

— POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION —
NEWSLETTER

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ANNUAL MEETING, SAN FRANCISCO, DECEMBER 28, 1975

The annual meeting of the PSA was held at the Hyatt Hotel in conjunction with the Modern Language Association Convention. The business session conducted by Vice President Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, consisted of a reminder about keeping dues current and the citation of Honorary Members, as follows:

Richard H. Hart

Anyone engaged in Poe research in the Baltimore area during the past quarter century can not help but be familiar with the name of Richard Hart, recently retired. Sage, conscientious, always eager to assist students of Poe, he gained a reputation beyond the confines of the city of Baltimore. Along with such doughty, gingery Poe scholars as Arthur Hobson Quinn and Thomas Olive Mabbott, Mr. Hart worked ably to make more available the Poe treasures in Enoch Pratt Free Library. We honor him today.
(BFFIV)

John Ward Ostrom

Griswold's characterization of Poe has been dying hard for over a century. John Ward Ostrom's peerless work of assembling, restoring, and carefully editing Poe's correspondence has helped restore a true picture of Poe the man and artist. Our tribute, together with the recent Festschrift *Papers on Poe*, salutes a mighty laborer in the cause of Poe studies.
(BFFIV)

New officers nominated and elected were: President, Eric W. Carlson; Vice President and Program Chairman, Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV (Hahnemann Medical College); Secretary-Treasurer and co-editor of the Newsletter, Richard P. Benton (Trinity College, Hartford, Ct.); Members-at-Large, Joseph M. DeFalco (Marquette University), John E. Reilly (College of the Holy Cross), and (later, by action of the Executive Committee) Alexander Hammond (Washington State) to represent *Poe Studies*. The program of papers consisted of "The Frame Structure of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*" by Alexander Hammond; "The Metaphorical Structure of Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*" by Joseph DeFalco; "Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Poe's Dedication of 'The Raven'" by Donald B. Stauffer.

OTHER RECENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Bronx Society of Science and Letters, with Dr. William C. Woolfson, President of the society, presiding, celebrated the 167th birthday of Edgar Allan Poe on Sunday, January 18, 1976, at the Hall of Fame, University Heights, Bronx Community College, Bronx, New York. The ceremony consisted of laying a wreath at the newly rehabilitated bust of Poe (originally sculpted by Daniel French) which had been removed from the Hall of Fame arcade for two years to undergo renovation. The wreath laying was followed by a talk by Dr. Theodore Kazimir-off on the site of the Hall of Fame and readings from Poe and commentaries on his work and life. The program, "A Visit with Poe: Out of Space, Out of Time," was conceived and directed by Robert Kornfeld of the Riverdale Contemporary Theatre.

On March 20, Professor Burton R. Pollin lectured on "Poe's Language-Making Skills and Habits" at a meeting of the American Society of Geolinguistics in New York City.

On April 6, Professor John E. Reilly spoke on "The Image of Poe in American Poetry" at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts.

A well-attended Poe section meeting was held as part of the Northeast MLA annual meeting at the University of Vermont on April 8-10, with Eric W. Carlson as chairman and John E. Reilly as secretary. The following papers were read: "Poe's Landscape of the Soul: Vision and the Visionary in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'" by Barton Levi St. Armand (Brown); "Poe's Arabesques: Visionary Architecture" by Glen A. Omans (Temple); and "'Metzengerstein' and the Soul of Man" by David H. Hirsch (Brown).

In 1977 NEMLA will meet in Pittsburgh, Penns. The Poe section will be in charge of Professor Marjorie W. McCune, Susquehanna University, chairman, and Lawrence Stahlberg, SUNY, Binghamton, secretary.

On October 10, 1976, Professor James W. Gargano will give the annual lecture of the Poe Society of Baltimore in the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, 2:00 p.m.

A new critical revue, *Delta*, edited by Claude Richard at the Université Paul Valéry, has just begun publication. It will publish special numbers on southern American writers of all periods, with occasional numbers on other major American figures. Articles in French or in English are contributed by members and associates and by others on invitation. The first number, devoted to Edgar Allan Poe, includes articles on "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Homeo-Cameleopard," and *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. Communications in respect to *Delta* and submissions of MSS. should be addressed to Claude Richard, Revue Delta, Université Paul Valéry, PP. 5043, 34032 Montpellier Cedex, France. Subscription: 30 francs.

Richard P. Benton, Associate Professor of English, Trinity College, Hartford, Ct., will edit a symposium of critical essays on Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* for *The American Transcendental Quarterly*. Those who wish to submit papers for his consideration should do so by December 1, 1976 and address him in care of the English Department, Trinity College, Hartford, Ct. 06106. Early submissions and terseness will be appreciated.

Lois David-Vines, Assistant Professor of French, Ohio University, is preparing a book for publication entitled *Poe-Valéry: A Study of Influence*. The MS. is a re-edited, translated version of her doctoral dissertation: *L'Influence d'Edgar Allan Poe sur Paul Valéry* (Georgetown University, 1973). She includes evidence that Valéry read a number of Poe's tales, which he comments on in some of his letters to Gide. He also borrowed titles from Poe for two of his own works, but these titles were later changed. His commentary on Poe's *Eureka*, of course, is widely known.

NEW POE RESEARCH

Benjamin F. Fisher, "To 'The Assigination' from 'The Visionary' (Part Two): The Revisions and Related Matters," University of Pennsylvania *Library Chronicle*, XL (Winter 1976) 221-51. Part One appeared in *The Library Chronicle* 39 (1973), 89-105.

Some recent doctoral dissertations: Carol Becker, "Edgar Allan Poe: The Madness of the Method," Univ. of Calif. at San Diego, 1975, abst: *DA*, 36 (1976), 5290-A; Martin Elliot Bickman, "Voyages of the Mind's Return: A Jungian Study of Poe, Emerson, Whitman, and Dickinson," Univ. of Pa., 1974, abst: *DA*, 36 (1975), 266-A; Elizabeth Ann Heldman, "The Dilemma of the Fragmented Self: Psychological Allegories in the Major Tales of Edgar Allan Poe," Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1975; abst: *DA*, 36 (1975), 2206-A; Sister Madeleine Kisner, "Color in the Worlds and Works of Poe, Hawthorne, Crane, Anderson, and Welty," Univ. of Michigan, 1973, abst: *DA*, 36 (1975), 3714-A; Maurice H. J. Morin, "Poe's Fiction: The Metaphysic of a Darkening Vision," Brown Univ., 1975; Paul Edward Nett, "A Closer Look at the Mind and Art of Edgar Allan Poe," Univ. of Kentucky, 1975, abst: *DA*, 36 (1975), 1507-A; Nancy Ann Watanabe, "Creative Destruction: The Irony of Self-Betrayal in the Psychosymbolic Monologue—Browning, Poe, Eliot, Kafka and Camus," Indiana Univ., 1975; abst: *DA*, 36 (1976), 5289-A.

Two German doctoral dissertations: Ulrich Herstmann's "Ansätze zu einer technomorphen Theorie der Dichtung bei Edgar Allan Poe." ["Technomorphism in Edgar Allan Poe's Theory of Poetry."] (Munster, 1974) and Bernd Günter's "Das Grotteske und seine Gestaltung in den Erzählungen Edgar Allan Poe." ["The Grotesque and Its Presentation in the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe."] (Freiburg i. Br., 1974) have been summarized in English in *English and American Studies in German* (Tübingen, 1975), pp. 153-4.

CRITICAL NOTICES

Roger Forclaz, *Le Monde d'Edgar Poe*. Berne: Herbert Lang, 1974. 612 pp.

This 1973 doctoral dissertation of the University of Lausanne is a major contribution, full of judicious estimates of Poe's creative works and of critical material in all major languages of Europe save Russian, scrupulously acknowledged and meticulously adjusted to the most relevant parts of the far ranging discussion. The twenty chapters, in 422 densely printed pages, plus 150 pages of over 2,000 sizable notes, including many items dating from 1972, provide a fine tribute to Poe's stature as writer and Mr. Forclaz's thoroughness. He makes sound judgments about problems and themes in Poe's works and produces many excellent "dissertations" on topics such as "Poe and the Black Novel," Poe's handling of the hero and of first and third person narrative. He has studied Poe's language, aptly citing crucial terms in numerous texts, and has investigated many Poe publications not in the canon as yet, although capable of authentication. The three divisions—"The Writer," "The Writer and his Universe," and "The World"—do lead to some overlapping and repetitions, and the frustrating lack of an index greatly reduces the potential usefulness of this tool. There are very few errors of any sort, amazing in a French work full of English citations. The author deserves considerable applause and thanks.

Burton R. Pollin, BCC, CUNY, Emeritus

Richard M. Fletcher, *The Stylistic Development of Edgar Allan Poe*. The Hague: Mouton, 1973. 192 pp.

One is inclined to think this a doctoral dissertation, published abroad, save that one prefers to believe that an American university would require higher standards of documentation, consistency of theme, interrelationship of parts, accuracy of facts, fullness of bibliography (fourteen entries!), and use of modern materials (1965 is the latest). The author displays the following weaknesses: He shifts constantly between presenting and rejecting Poe as a symbolist, largely because he lacks control over the language of philosophical inquiry and criticism. There is a general imprecision of language, as in the frequent use of "inspiratory" for "inspirational," "seamless logic," "hypnagogic prowess" and "mechanically orientated vocabulary." This last is part of the only praiseworthy effort, to analyze "the Poe vocabulary," sadly thwarted by an arbitrary division into language for "pot boiler exercises," "inspired writing," and "vocabulary based on allusion and analogy," all three coexisting in many works. Borrowed ideas are only occasionally documented as to source. The discussion of the poems is full of grievous errors about sounds ("the hard sibilance of s") and prosody. The facts of Poe's authorship are often wrong (*numerous* made-up mottoes; after 1844 he turned increasingly to poetry, and he wrote four detective tales, one each year before his death). Chapter 5 on "The Major Themes," repeats obvious commonplaces and 7 and 8, on *Pym* and two tales, are mere summaries with scarcely any point. Chapter 2 presents a weak argument that sound effects are almost more important to Poe than visual ones, but this is abandoned for the tales. The book is full of typographical errors and awkward constructions that a good editor might have helped the author to eliminate. This is a publication far more pleasing to the writer than to any knowing, logical, or word-sensitive reader.

Burton R. Pollin, BCC, CUNY, Emeritus

Evelyn J. Hinz, ed., *Anais Nin: A Woman Speaks*. The Lectures, Seminars, and Interviews of Anais Nin. Chicago: Swallow Press, 1975. 270 pp.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that this volume has been edited by one of the charter members of the Poe Studies Association, Assistant Professor Evelyn Hinz of the U. of Manitoba. To Ms. Hinz, Nin's "Under a Glass Bell" is "a marvelous little horror story in the perfect spirit of Poe," and in style Nin's writing resembles "Eleonora" and "A Dream Within a Dream." Beyond such resemblances, one finds in this collection a rich lode of insights into the nature of the psyche as Poe conceived it: the soul revealed in dreams. For Anais Nin, writing itself

is a form of waking dream experience under the "artistic controls" of the creative will. Rejecting Freudian psychology as too dogmatic and outdated, Ms. Nin turns to R. D. Laing and Otto Rank as more liberating in their recognition of responsible creativity. This process of growth from within she regards as a Western, not Eastern, way of achieved selfhood or "faith," a new center of gravity. Despite her French and Spanish background (to the age of eleven), she prefers the "constant evolution" of American culture, and identifies with the "transcending" principle of American literary transcendentalism ("Emerson's people") that all life, however commonplace, has meaning and beauty. Editor Hinz, now at work on a biography of Nin, has arranged the most representative excerpts from the years 1966 through 1973 under eight major themes, each in the form of a lecture. These themes include creativity, the artist as magician, moving from the dream outward, the struggle for wholeness, and the personal life deeply lived. Two long chapters, "Women Reconstructing the World" and "The Unveiling of Woman," are opposed to any dogma or movement that seeks to separate women from men on behalf of "women's liberation." In theme, as well as style and mode, the affinity with Poe is evident.

Eric W. Carlson, University of Connecticut

ALSO FOR THE POE CONNOISSEUR

Professor Alexander G. Rose, president of the Poe Society of Baltimore, informs us that (1) A package of 12 Poe color slides can be obtained from him, 402 E. Gittings Ave., Baltimore, Md. 21212 for \$6 postpaid. These slides include views of the Ezekiel Poe Statue in Wyman Park, the North Amity Street house, exterior and interior, Poe's tombstone, and the Fordham Cottage in the Bronx. (2) The 20% discount is still in effect on these Baltimore lectures: Patrick F. Quinn, *Poe and France: The Last Twenty Years* (1970) \$1.50; Robert D. Jacobs, *The Courage of a Critic: Edgar Poe as Editor* (1971) \$1.50; Eric W. Carlson, *Poe on the Soul of Man* (1973) \$1.50; Burton R. Pollin, *Poe, Creator of Words* (1974) \$5. Deduct 20%, add 30-cent mailing charge; order from A. G. Rose.

In Baltimore there are guided tours of the Westminster United Presbyterian Church catacombs and cemetery, site of the Poe family plot. These tours are endorsed by the Baltimore Bicentennial Commission and the Edgar Allan Poe Society. Tour director is Sam Porpora (547-8413, evenings). Recently Mr. Porpora found a basket of 24 American Beauty roses at Poe's grave, with a card signed "From your friends in Toulouse, France."

For visitors to Richmond, we recommend a stop at the Poe Museum, under the direction of the Poe Foundation, 1914 East Main St., Richmond, Va. 23223, which publishes *The Poe Messenger* for its members. A steady stream of tourists, many from abroad, visit the Museum, which consists of the Old Stone House, the Memorial Building, a converted carriage house, and a sheltered garden. The grey stone cottage, c. 1686, is the oldest house in the city. In the Raven Room are hung James Carling's illustrations of Poe's poem.

The Society for the Study of Southern Literature not only meets annually at MLA but also publishes a Newsletter in April and December. Membership dues (\$2) should be sent to treasurer Robert Phillips, Book Review Editor, *Miss Q*, Box 5272, Mississippi State, Miss. 39762.

AMERICAN WORLDS BOOKS

A bookselling firm of that name was recently established by one of our members, Nolan E. Smith, P. O. Box 6162, Whitneyville Station, Hamden, Conn. 06517. Dealing in the "Many Worlds" of American literature and American history, with 19th century American literature and works relating to Poe among his specialties, Mr. Smith invites requests for lists or inquiries for specific titles.

INTRODUCTION TO POE: A THEMATIC READER (Scott, Foresman & Co.)

This widely used anthology, edited by Eric W. Carlson, your other co-editor, has been erroneously reported "out of print." It is still in print, 640 pp., \$4.95. If reissued in a new edition, that fact will be publicized. For further information, write E. W. Carlson, English Dept., Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs, Ct. 06268.

"Argento's 'Poe,' A Rich Opera, Is Staged in St. Paul" is the title of Raymond Ericson's review in the *New York Times*, April 26, 1976, p. 38, of the premiere performance of a work commissioned by the University of Minnesota. The libretto by Charles M. Nolte presents Poe as experiencing a hallucinatory "voyage of discovery" in a dramatization of crucial moments in his life. Ericson writes that "after the performance the work began to haunt this writer. Thinking about various scenes began to illuminate them as they had not been illuminated while watching them. With this came the desire to see it again."

DUES FOR 1976

To date, over half of our usual members have sent in their dues for this calendar year. The PSA is not subsidized. Therefore, we would greatly appreciate receiving now the \$3 dues from other intending members or recipients of this newsletter, which is partly made possible by "student labor" and mailing privileges contributed by the University of Connecticut. The *Newsletter* itself, paid for by the PSA, is printed by the Parousia Press of Storrs. Please mail your check for \$3 to your co-editor and secretary-treasurer:

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