

-POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION, INC.-
NEWSLETTER

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Editors

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THE NEW HARVARD EDITION OF POE'S TALES

The long-awaited *Tales and Sketches*, volumes 2 and 3 of *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, will be published by the Belknap Press (Harvard UP) on May 30, 1978. The two-volume set, totalling 1451 pp., is priced at \$45. Since the untimely death of editor Thomas Ollive Mabbott in 1968, his typescript for these volumes has been completed by Eleanor D. Kewer and Maureen C. Mabbott, with the occasional assistance of George E. Hatvary, and the guidance or advice of Clarence Gohdes, Rollo G. Silver, Burton R. Pollin, and others. For scholarly purposes, these volumes will supersede the earlier editions by Killis Campbell, Quinn and O'Neill, and the five volumes of the tales in the Virginia (Harrison) edition of 1902. In terms of readability and general format, they will also appeal to the general reader; textual variants are relegated to footnote status and Notes follow each selection. A headnote describes the origin, sources, and publishing history of each tale. Aesthetic and critical comment is limited in scope and time (especially after 1968). Included are nine pieces not to be found in Harrison, "The Light-House" and "Instinct vs. Reason" among them; and some in Harrison but not among the tales of that edition. *Pym*, "Julius Rodman," and "Hans Pfaall" will appear as longer stories in vol. 4. The texts used are Poe's final versions, with more than fifty authorized texts collated, mostly mss. and early printings. From the earliest imaginative prose of 1826-31, the tales are arranged chronologically, facilitating the study of Poe's development, "for both Poe's method and his style changed markedly with the years, as did his opinions" (xxix).

FORTHCOMING POE MEETINGS

In December, at MLA, New York City, the Annual Meeting of the PSA. The program is completed and will be announced in the fall *Newsletter*.

During the March 29-30-31, 1979 meetings of the Northeast MLA in Hartford, Conn. there will be a Poe Section under the chairmanship of Frederick S. Frank. Papers of 8 to 10 pages are solicited, on no special theme, by Prof. Frederick S. Frank, Dept. of English, AC Post Office Box 90, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335, before Oct. 1, 1978.

RECENT POE MEETINGS

On March 24, 1978, during the Northeast MLA at SUNY, Albany, the Poe Section under Lawrence Stahlberg, chairman, consisted of three papers: Raymond A. Cook, Valdosta State College, "Astarte Who? Poe's 'Ulalume' Revisited Once More"; Steven K. Hoffman, Virginia Polytechnic Inst. & SU, "Toward the New Center: A Jungian Study of 'MS. Found in a Bottle'"; Kristin R. Woolever, Allegheny College, "The Voyage to White: Poe's Use of Myth."

Poe Studies Association Meeting - MLA Convention
Chicago, Dec. 29, 1977

The sixth annual meeting of the Poe Studies Association was called to order by Professor Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV. He offered greetings from President Eric W. Carlson. Copies of some recent Poe publications were on display at a discount to PSA members. During the business meeting, these officers and members-at-large were unanimously elected: J. Lasley Dameron, President (two years); Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, Vice President (two years); Joseph M. DeFalco, Secretary-Treasurer (three years) [succeeding R. P. Benton]; Members-at-Large, James W. Gargano, representing *Poe Studies*; and Helen Ensley.

Because of Richard P. Benton's resignation as co-editor of the *Newsletter*, as well as Secretary, Professor Kent Ljungquist agreed to serve as co-editor. We regret that Professor Benton's time is required elsewhere.

It was agreed that for the 1978 meeting in New York the program would consist of speakers who have either just finished major publications on Poe, or will have such projects nearly completed by the time of that meeting. Our President will communicate with these speakers. For the December 1978 meeting, unsolicited papers should not be submitted.

CITATION FOR ARLIN TURNER

Nearly fifty years ago Killis Campbell taught a seminar, some of whose members have made their mark in Poe studies: Ruth Leigh Hudson, Lucille King, J. Rhea, and Arlin Turner. Although other concerns, such as Southern Literature and American Humor, have beguiled him, and the biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne seduced him, Professor Turner's earliest scholarly publications are still among the best source studies in Poe scholarship. Recently he contributed an essay on Poe and Simms to the John Ostrom Festschrift. His associations with the late Thomas O. Mabbott, with whom he co-authored work on Poe, doubtless supported these interests (which, of course typify Campbell's followers). Today, Professor Turner continues to move along the paths of American literary scholarship with an elastic step and a self-effacing modesty, fitting attributes for a successor to Jay B. Hubbell. Student of Poe, Hawthorne, and Twain, long time Editor of *American Literature*, distinguished professor at Duke University, tireless friend to his graduate students - he dignifies the Poe Studies Association as we welcome him into Honorary Fellowship. (B.F.F. IV)

Abstracts of the three papers read:

Metrical Subtleties in Poe's Poetry by Helen Ensley (Francis Marion College)

Too often judgment of Poe's poetry is limited to a consideration of a handful of more famous poems. True, the syncopated trochaics of "The Raven" or the lilting trisyllabics of "Ulalume" were original experiments. But such displays are perhaps atypical; critics rarely realize that Poe was capable of subtle variations and that, although it may be limited in theme and genre, rhythmically Poe's poetry is of extensive range. More characteristic of Poe's verse are his metrically subtle [ambiguous?] poems which demonstrate that Poe, whatever his limitations, was anything but limited in his rhythmical variations and in correlating rhythm with mood and tone.

Poe and American Social History by Stuart Levine (U. of Kansas)

Specialization, professionalization, rationalization and the other tendencies which, according to Modernization Theory, characterize industrializing societies, threatened Poe and other romantic artists. Both his philosophical stance and much of the texture of his work may be seen as direct reactions to modernization. He is further tied to his age and nation by his fascination with technology, his sometimes touchy sense of national self-consciousness, his sure sense of the feel of the media (of transportation as well as communication), his sensitivity to popular culture in matters obvious (advertisements, patent medicines, fads and the like) and subtle (racism, sexual folklore and hang-ups), his commitment to many of the most sacred values of American culture, and his vigorous reactions to national government and political theory. Poe, then, seems a source of

valuable insights in terms of any of the methodologies which have been proposed or used for the study of our society and culture, from the intellectual history approach to the culture concept, paradigm study, popular culture, or Modernization Theory.

The Dematerialization of William Wilson: Poe's Use of Cumulative Allegory by Ottavio M. Casale (Kent State Univ.)

Edgar Allan Poe disliked allegory as a literary form, specifying in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* that allegory tended to destroy the vital artistic quality of "earnestness or verisimilitude." Nonetheless, "William Wilson," one of Poe's greater tales, is decidedly allegorical. In adapting his source, Washington Irving's "An Unwritten Drama of Lord Byron," Poe labored to create a realistic, credible dimension to his story, allowing the double only gradually to recede from a relatively objective existence to an internalized, allegorical one. Poe's subtle use of a skeptical narrator and his manipulating of such elements as Wilson's clothing and voice are especially important to this gradual "dematerialization" of Wilson. It is only at the end of the tale that Wilson becomes the precise image of the narrator, that he is fully perceived as internal, and that he finds his voice.

POE, THE DANCE, AND CHOPIN

The eminent choreographer Anna Sokolow felicitously set her recent Juilliard Theatre Center dance program (April 6 and 7, 1978) to three pieces by Chopin and one by Rachmaninoff. She now joins the large company, including James Huneker and Father Tabb (Dameron *Bibliography* H 143 and T5) who have paralleled Poe and the Pole in dates and artistic spirit and affords me a chance to indicate that Poe did indeed know Chopin's works. In the last issue of the *Broadway Journal*, most of which was written by Poe, we find, in "The Fine Arts" (2:406), that "*Chopin (sic)*, the celebrated composer and pianist, has dedicated . . . several of his waltzes" to a Mr. Fontana. Significantly, this issue (January 3, 1846) reprints "Loss of Breath" with its early "pirouetting" in a "*Pas de Zephyr*," thereby reminding us of Poe's omnipresent interest in the dance. This large subject, by the way, has scarcely been even touched upon by scholars. As for the dance music for Poe as performed on the stage — we have only three pages in May G. Evans's *Music and . . . Poe* (pp. 26-28). Our applause goes to Ms. Sokolow for using Poe texts, first for the Salt Lake City Repertory Dance Company in March of 1977 and now for the Juilliard Theatre students, who were learning dance movement and inviting the public to share their obvious joy in imaginative choreography and great poetry. The "Prologue" was electrifying with the intoned sentence about the rain that becomes blood ("Silence") and the iterated titles, including those used for the following movements: "The Bells," "Annabel Lee," "Alone" and "*Eureka*." The fine piano playing of Marianna Rosett was varied by her effectively performing her own music or, rather, sound effects for "The Bells," on drums, harp, and electronic or "electronicized" instruments. The varied aspects of "bells" were suggested with less subtlety than we saw in the "prologue." Similarly, the love of "Annabel Lee" rather obviously exploited the agreeable presence of the many young couples filling the stage, moving to the strains of Chopin's "Nocturne," op. 72, no. 1, while a succession of male voices recited the poem. The beautiful lines of "Alone" suffered from the chorused intonations, unwisely overlaid with echo effects, and the strenuous and massed militancy of the dancers detracted from the brooding intimacy of the content. "*Eureka*" ("Preface") was daringly set to Rachmaninoff's beautiful "Prelude," Op. 32, no. 12, since the music was sharply contrary to the sometimes violent enactment of the semi-biographical nature of the dance material: the opium- or pot-smoking youths of the opening writhing up and rapping against the backdrop wall and succumbing to stupor before their revival into movements of surging protest and struggle. The choreographer's view of Poe as a prototypical artist, embattled, unrepressed, but always victimized by "systems" was patent in every movement and in the spoken words of Baudelaire at the end. The whole too-brief program was suitably repeated after the intermission, and it suggested how fruitfully the modern interpretive or expressive dance might continue to use the works of Poe for inspiration and text.

Burton R. Pollin, Professor emeritus, CUNY

OTHER PERFORMANCES OF POE WORKS

A musical setting of Poe's "Israfel" was included in Leonard Bernstein's "Songfest," a twelve-part song cycle based on American poetry from Anne Bradstreet to Conrad Aiken and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. The piece received its concert debut in December, 1977. A full-length review, dubbing the "Israfel" setting "brilliant," can be found in the January 2, 1978 *New Yorker*.

The Edgar Allan Poe Week, April 9-18, arranged by the Bronx County Historical Society, included the following presentations: "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," with George S. Irving, guest narrator and singer; a Poe Film Festival; A Recital of Poems and Short Stories of Poe by Gary Allan Poe, a distant relative of the poet; and Claude Debussy's opera based on "The Fall of the House of Usher," by the Bronx Arts Ensemble.

NOTICES AND REVIEWS

THE AMERICAN TRANSCENDENTAL QUARTERLY — Symposium on *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* — edited by Richard P. Benton

This quarterly has been acquired by the University of Rhode Island, with Eric Schoonover as new editor. This issue is the first under a special introductory subscription rate of \$10 for the year. Send to: *ATQ*, Dept. of English, URI, Kingston, RI 02881. *ATQ* welcomes articles on 19th-century New England writers and their culture.

David Sinclair. *Edgar Allan Poe*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons; Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977. 271 pp. \$13.50.

Although the need for a new biography, preferably a critical biography, of Poe is urgent, Sinclair's does not satisfy that need. It is inaccurate in factual matters (*vide* references to Mabbott and Campbell, p. 266), full of conditional escape phraseology, and free with sensational suggestions (for example that Poe was Roderick Usher, and that he "vanished into his own nightmares" upon travelling to Baltimore for the last time). This book disappoints expectations of a balanced portrait. Promising to emphasize Poe's personality rather than the writings, Sinclair mistakenly goes on to cite "William Wilson" as if it were a far more autobiographical than a literary document. Like Marie Bonaparte, but without her formidable preparation, Sinclair would have us see Poe through a glass Freudianly, surely not a fresh approach. Like Griswold, whose work he properly attacks, Sinclair rearranges "evidence" (pp. 246-47) to press his own thesis about Poe's diabetes. Filler is too obvious. Is it essential to quote so much from Poe's own works, as well as from contemporaneous biographical documents? "Criticism" appears occasionally, but quickly veers toward dangerous shoals when interpreting such pieces as "Metzengerstein," "MS. Found in a Bottle" (in which fact again is ignored: the ghost ship was not named "Discovery"), "Eldorado," and "Valdemar" (overlooking recent studies treating hoax aspects). The Hoffmann "influence," which most recent approaches to Poe discount, is unsubstantiated. All in all, this biography is a poor one.

Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV
Hahnemann Medical College

Vincent Buranelli. *Edgar Allan Poe*. Second Edition. Twayne Publishers. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1977. 166 pp. \$7.50.

This second edition of a Twayne U. S. Authors Series title is described by the author as containing "no startling novelties or recantations," and as retaining "much of the first edition, although corrections, revisions, and additions are substantial." The Preface also states that "time has changed both the author and his subject." Yet a close comparison reveals that, except for about seven pages, the main text is identical with the 1961 edition. To be sure, the author notes that ch. 2 is expanded by the addition of a paragraph on Mesmerism; ch. 3 by pages distinguishing Poe the man from Poe the artist; ch. 4 by the rewriting of a passage on morality in Poe's work; ch. 5 and ch. 6 by the revision of a paragraph or page or two; and most of all, ch. 7 by the subdivision into "Poe's Achievement" and "Poe's Influence," with two pages added under the latter. Only the

Notes to ch. 7 are changed, being doubled in number. In the Bibliography, primary and secondary sources have been expanded, a few "indexes" added, and the critical "authorities" brought up to date with the inclusion of two dozen books and two or three articles published since 1961, the date of the first edition. *Poe Studies*, but not the Poe Studies Association *Newsletter*, is listed and referred to as "the clearing house for everything that has to do with Poe," as if the PSA and its *Newsletter* did not exist. (Blush, Vincent) Most disappointing of all is the failure of the main text to reflect the Poe research and criticism of the past sixteen years. For all the face-lifting, which includes the correction of the first name of Erle Stanley Gardner, Poe's "Eleonora" appears as "Eleanora." (When you're on the side of the angels, Vincent, why imitate Yvor Winters?) Other typos include *Coper* (for Cooper), *Faolk* (for Falk), among more than a dozen such. Apart from its minor defects and minor improvements, this edition is essentially the first edition reprinted. Nevertheless, it is better than most in the Twayne series. Within its 117 pages of text, it presents an informative, balanced, and interesting, though necessarily limited introduction to the works and personality of "America's greatest writer" (136).

Eric W. Carlson
University of Connecticut

Samuel Edwards. *The Vidocq Dossier: The Story of the World's First Detective*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977. 191 pp. \$7.95.

In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Dupin cites Vidocq as "a good guesser" who "impaired his vision by holding the object too close." The subject of Poe's allusion was François Eugène Vidocq (1775-1857), reputedly the world's first private detective and a pioneer in methods of police detection: disguises, fingerprinting, and handwriting analysis. As Arthur Hobson Quinn pointed out, Poe may have read a series entitled "Unpublished Passages, in the Life of Vidocq, the French Minister of Police," which appeared in Burton's *Magazine* in 1838-39 under the

initials J.M.B. Edwards, in the first American biography of Vidocq, suggests, albeit in cursory fashion (p. 170), that Vidocq's underworld environment influenced the setting of Poe's detective fiction. Edwards correctly distinguishes Vidocq, the professional detective, from Dupin, the skillful and reclusive amateur. However, the Poe specialist could expect more detailed documentation of Poe's knowledge of Vidocq, friend to aristocrats, upstarts, and criminals in the fauborg Saint-Germain. Alas, this is a popular rather than scholarly biography — with minimal bibliography and without notes and index. It remains a readable portrait of a public hero who achieved his reputation through authentic exploits, which were subsequently appropriated into legend by Balzac, Hugo, Sue, and other literary figures.

Kent Ljungquist
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

O. M. Brack, Jr. ed. *American Humor: Essays Presented to John C. Gerber*. Scottsdale, Ar.: Arete Publications, 1977. \$9.75.

Honoring Professor Gerber with a *festschrift* involving American humor is unquestionable: Gerber stands at the head of current students of that rich field. But some of the material in Brack's book is questionable. The essay on Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" (pp. 13-26) does not follow as a worthy successor to John Clendenning's earlier treatment of humorous Gothicism in Irving's work. That Poe was creating a subtle mockery of the Roman Catholic Mass, at least from the evidence offered, seems a more ingenious exercise on Clendenning's part than on his subject's. We do not quibble with Clendenning's attention to Poe's constant desire for and scorn of ambition. We do cavil at (A) misspelling Allan with an *e* (B) an 1843 date for the publication of "Cask" and (C) the writer's neglect of previous studies, most notably those by James E. Rocks, detailing the Catholic-Masonic feud, and John Freehafer (who synthesizes much earlier material into his own excellent critique), treating the tale as one of "effect" in the *Blackwood's* mode.

Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV
Hahnemann Medical College

NEW MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL FOR 1978

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

Enclosed is my \$3 check for dues and subscription for the calendar year 1978. (Checks should be made out to "Poe Studies Association" and mailed to Joseph M. DeFalco, Dept. of English, Marquette University, 635 North Thirteenth St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233).

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