



PSA Newsletter

POE Studies Association Newsletter

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Conferences

Poe at the MLA

Two Poe panels arranged by the Poe Studies Association for the MLA in San Francisco will meet at the Hilton Hotel this December.

The first—"Poe and Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers"—will be in the Union Square Room 23/24 on Sunday, December 27 from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. Chaired by J. Gerald Kennedy, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, the panel includes four papers:

- "I Feel That It Will Live': (Auto)Biography and Criticism in Sarah Helen Whitman's Defense of Poe" by Noelle A. Baker, Georgia State University;
- "Poe in Context: Sarah Helen Whitman on the Man and His Times" by John E. Reilly, College of the Holy Cross;
- "Susan Archer Weiss and Poe's Nineteenth-Century Women Critics" by Buford Jones, Duke University; and
- "Quoth the Critic 'Evermore': Edgar Allan Poe's Influence on Kate Chopin's 'An Egyptian Cigarette'" by Suzanne D. Green, Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

The second panel—"The International Poe"—will be in Parlor 8, Continental Ballroom from 12 noon to 1:15 p.m. on Tuesday, December 29. Chaired by Richard Kopley, Penn State DuBois, the panel includes three papers:

- "Poe and the Belgian Aesthetic Movement" by J. P. Vander Motten, University of Ghent;
- "Poe's 'Nevermore' Motif as a Key to Bulgarian (Non)Modernism" by Nikita Dimitrov Nankov, Indiana University, Bloomington; and
- "Poe in Israel (and Russia)" by Aminadav A. Dykman, Penn State University Park.

International Edgar Allan Poe Conference

Richmond, Virginia, October 7-10, 1999

Abstracts for papers and proposals for sessions are invited for the International Edgar Allan Poe Conference commemorating the sesquicentennial of Poe's death. Sponsored by the PSA in conjunction with the Poe Foundation, Penn State DuBois, and the departments of English at Louisiana State University and Penn State, the event will be held at The Jefferson Hotel in Richmond, Virginia. All topics related to the life and works of Edgar Allan Poe are appropriate; suggested topics are as follows:

Poe's Reading	Poe's Richmond
Poe's Influence	Poe's <i>Pym</i>
Poe and His Contemporaries	Poe and Film
Poe and Periodicals	Poe and Science
Poe's Critical Reputation	Poe and Humor
Poe Biography	Collecting Poe
Poe Bibliography	Editing Poe
Poe and Popular Culture	Teaching Poe
Poe and the Short Story	Poe's Lectures
Poe and Music	Poe Portraiture
Poe and Dance	Poe Sites
Poe and the Visual Arts	Poe Folklore
Poe and Detective Fiction	Poe and the South
Poe and Philosophy	Poe and Religion
Poe and the Gothic	Poe Abroad
Poe's Social Commentary	Poe and Race
Poe and Science Fiction	Poe and Gender
Poe's Contemporary Reception	Poe's Lyric Poetry

Please send abstracts for twenty-minute papers (and proposals for one hour-and-twenty-minute sessions) to Richard Kopley, Vice-President of the PSA, Department of English, Penn State, University Park, PA 16802 or to rxk3@psu.edu. Abstracts and proposals will be evaluated by members of the PSA Executive Committee: J. Gerald Kennedy (President), Richard Kopley, Joel Myerson and Terence Whalen (Members-at-Large), Barbara Cantalupo (*PSA Newsletter* editor), and Roberta Sharp (Secretary-Treasurer). Submission deadline: December 31, 1998.

Poe in Cyberspace

Several places where Poe lived—Richmond, the University of Virginia, Philadelphia, the Bronx, and Baltimore—now proudly celebrate their connection on the Internet. Of course, many Poe scholars probably ignore these local Web sites on the assumption that they couldn't possibly contain much research material. To do so would be a grave error in the case of the most promising Web site for Poe research to appear thus far—the rapidly evolving pages of the Poe Society of Baltimore. This site raises the bar by which all Poe Web sites must now be judged.

During most of its 75 years of existence, the Poe Society of Baltimore concerned itself with local matters such as the Poe house, the Poe memorial statue, and the Poe grave site. But in the 1960s it began to reach out with annual lectures delivered by distinguished Poe scholars. In May 1997, the Poe Society of Baltimore (hereafter the PSB) launched a Web site with two aims, first, to provide information about itself; and second—and this is the unexpected part—to remedy the scarcity of reliable Poe e-texts and information about Poe on the Internet. Initially located at <http://raven.ubalt.edu/features/poe>, an address still partly maintained for compatibility, the enlarged PSB site moved in September 1998 to <http://www.eapoe.org>.

In announcing this new Web address, Mr. Jeffrey A. Savoye, Secretary/Treasurer of the PSB and the quiet author and webmaster of the PSB Web site, wrote via e-mail on September 8, 1998: “Our new site launches our on-going project to provide Poe's complete works in e-text. We have started with the poems, with multiple versions of each. We need to have at least a basic text for all of the tales as that is what most people are seeking, but we hope to show people that Poe wrote far more than the handful of horror tales for which he is usually given credit.”

To distinguish itself from the many derivative Poe sites which have sprung up on the Web, the PSB set two ambitious tasks for itself: 1) to provide comprehensive and reliable secondary information about Poe's life, works, and significance using serious scholarship and criticism, and 2) to create a fresh collection of reliable Poe e-texts and variants from original sources (or exact photo-facsimiles) by means of scanning or re-keying followed by careful verification.

Yet the PSB site may be one of the best-kept secrets on the Internet. It modestly insists on plain text, avoids fancy graphics and advanced HTML, and keeps an understated approach. Web gurus would call it a “first generation Web site,” meaning that the text has the minimal coding needed to get it up on the Web, is unsupported by visual metaphors, and is easy to print or download. Web readers accustomed to eye-catching interfaces which plaster over indifferent contents will find the opposite here, a stodgy, “old-fashioned” interface above mind-absorbing research materials. The scholarly may find some unexpected twists in how the PSB site is organized, and may wish to try these suggestions: 1) First, go the PSB home page at <http://www.eapoe.org>. 2) Select the first item, “Additional Topics About Poe.” Despite the fact that the antecedent to which *additional* refers doesn't exist, there are some little treasure troves here of secondary research material, arranged around twenty-five lively topics. 3) Go back up to the Main Menu and select the second item, “Poe's Works.” Mr. Savoye modestly remarks here: “At the moment, this is something of an experiment. There are several sites on the Internet with some of Poe's works, usually the better known poems (such as ‘The Raven’) and tales (such as ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’). This site is primarily intended to fill in some of the gaps, as Poe wrote a great deal more than the handful of tales and poems read so regularly.” 4) From the Works page (actually the “Selection from the Works of Edgar Allan Poe” page) choose “Index of Poe's Poems.” Don't expect a word index or concordance; instead you'll find a variorum bibliography of 81 Poe poems, showing editions during Poe's lifetime and manuscript variants, marked with Mabbott's codes and enriched with hypertext links to e-text versions. The main arrangement orders the poems alphabetically, and subsidiary arrangements list the poems by first lines and chronologically. 5) Return to the Works page and choose “Index of Poe's Tales.” This leads to a shorter list of Poe titles and their variants, also using Mabbott's keys. Although the formidable task of the e-text processing and verification of the large body of Poe tales is just beginning here, one of the first titles available is an e-text first, “The Journal of Julius Rodman,” in the six original installments. 6) Return again to the Works page and choose “Miscellanea.” Mr. Savoye seems to have deployed his limited resources into areas that have received the least on-line attention thus far, such as Poe's nonfiction prose—his articles, criticism, and reviews. This section of the PSB site includes *Eureka* and makes

valuable additions to the repertoire of Poe e-texts on-line: "A Chapter of Suggestions," "Doings of Gotham," "Fifty Suggestions," and the seventeen original installments of "Marginalia." Perhaps this section is worth including in the running headers for navigation. 7) Two choices on the Works menu actually contain leads to secondary materials, the useful bibliographical surveys of "The Canon of Poe's Works," and "A Few Editions of Poe's Works." The last choice on the Works menu, "Other Sites with Poe's Works in E-Text," needs strengthening. Incidentally, there are more secondary materials, actually short critical excerpts, on the Main menu under "Bits & Pieces - II." ("Bits and Pieces - I" in the same place contains short quotations from Poe himself.)

For whom was the PSB Web site created? The site appeals to the common reader, and has won the awards of Poe Decoder, Brain Bait, Net Guide, and RSAC. The student—graduate, undergraduate, and even high school—will find the site to be a useful on-line Poe companion or handbook. Computer-literate students who browse the Web for hours but never walk into the library will find much more here than they expect, as their computer-illiterate teachers may or may not ever discover! For faculty members and advanced researchers, the site already has perhaps the best on-line overview of secondary Poe material for teaching and learning. Each page of text and commentary is dated to show the most recent editorial work, and each also displays a code to indicate its state of verification.

A few suggestions: the PSB site might benefit from a clearer division between its local and scholarly functions, a general introductory statement of intentions and methods, a personal statement from Mr. Savoye, a "what's new" page, a site map with fuller navigation aids, an explanation of how students should cite Web sources, and some revision of its hypertext link labels (the imprecise term *index* seems particularly overworked). Until the PSB site fills itself out with more tales and criticism, it might point more authoritatively to alternative on-line resources, such as rival e-text repositories, Web guides to literature, criticism, and authors, the bibliographical resources of the Amazon and Barnes and Noble sites, and the burgeoning Web indexes and search engines.

All on-line projects face the inherent editorial limitations of self-publishing, and the PSB site is no exception; many passages of commentary would benefit from editorial blue-penciling. Perhaps two of the announced PSB editorial procedures designed to reduce confusion may actually introduce it: the spelling checker may bring in modernized spelling unwanted by researchers, and changing Poe's square brackets to angle brackets to parentheses needlessly contradicts the standard meanings of editorial punctuation.

The entire structure, content, and range of opinions at the PSB site are the commendable work of one person, Mr. Savoye, assisted by David A. Spence, a student at the University of Michigan, a considerable feat in a relatively short period of time. But future progress may be less rapid as the project moves from the slim body of poetry to the heavier corpus of tales and reviews, which constitute much larger portions of Poe's work. Those who have worked with e-texts know that after the computer-assisted work of keying, scanning, optical character recognition, and spell-checking is done, the real work still lies ahead in the human verification of e-texts. Surely the PSB can maintain its commendable editorial focus while obtaining some appropriate volunteer help from the community of Poe scholars.

To the extent to which the PSB site fulfills its glorious goals, it will become increasingly authoritative as a source for the study of Poe on the Internet. As a site more loyal to print methods than on-line methods, the PSB site also stands in a position to narrow the deplorable gap that is fast widening between the opposing standards and habits of print resources and on-line resources in the pursuit of research and information.

Note: The PSB uses www.eapoe.org as its Web address because so many other Poe combinations were already assigned: www.poe.com to the Professional Office Equipment company, www.poe.org to a rock music band led by a girl who performs under the name Poe, www.poe.net to Apache: Red Hat Linux Web Server, and ea-poe.org to Jered Koenig, a high school student in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Heyward Ehrlich
Rutgers University

Reviews

Writings in The Southern Literary Messenger: Nonfictional Prose. eds. Burton R. Pollin and Joseph V. Ridgely. New York: Gordian Press, 1997. 406 pp. \$75.00.

This fifth volume of the definitive edition of Poe's prose writings has maintained and, in some respects, even surpassed the high standards of the earlier volumes in this series. The Text, Headnotes, Notes, and Index are logically compressed into one handsome, sturdy folio. The facsimile text is reproduced in the double-column format of the original *Messenger* with the small-print excerpts enlarged by sixteen percent for greater legibility. The high quality white paper and the generous spacing of the Headnotes and Notes make for a very attractive, inviting page spread.

Professor Pollin notes that from the beginning the editors faced and, in time, resolved several problems: (1) identifying and authenticating Poe's reviews apart from the several articles attributed to Poe (but not his) included in the Harrison edition, a process aided by the use of the Mabbott manuscripts at the University of Iowa Library and by his annotated copy of the Harrison edition; (2) relating the "reformistic" motive and character of these early reviews of Poe to his life from mid-1834 to January 1837 and a few years later with the help of texts by David K. Jackson and Dwight Thomas, the Boston Public Library Griswold collection, and letters in Ostrom and Harrison; (3) writing annotations that allowed for the apprentice Poe's immature theory of literature and psychology and uncertain judgments of Romantic English poetry while keeping in mind his ideas on unity of effect, poetic composition, language, etc. as part of the continuum of his critical and creative thought. These problems are, of course, dealt with in the general Introduction and, in detail, in the Headnotes and Notes to the twenty monthly issues of the *The Southern Literary Messenger*.

Supplementing the Index is a checklist of reviews omitted from the Index by Author, title, and date (393-97). The review of James Kirke Paulding's *Slavery in the United States*, lately, again, determined to be by Nathaniel Beverley Tucker is excluded (153-54). A second checklist of the same texts is by Title of the works reviewed (398-402). As the titles and names in these checklists are "almost entirely" omitted in the Index, the Index refers largely to the Notes though by page only without the useful letter symbols in the Notes. Each monthly issue is introduced in a Headnote that mainly identifies the content, Poe's contributions, and their significance. These and the Notes comprise an interesting, rich, indispensable body of data and critical commentary for future Poe scholarship. That the quality of this facsimile edition is superior to other

reprint copies is evident not only in its editing and typography but in its scrupulous regard for the authentic Poe original. This is no better illustrated than by the review of Bulwer's *Rienzi* in the Library of America volume of Poe's essays and reviews, where the text ends on page 146, omitting Poe's introductory and concluding paragraphs and the six-column excerpt ("The Error" 122-25) to which they refer, thus depriving the reader of Poe's view, explicit and implicit, of this work as presented in this facsimile. Similar complete accuracy is found in the handling of the review of Dickens' *Watkins Tottle* in contrast to the Library of America which omits not only the essay on Gin Shops but paragraphs two and three of the facsimile text (218-219) and the review of Dickens' *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (319-21) from which the concluding selection is omitted by the Library of America (207).

Among the illustrations, the fine frontispiece daguerreotype of Poe (May-June 1849) is from the Paul Getty Museum. Lesser ones include Cole's wood engraving of November 1848, a painting of Thomas Willis White, filler sketches of Dickens, Tucker, Willis, Longfellow, Margaret Fuller, Poe residences, the December 1835 *The Southern Literary Messenger* contents page, Allan's home, and others.

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POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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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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"O Corvo" e Suas Traduções. Organized, with an introduction, by Ivo Barroso. Preface by Carlos Heitor Cony. Rio de Janeiro: Lacerda Editores, 1998. 105 pp. \$11.00.

This handsome book gathers seven translations of "The Raven" into Portuguese that have been written over the last 115 years or so. It also—fittingly, I think, since most of them were undoubtedly done from the French—includes the famous translations of Poe's poem by Charles Baudelaire and Stéphane Mallarmé.

Poe's great poem was first translated into Portuguese in Brazil in 1883 (thirty years after Baudelaire's translation but five years before Mallarmé's, according to the dates given in this book) by Machado de Assis, who is still widely considered to be Brazil's greatest novelist. Machado's translation was followed in Brazil by those of Emílio de Meneses (1917), Gondin da Fonseca (1928), Milton Amado (1943), Benedito Lopes (1956), and Alexei Bueno (1980). The one translation from Portugal that Ivo Barroso includes in this collection is that of Fernando Pessoa, Portugal's great modern poet, which was published in 1924. In Barroso's introduction he argues that the "best"—that is, the most faithful in rhythm, structure and meaning—of these translations is that of Milton Amado (1913-1974), a now forgotten journalist-translator from the state of Minas Gerais.

There are a few curiosities. Benedito Lopes's version is done as a series of sonnets. Fernando Pessoa circumvents the necessity to name the lady "Lenore" probably because of the distracting connotation that name would have for any reader raised on the lyric poetry of the sixteenth-century Portuguese poet Luíz Vaz Camões. Probably the only one of these Portuguese translators who worked directly from Poe's original English was Pessoa, whose entire formal education was that of a British colonial in Durban in southern Africa at the end of the nineteenth century.

*George Monteiro
Brown University*

George Egon Hatvary. **The Murder of Edgar Allan Poe**. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1997. 211 pp. \$22.00.

Every reader of Poe must be puzzled and dismayed by the known circumstances of his death—found delirious, incoherent, garbed in rags in a Baltimore gutter on Election Day, dying in hospital a few days later, calling, mysteriously, for "Reynolds" with his last breaths. A year or so ago it was proposed that Poe had died of rabies rather than alcoholism, a diagnosis rather quickly dismissed as improbable; what next, encephalitis, diphtheria? But now we have George Egon Hatvary, convinced from the evidence available that Poe was the victim of a homicide. How to prove the murder and discover its perpetrator? How better than by enlisting that famous solver of crimes baffling to both the prefect of police and the reader, Monsieur Dupin.

Never mind that if Poe is dead, Monsieur Dupin died with him. Taking poetic license, Mr. Hatvary presents Dupin as still living in Paris, where he had been visited by Edgar Allan Poe, who described Dupin to us and wrote down the proofs of his original genius. Dupin, we learn, so resembles his author-companion physically that he can be mistaken for Poe. Learning of Poe's death from a letter sent him by Dr. J. E. Snodgrass, Dupin resolves to go to America to investigate the mysterious circumstances of his late friend's passing.

When we think of C. Auguste Dupin, what comes to mind? The Dupin we know is an impoverished recluse who ventures only by night from his apartment, *au troisieme*, No. 33 *Rue Dunôt, Faubourg St. Germain*. He is an adept of arcane information, gifted with a poet's intuition as well as a mind of analytical rigor. All this is conveyed to us in Poe's tales by the nameless narrator whom Hatvary assumes to be Poe, but in this telling the narrator is Dupin himself. Perhaps because nobody likes a Clever Dick, Hatvary's Dupin does not expatiate on his own brilliance—in fact, at one point, he attributes to Poe some of the brilliance associated with himself.

Arriving in Baltimore, Dupin looks up Dr. Snodgrass and, in the ensuing fortnight, travelling to Richmond and New York, he meets just about everyone whom Poe knew, had insulted in print, or otherwise gave reasons for resentment. Early in this quest, Dupin calls on Mrs. Elmira Shelton. Even she may be a suspect, for had she succumbed to Poe's imploring requests to marry

him, she would have lost her late husband's estate and the approval of her children; having Poe killed would have relieved her of the need to reject his importunities.

Elmira explains that she wasn't jealous of Poe's attention to other women, knowing that his love was idealized. But this widow longed for the physical fulfillment Poe could not offer her, and by Dupin's second interview with her, struck by his resemblance to Poe, she and Dupin have kissed; indeed, she soon takes him to her bed. But Dupin's quest is not all romance—he is in physical danger, is shot at when visiting Poe's tomb by night, and is seized, blindfolded, and imprisoned in a darkened cell with rats and a pit, if not a pendulum. Escaping, he still has no idea who is his enemy as well as Poe's, but is undeterred in his search.

This plot is handled expertly by Mr. Hatvary, who provides convincing descriptions of the varied locales, e.g., New York in the 1840s (where Dupin meets Walt Whitman). Dupin makes apposite quotations now and then from his countrymen Tocqueville and Crèvecoeur, but this is practically the only evidence of his being a Frenchman. In fact, Hatvary's Dupin is quite unlike Poe's; he seems more an American private eye than the introspective resolver of the murders in the Rue Morgue. He's convivial, at ease socially in a foreign country, and his amorous success with Elmira Shelton is more her doing than evidence of his Gallic charm, of which there is little to see. A further difference is that there's also little evidence of the brilliant intuition of the man who located the purloined letter. Here Dupin collects and weighs possible clues, follows false leads, and finally does figure out who is his enemy as well as Poe's. It's not cricket, in a review, to reveal the solution, but I will say that the villain is characterized by intelligence, ambition, and envy; in fact, his rational propensities seem further developed than do Dupin's, and it is only in the villain's confessional letter that Hatvary's prose emulates the resonance and intensity of Poe's own style. Otherwise the language is serviceable but does not take us below its surfaces.

In his presentation of Dupin and the late Poe, Hatvary takes the author's theme of doubling and division of personality, but, in fact, doesn't do very much with the contrast between Poe's emotional idealism and Dupin's analytical mind. There's all too little, in the latter, of Poe's observation (in "Rue Morgue") that "the truly

imaginative are never otherwise than analytic," and its implicit corollary, the reverse. By borrowing Poe's detective, Hatvary has put himself in line for inevitable comparison with the original. A fictive character of his own might have served him better.

That said, the book may be enjoyed as a mystery, with many allusions to Poe's actual career and his associates which will be recognized by the *cognoscenti*.

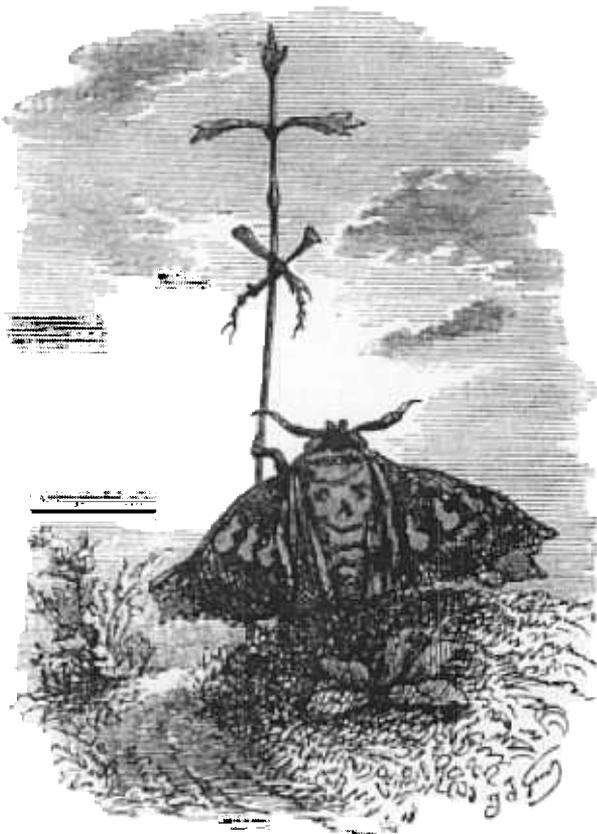
Daniel Hoffman
Professor Emeritus
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Craig Werner. **Gold Bugs and the Powers of Blackness: Re-reading Poe.** Baltimore: The Edgar Allan Poe Society and the Library of the University of Baltimore, 1995. 29 pp.

Gold Bugs and the Powers of Blackness: Re-reading Poe seeks to present Poe as "a philosophically compelling artist who contributes significantly to our understanding of the relationship between epistemology and ontology" (4). Werner's discussion centers mainly on Richard Powers' *The Gold Bug Variations* and Leon Forrest's *The Bloodworth Orphans* but also includes examples from Martha Grimes' *The Horse You Came In On* and some selections from film and contemporary music.

Instead of using the term, "Poe's influence," Werner prefers to talk about layers of re-reading Poe, adopting Alan Nadel's approach: reading "influence backwards, concentrating on how later figures reveal new richness in what can no longer quite accurately be called 'source works'" (5). Werner sees the works by Forrest and Powers as responses to earlier re-creations, which Werner refers to as "the French Poe, the Wright Poe, and the Pynchon Poe" (12) as well as demonstrating an awareness of V's use of elements from Poe. In Pynchon's reworking of "The Masque of the Red Death," Werner identifies the theme, "solipsism equals death," as also evident in *The Bloodworth Orphans* and *The Gold Bug Variations*.

After presenting numerous examples linking Forrest's and Powers' works to Pynchon's version of Poe, Werner points out that "for both Forrest and Powers this cluster



By Grandville from *Les Animaux*, 1842, "Funeral Oration for a Silkworm" by P. -J. Stahl (Pierre-Jules Hertz). *Bizarreries and Fantasies of Grandville*. Introduction and commentary by Stanley Appelbaum. New York: Dover, 1974.

of concerns—ultimate knowledge, death and the inherent disjunction between truth and process—points toward a pluralistic ontology in which spiritual significance cannot be separated from its material conditions" (16). Werner concludes that "for Powers and Forrest, 'other' understandings of Poe and of the ontological issues he raises are not only possible but inevitable and, at least potentially, spiritually liberating" (25). In his concluding pages, Werner is convinced that readers will rediscover *Eureka*, seeing in Poe's cosmology an "underlying pluralistic tendency" (21).

Lois Vines
Ohio University

Jack Aaronson. **Poe: A Musical Based on the Life of E. A. Poe.** Recorded at Amherst College. Recording and Post-production by Art Steele and Audio Promedia, Sunderland, MA, 1997.

Surveys of over 400 musical compositions based on Edgar Allan Poe texts (by May G. Evans in *Music and Edgar Allan Poe* [1939] and by B. Pollin in the October 1973 *Music and Letters*) reveal that before the present

century, no one had used merely Poe's rather unfortunate, fantastic life alone as a text. Instead, composers found inspiration for operas (Debussy's "Usher"), tone poems, ballets (especially "The Masque of the Red Death"), songs, vocal choruses sometimes a cappella, choral symphonies (e.g., Rachmaninoff's "The Bells") in Poe's rich variety of drama, lyricism, grim atmosphere and flippant satire. But still rare are uses of the marked contrasts of his curious life in any approach to "musical drama": the sharp shifts from penniless orphanhood to manorial splendor in Richmond, from Baltimore aunt's frugal subsistence to his respectable editorial posts, from the fame of his "Raven" (writing popularity coincident with increasing notoriety for his insobriety) to the trauma of Virginia's death, and the ceaseless pursuit of the dreamt-of "Stylus" magazine as well as of two wealthy widows—all terminating in his sidewalk collapse and demise en route to his projected rewedding. Inevitably, composers would seize upon this varied, tragic and prominent life for stage music after a long succession of settings for Poe's tales had appeared (see Pollin on Poe in *Grove's Book of the Opera* of 1992). Only one of these deserves serious consideration: Dominick Argento's *The Voyage of Edgar Allan Poe*, commissioned in 1976 and presented several times since in music centers.

Jack Aaronson, apparently fully aware of the New York productions of Bernstein, Sondheim, David Lloyd Weber, et al., as evidenced by his cabaret-style group work, was led by his keen interest in Poe's life and work to follow Argento's style of handling the narrative theme of high points of Poe's life. Here in twelve short scenes, Aaronson develops his view of the aims and "meaning" of Poe's tragic life. "A Musical Based on the Life of E. A. Poe" was produced in concert form at Amherst College on May 8, 1997 before a full house of 500 with a cast of fourteen and an orchestra of thirty-five. Encouraged by the friendly audience and some professional commendations, Aaronson is seeking to expand it for a "development house" in the near future. Here we will deal with the present material and its potential.

The composer has great enthusiasm, a good sense of and experience in simple orchestration, especially for voice parts, and interesting ideas, all of which are hopeful and encouraging. The question of audience is important, and here Poe looms as a great difficulty. Argento conceived his commissioned work for an opera audience, and his

two long scenes were modeled, it seems to me, musically and orchestrally, upon something like *Peter Grimes* with the tragic feeling rife in Benjamin Britten's operas prevailing. Aaronson's work, on the other hand, is more inclined toward Broadway musicals with orchestral-aria interplay. The influence of Sondheim, Bernstein, David Lloyd Weber, Charles Stowse (*Annie*), and Kurt Weill appears to be dominant. This would be natural and beneficial if it were linked to an original talent for song-writing, but of that there is doubt. Most of the featured songs peter out after a short statement, although sometimes they are given a clever or skillful variation, but never an effective contrasting theme or rarely any follow up. Many are as banal as the tone rows featured in serial music—which is far from this score, fortunately.

The composer provided a synopsis of his intentions and how they would be carried out. The aim is too ambitious, of course, for a one-hour production. It involves Poe's creating "Red Death" to personify Virginia's enemy and dream sequences at the hospital (sic) where "Annabel Lee" represents this struggle. Interwoven is Poe's feud with inferior "critics" jealous of him, especially at Mrs. Lynch's salon at his launching of "The Raven" (sic); and finally his seeking his Baltimore death, in part to rejoin Virginia. The situations used for Aaronson's twelve scenes are sufficiently poignant and varied, even if untrue to the Poe ana. This mismatching is always a problem in dramas based upon a groundwork of real persons and their lives and acceptable only if projected on the stage convincingly. Longer scenes here might work with development of each, but certainly not in this abridged form.

For a few of the "scenes" or song episodes, one might call them, some words of Poe's poems are used, but usually it is the composer's text; needless to say, there is no comparison or continuity with Poe's. The "narrative" scheme evolves from these song episodes, with four very brief orchestral "segues." First is "Once Upon a Time" from mother Eliza, followed by her promise to "watch over" baby Poe with Virginia soon introduced as a "maternal figure." A 30-year leap gives us the derisive critics, followed by Poe's singing about being "Alone." Frances Allan next is shown as another protectress being removed by "Red Death," after Virginia sings a cheerful, jazzy song of "Navy Girl" out of his West Point memories. Here she shows the alarming first sign of her devastating consumption. Next comes "Salon Ribaldry" against Edgar at Mrs. Lynch's. This

is followed by dream sequences for the "sea death" of "Annabel Lee" and a return to the "hospital." There remain Poe's visit to Virginia's grave and his wish to join her, another mockery scene in a bar, and a return to a graveyard symbolizing Poe's life alone and watching "all around him die." The theme song here is "Time Is One Long Winter." Surely this is more than one hour's telling can encompass effectively.

Nevertheless, by building upon several elements in the musical score and collaborating with a talented script writer, a much needed musical based on this sort of material for the ever growing audience of Poe enthusiasts could be produced.

Burton R. Pollin
Professor Emeritus
The City University of New York

Letters to the Editor

I was somewhat disappointed not to find my site listed in the "Poe in Cyberspace" article in the Spring 1998 issue of the *Newsletter* as well as in the comment about Qriss's page at the Poe Decoder containing "non-academic commentaries and interpretations." Therefore, I would like to provide you with some information. First, my site is called Precisely Poe at <http://www.poedecoder.com/PreciselyPoe/>. I average at least 10 emails per day (worldwide) during the regular school year, asking for information either about Poe's life or writings. Very often I have to clarify information and erase or try to eliminate the misconceptions that many people still have about Poe and his work. I also have information which can be found at the Poe Decoder at <http://www.poedecoder.com> which is a domain that I own along with five other academics in this country and in Sweden.

Your Friend in Poe,
Martha Womack
mewomack@pen.k12.va.us

The reviewer of *The American Face of Edgar Allan Poe* (Spring 1998 *PSA Newsletter*), overall, did a fine job, with the exception of the following. The "Morning on the Wissahiccon" article was NOT a plate article; the picture was added afterward, when Poe sent it to NYC and it was published in *The Opal*. It was drawn by John Gadsby Chapman, a well-known artist who knew the Hudson River better than the Philadelphia creek and pictured it wrongly. How could it have, therefore, "explained" his picture? As for the "Island of the Fay," it was never the inspiration for the sketch, and, therefore, "Island of Fay" was only nominally a "plate article;" Poe contrived with Sartain to reshape an engineering drawing by John Martin and adapt it to the text of his already written story.

With Best Regards,
Burton Pollin
ap2@is4.nyu.edu

Short Notes

The latest novel by Joyce Carol Oates, *My Heart Laid Bare* (Dutton, 1998), is playfully derived from the celebrated "Marginalia" No. 194, which Baudelaire so highly praised. Here Poe grandiosely offers this phrase as a putative title for a "very little book" which would revolutionize "the universal world of human thought" and lead its author "to immortal renown." Such stories as "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Cask of Amontillado," and "The Imp of the Perverse" are, in a sense, those "little books" recording the careers of monomaniacal murderers. The tome by Oates is a "big" book (531 pages) which attempts the same end through following the life of the head of a large family whose several members have adopted his devilish "game" of nefarious survival, and here he somehow (as does Poe) communicates his egotistic tale. The book's epigraph—Poe's two-paragraph "essay" abridged to one (see *Brevities* 322-23)—sets the theme applied by all the family save for two redemptive members, at the end of an extraordinary number of narratives in varied fields demonstrating J. C. Oates' virtuosity. The question now is whether her title and confessional approach to a scam-artist's life indicate all of her interest in Poe's work.

One of the intrigues, carried through many important ramifying sections of the plot, originates, I believe, in Poe's tale, of 1842, "The Landscape Garden," which Poe later increased by adding thirteen long paragraphs for "The Domain of Arnheim" of 1848. Both versions arise from the same theme: virtuoso gardening as the height of man's artistry in recreating great panoramic vistas for aesthetic pleasure. The creative spirit merely needs the limitless riches inherited by the heir to a hundred-year-old untouched, accumulated product of well-invested large funds.

We scarcely have to note Poe's deriving the idea and the name Ellison from reading about the real multi-million-dollar fortune inherited by one Thelluson, about whom he tells of reading in his footnote. The primary source of this wish-fulfillment fantasy, as often, is Poe, the "gold-seeker" himself. In the novel, the implied memoir heart-barer is ironically, almost sardonically, named "Abraham Licht."

Another Poe touch lies in the fact that his widespread scheme is French in origin (Thelluson was the banking associate of Necker). Oates elaborates Licht's creation of the "Society for Reclamation and Restoration of E. Auguste Napoléon Bonaparte," Napoléon's illegitimate son (*sic*), intended to see to the finding of his descendants; otherwise in 1912 (date of the action) the large estate will be distributed to all the self-declared relatives who can assert their family link after handsomely funding the search, with Licht as the benevolent manager in America. Poe's detective, C. Auguste Dupin, must have contributed at least part of his name, strikingly non-Gallic in style, to E. Auguste Napoléon.

Burton R. Pollin

This fall, the journal, *The Formalist*, promoted a poetry contest inviting submissions of metrical poems 28-56 lines long, rhymed or unrhymed, that were sparked by a line or a brief passage from one of the following of Poe's poems: "Spirits of the Dead," "Sonnet—To Science," "Alone," "Israfel," "The Sleeper," "The Valley of Unrest," "The City in the Sea," "To One in Paradise," "The Haunted Palace," and "The Conquerer Worm." A monetary prize and an "Edgar Allan Poe Award" are to be awarded. _____

Meridel Le Sueur's *The Dread Road* adapted for radio by Susan Brennen and Toni Presti and produced by the Neon Crow Theater Lab (neoncrow@aol.com) won the 1998 Silver Reel Award. Integral to this adaptation of Le Sueur's work are thirty-three passages from Poe's tales including "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "A Descent into the Maelstrom," "The Tell Tale Heart," "The Masque of the Red Death," "The Black Cat," "The Premature Burial," "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," "MS. Found in a Bottle," and "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains." In the program notes, John Crawford points out that "[i]n her journal Meridel refers to Poe in three entries: (1) 'Poe showed us the dread road. I looked, he said, and it seemed they had all drowned. When I got up, looked up, he said, I found everyone had been bound and gagged.' (2) 'Light muffled voice' is the voice of Poe's women after they have been cemented alive in the castle walls . . . and (3) Yes, Poe said, my fancy grows charnel in the image of gloom. There is the faint phosphorous image now of decay.' Meridel's view of Poe's writing as a whole [Crawford suggests] may be indebted to . . . D. H. Lawrence's remark . . . that Poe's art is concerned with 'a disintegrating and sloughing of the old consciousness.'"

In an October 2, 1998 article in *The New York Times* describing the van Gogh exhibit at The National Gallery, Michael Kimmelman points out van Gogh's fascination with Poe: "An early work, 'Flying Fox,' with the animal backlighted, its translucent wings extended . . . clearly a macabre joke, paired here with 'Skull of a Skeleton with Burning Cigarette,' an even funnier picture, and like the fox, lusciously painted in a way that somehow reanimates the dead subject . . . [are] straight out of Gothic literature. We know van Gogh read Poe. He was a voracious reader" (36).

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Poe Everywhere

Poe in France

J. Gerald Kennedy gave a paper, "Le Palais des Glaces: *Pym* et sa Critique" ("The Palace of Mirrors: *Pym* and Criticism") at the Poe Colloque, Edgar Poe: Entre Nomadisme et Enracinement ("Edgar Poe: Between Nomadism and Rootedness"), held at the International Cultural Center at Cerisy-la-Salle in Normandy. Kennedy writes: "Since 1952 there have been summer colloquia on a wide range of intellectual and philosophical topics. The organizing committee currently includes such familiar names as Jacques Derrida, Umberto Eco, René Girard, Jean Ricardou, Paul Ricoeur, Tzvetan Todorov, etc. The Poe colloquium included a display of books on Poe, illustrations inspired by Poe texts, and a lengthy list of Poe videos/films. Interest in Poe remains extraordinarily intense in France, judging from the quality and diversity of the presentations, as well as the responsiveness of the audience. We talked about Poe morning and night—it was quite an adventure." Titles of some of the papers presented include: "Poe and American Space," "Poetics and Epistemology in *Eureka*," "Rachilde and Poe," "From Writing Landscape to Understanding the World: The Art of Gardening and Creativity in Edgar Allan Poe," "The Extraordinary Astronomy of Camille Flammarion: Reader of Edgar Allan Poe," "Délire and Narration in the Tales." Eight participants at the conference became new members of the PSA.

Poe in Baltimore

On four dates in late October and early November, theatrical performances of "The Tell Tale Heart" and "Annabel Lee" featuring Poe impersonator David Keltz and actress Stacy McFarlane were sponsored by The Poe House. The annual birthday celebration is scheduled for January 22-24, 1999. For more information contact Jeff Jerome, Poepoet@juno.com or check <http://www.eapoe.org/balt/poehseb.htm>.

On October 4, 1998, after a tribute to Poe at his grave in the Westminster Burying Ground, the Poe Society sponsored the 76th Commemorative Edgar Allan Poe Lecture at the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Dr. Benjamin F. Fisher IV (University of Mississippi) delivered a paper entitled, "Poe's Reputation in the 1890's—A View from a Century Later." For more information on this annual event held on the first Sunday in October, see <http://www.eapoe.org/society/psbevnts.htm>.

Poe in Pennsylvania

This year's *Poe Evermore* production held in the Mt. Hope Mansion on the site of The Renaissance Faire in Cornwall included enactments of "The Raven," "The Tell Tale Heart," "The Premature Burial," "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Black Cat."

John Astin performed his one-man Poe production at the Keswick Theater in Glenside on October 30, 1998.

Weekends from October 30-November 22, 1998 were devoted to Poe at the Skytop Lodge, Skytop (800-345-7759, for more information).

Poe in Frederick, Maryland

The Weinberg Center presented John Astin in "Once Upon a Midnight" on Halloween night.

Poe in Peoria

On October 30, 1998, Norman George presented "Poe Alone: The Last Lecture" at the Performing Arts Center of Illinois Central College.

Poe in Brooklyn

On October 31, 1998 at St. Ann's in Brooklyn Heights, pianist Margaret Leng Tan resurrected Arthur Bergh's version of "The Raven," the first since the 1909 Carnegie Hall orchestral performance of the original piano composition performed three months earlier at the Hall of Fame, NYU. "Assembled by the Arts at St. Ann's and Hal Wilner, a record producer . . . actors and musicians including Steve Buscemi . . . took part in readings . . . [with] musical settings by Garth Hudson, Elysian Fields, Mark Birghan and Lenny Pichett." (*New York Times*, 10/28/98)

Poe in Richmond

At the Poe Museum: The Susan Jaffe Tane Collection, "Quoth the Raven," will be extended until June of 1999. "The Enchanted Garden Halloween Program" featured Poe and the Masters of Terror. In conjunction with the Poe Museum, the University of Richmond's School of Continuing Studies will sponsor a course for teachers, "Teaching Poe." For more information, call (804) 289-8133. On January 23, 1998, a long-range planning retreat regarding the Museum's potential will be held; input is welcomed; contact John Moon (804) 648-5523.

In conjunction with the Poe Museum and the *New Virginia Review*, the 1998 Poe Festival—"The Essential *Dracula*"—was held at the Library of Virginia. Henry Taylor, professor at American University and 1986 Pulitzer Prize-winning author read from his poems. Following Taylor's reading, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* was shown with commentary by Leonard Wolf, prize-winning poetry and fiction writer and one of the film's historical consultants.

On January 22-23, 1999, John Astin will perform "Once Upon a Midnight" at the Modlin Center of the University of Richmond.



By Grandville from *Les Animaux*, 1842, "Sufferings of a Click-Beetle" by Paul de Musset. *Bizarrenes and Fantasies of Grandville*. Introduction and commentary by Stanley Appelbaum. New York: Dover, 1974.

Another Ravin'

In the April 27, 1998 issue of *Fortune* magazine, the following was featured:

The Broker: A Poem of Gothic Horror

by Stanley Bing

Once upon a morning hairy, as I looked upon the scary
Ebitda projections for the business firms that I adore,
While I sat there, dread increasing, suddenly I heard a sneezing
And a babbling, not unpleasing, right outside my chamber door.
"Some consultant, then," I muttered, "out to earn his
bucks galore.
Only this and nothing more."

Ah! I knew—and well I oughta—as we neared the second quarter
Profit growth in double digits lay beneath in smoky ruin.
And yet the Dow, in feats astounding, kept on mounting!
Mounting! Mounting!
Earnings? Cash flow? Hey, who's counting? Something had to
give, and soon.
"Come in, visitor," I hollered, "if to me you bring a boon!"
Quoth the broker: "How ya doin'?"

"Pal," he chirped, "you look befuddled, about your choices
deeply muddled
As investment options mount, and you try to stay out of hock.
Actually, it's very easy. Come on, now! Let's don't be queasy.
There is nothing crass or sleazy 'bout the answer we'll concoct,
'Bout the wise and prudent answer we will build on solid rock."
Quoth the broker: "Buy more stock."

"But which?" I cried. "You fatuous boomer! Shall I buy on
whim? On rumor?
How to choose among the thousands wanting of my pie a slice?"
Then I with a passion unencumbered, picked up FORTUNE's
great 500
And across my space I lumbered forward, pleading for advice.
"Tell me now!" I screamed in anguish. "You won't have to
tell me twice!"
Quoth the broker: "Roll them dice."

"Look!" said I, "today and ever, rolling like a huge green river
Comes the cash flow of the top four, towering, immutable!
GM, Ford, Exxon, Wal-Mart—they stand alone! Abreed
apart!
So little fat, and so much heart. A good investment? Irrefutable!
But will they keep on soaring daily? As a plan, is't executable?"
Quoth the broker: "Sounds indubitable."

"And what," I cried, "of Welch and Gerstner? Procuring these,
you could do worstner
At Nos. 5 and 6. Chrysler's at 7! And Mobil? Why, it's 8.
Philip Morris, doing fine, is up a notch, from 10 to 9,
And all wrapped up in optic twine, ATT rounds out the
top-ten slate.
But will they all continue growing? Can you that substantiate?"
Quoth the broker: "They all look great."

"Monster!" said I. "Callous booster! Monster still if sage
or rooster!
By that Greenspan high above us, by that pundit we adore!
Tell me now how things are going. And incidentally, what's
with Boeing?
A25-slot improvement showing double grosses through the door!
Not to mention Morgan Stanley, four times what it did before!"
Quoth the broker: "They merged. Buy more."

"Monster!" said I. "Shallow jerk! Monster still, if . . . How
'bout Merck?
Travelers Group and Bell Atlantic; Microsoft and Dell,
good gracious!
Each one's '97 posting, vastly better, cause for boasting!
Should we have a purchase roasting? Sate our appetite voracious?
A red-hot nugget socked away, as a shogun hides his geishas?"
Quoth the broker: "How bodacious!"

And so the broker, smoking, twitching, still is pitching,
still is pitching,
Feet on my credenza perching, nibbling on some wine
and cheese.
And, God help me, my portfolio? Well, every day it keeps
on growlio;
Where it will end, nobody knowlio. Can someone out there
help me, please?
Will he ever leave me, free me, from his greedy,
needy squeeze?
Quoth the broker: "Pay my fees!"

Recent Dissertations

1997

Adam J. Frank, "Symptom and Sensation in Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, and Gertrude Stein (Nineteenth Century)," DAI 58/12A: 4653.

Benjamin Denis Reiss, "The Dark Subject: Deception and Mastery in Antebellum America (Slavery, Nat Turner, Thomas Gray, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, P.T. Barnum)," DAI 59/03A: 0825.

Francis Timothy Ruppel, "Marketplace Romances: Elusive Ambitions in the Fiction of T. S. Arthur, Edgar Allan Poe, and Nathaniel Hawthorne," DAI 58/09A: 3529.

Laura Saltz, "Disappearing Women: Gender and Vision in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction and Photographs (Edgar Allan Poe, Marian Adams, Henry James, Edith Wharton)," DAI 58/12A: 4656.

1998

Daniel A. Burgoyne, "The Colloquy of Edgar Allan Poe and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (Aesthetics)," DAI 59/03A: 0812.

Lesley Ellen Ginsberg, "The Romance of Dependency: Childhood and the Ideology of Love in American Literature, 1825-1870 (Women, Slaves, Children's Literature, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa May Alcott)," DAI 59/06A: 2023.

Philip Henry Gochenour, "Fixing a Shadow: Doppelgaengers, Photography, and the Disciplined Subject, 1775-1926 (Romanticism, E.T.A. Hoffman, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne)," DAI 59/04A: 1151.

Peter C. Norberg, "Estranged Affections: Literary Writing and the Public Sphere in Poe, Emerson, and Melville (Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville, Romantic Aesthetics)," DAI 59/03A: 0824.

Shaindy Rudoff, "Scripturally Enslaved: Bible Politics, Slavery, and the American Renaissance (Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Frederick Douglass, Racial Politics)," DAI 59/04A: 1169.

Treasurer's Report

At the beginning of November 1998, the Poe Studies Association membership totalled 229. The investment account balance at the end of September 1998 was \$3,051.61 including a \$112.32 dividend for the year to date. The beginning balance of the PSA checking account as of January 1998 was \$6,378.48. Deposits include \$521.00, and expenses total \$466.03 leaving a balance of \$6,433.45.

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