

— POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION, INC. —
NEWSLETTER

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Eric W. Carlson
Department of English
University of Connecticut
Storrs, Conn. 06268

Editors

Richard P. Benton
Department of English
Trinity College
Hartford, Conn. 06106

ANNUAL MEETING: MLA, December 27, 1976

The Poe Studies Association will hold its annual meeting on December 27, 1976, in the Monte Carlo Room of the Hotel Americana in New York City from 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

In addition to business matters, the PSA program will consist of the reading of three papers: "The Invisible Message: The Problem of Truth in *Pym*," by J. Gerald Kennedy; "On the Coincidence of the Wet Plasters in 'The Black Cat'," by John Harmon McElroy; and "John Henry Ingram: English Architect of Poe Biography," by John C. Miller. All those interested in the life and writings of Poe are cordially invited to attend.

Between now and June 1, 1977, the PSA welcomes the submission of papers to be considered for the next annual meeting to be held in December of 1977. Papers should be sent to Prof. Eric W. Carlson, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Ct. 06268.

SPRING MEETING, NEMLA, APRIL 21-23, 1977

"Tradition and Renewal" (cultural continuity, the greatness of humane letters, etc.) is the general theme of the meeting. A Poe section will be chaired by Professor Marjorie McCune, Department of English, Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA. 17870. A preliminary program may be obtained from NEMLA President Prof. Cortland Pell Auser, English, Bronx Community College. Only NEMLA members may participate. Dues (\$6) should be sent to Prof. Michael Stanton, English, U. of Vermont, Burlington, VT.

POE STUDIES' NEW CO-EDITOR

With the June, 1976 issue of *Poe Studies*, Alexander Hammond, now at Washington State University, assumed the position of co-editor with G.R. Thompson, who had moved to Purdue University. Kathleen McLean remains as Associate Editor. Milton Peterson has resigned from the Editorial Board, which now includes Richard P. Benton, Eric W. Carlson, J. Lasley Dameron, James W. Gargano, Robert C. McLean, Joseph J. Moldenhauer, Burton R. Pollin, Patrick F. Quinn, John E. Reilly, Claude Richard, and William H. Shurr.

POE SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE

James W. Gargano, Professor of English at Washington and Jefferson College, delivered the annual Edgar Allan Poe lecture, under the auspices of The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore and the Enoch Pratt Free Library, at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Baltimore on Sunday, October 10, 1976. Gargano's topic was "The Masquerade Vision in Poe's Short Stories."

Preceding the lecture, Memorial Wreaths were laid on Poe's tomb and readings from Poe's poetry were given by William A. Fry, Professor of English at Prince Georges Community College. Afterwards a reception was held in the parish house, punch and cookies being provided by the University of Baltimore Alumni Association, the English Club, and the English Department. Following this affair, a talk on the history of Westminster and a tour of the church were provided by Dr. Samuel David Porpora, Church Historian; at the same time, visitors had an opportunity to choose a tour of the Poe House on Amity Street conducted by Fry and students from Prince Georges Community College. About 500 persons visit the Poe House annually, according to Alexander G. Rose, President of the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, who answers about 300 queries a year concerning Poe and the work of the Society.

Professor Rose announced recently that the Preservation People of Baltimore City have allocated \$15,000 toward the restoration and preservation of the Poe House on Amity Street. The Baltimoreans, headed by Miss Hoff, Chairperson of the Committee, are eager to restore the house, even the interior, to exactly the way it was when Poe lived there 1832/3-1835. The Poe Society, however, has no description of what the interior looked like in Poe's time and believes that no description exists. If any student of Poe knows of such a description or discovers one, the Society would appreciate having a copy of it, with, of course, accurate reference as to the source.

The Baltimore Poe Society, along with the Enoch Pratt Free Library, has now published "The Image of Poe in American Poetry," by Professor John E. Reilly, as its 53rd annual lecture (1975). Copies may be obtained for \$2.75 from Prof. A.G. Rose, 402 E. Gittings Ave., Baltimore, MD 21212.

THE POE COTTAGE AT FORDHAM

A master's thesis on the history of the Poe Cottage at Fordham as an historic museum is being prepared by John E. Piper for the American Studies Department of the University of Maryland.

We are pleased to learn from Mr. Piper as well as from Mr. Gary Hermalyn, Executive Director of the Bronx County Historical Society, 3266 Bainbridge Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10467, that the Cottage is no longer the object of neglect and vandalism. The Historical Society, now the official administrator of the Cottage, has rehabilitated it by providing a new roof and complete interior renovation (plastering, painting, and restoration with period furniture); and, for the first time in twenty years, seen to it that there is a live-in caretaker and, for the first time in thirty years, a functioning staff to give guided tours of Poe's final home during open hours, 10 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Saturdays, and 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Sundays.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND DISSERTATIONS

Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, Associate Professor of English at Hahnemann Medical College, has edited a series of scholarly Poe studies which occupy the entire Spring, 1976 issue of *The Library Chronicle*, a publication of the Friends of the Library of the University of Pennsylvania. Called "Poe the Craftsman: The Changing Fiction," the collection contains six essays, including "Introduction: Poe and the Art of the Well Wrought Tale" and "The Power of Words in Poe's 'Silence,'" by Dr. Fisher himself. The other essays are "Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales of the Folio Club*: The Evolution of a Lost Book," by Alexander Hammond; "Poe's 'Diabolical' Humor: Revisions in 'Bon-Bon,'" by James W. Christie; "What William Wilson Knew: Poe's Dramatization of an Errant Mind," by Marc Leslie Rovner; "A Telling Tale: Poe's Revisions in 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,'" by Joel Kenneth Asarch; and "Poe's Revisions of 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' — A Hoax?," by Richard Fusco. This collection of essays is in honor of Richard P. Benton, of Trinity College, Hartford, and Maureen Cobb Mabbott, scholar-wife of the deceased Thomas Ollive Mabbott.

Fisher has also published an essay, "To 'The Assignment' from 'The Visionary' (Part II)," in the *Library Chronicle*, 40 (1976), 121-151, which supplements the work of Benton, Thompson, and Hammond; "Ancilla to the Gothic Mode: A Supplementary Bibliography," *American Transcendental Quarterly* (Winter Quart., 1976), a lengthy checklist, annotated, of items relevant to European and American Gothicism, which supplements the work of Frank in *BB*, 30 (1973), 45-54; "Writing about A.E. Housman, 1962-1972: Part II — Books," *Housman Society Journal*, in which Poe and Housman are shown as both painstaking revisers; and reviews of the Dameron-Cauthen Poe Bibliography in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 70 (1975), 131-133, and of that volume as well as Hyneman's checklist in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 30 (1976), 544-546.

Fisher will deliver the annual lecture to the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore in October of 1977. His topic will be "The Very Spirit of Cordiality: The Literary Uses of Alcohol in Poe's Tales."

The Universidad de la Republica [Uruguay] will publish the paper, "Edgar Poe: La Nueva Imagen," which Stuart Levine, Professor of English at the University of Kansas, delivered in Latin America recently. Dealing with what Poe scholarship has taught us since 1941, his paper provoked much excitement in his audience at the time.

More Poe Dissertations 1975-76 (through August issue of *DA*): 1975 vol. — Neal Howard Bruss, "The Psychoanalytic Function of the Language of Literature: Freudian Theory, Modern Linguistics and the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe" (1975); Roland W. Nelson, "The Definitive Edition of Edgar Allan Poe's EUREKA: A PROSE POEM" (1974); Norma J.E. Walker, "A Study of the Relation of Poe's THE NARRATIVE OF ARTHUR GORDON PYM to the Development of His Craft as a Writer" (1974); Allan Gardner Smith, "Nineteenth-Century Psychology in the Fiction of Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Allan Poe, and Nathaniel Hawthorne" (1974); James Joseph Reilly, "The Social Vision of Edgar Allan Poe: The Concepts of Human Potential and Social Interaction Presented in His Writings" (1974); Julia Wolf Mazow, "Survival and the Guide in Selected Works of Edgar Allan Poe" (1974); Marie-Louise N. Matthew, "Forms of Hoax in the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe" (1974). 1976 vol. — Joseph Madison Kirkland, "Poe's Universe: A Critical Study of EUREKA" (1976); Kent P. Ljungquist, "Poe's Landscape Aesthetics and Pictorial Techniques" (1975); Leroy E. Perkins, "Poe at Play" (1975); Paula Wanda Sunderman, "The Theme of Deception in Edgar Allan Poe's Fiction" (1975); Victor J. Vitanza, "The Dialectic of Perverseness in the Major Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe" (1975).

Doctoral Dissertations partly on Poe are: John Edmund, "Some Theories of Short Fiction in America in the Nineteenth Century: Poe, Hawthorne, and James" (1975); James W. Fulcher, "The Mask Idea in Selected Fiction of Poe, Melville and Twain" (1975); Richard Sam Di Maggio's "The Tradition of the American Gothic Novel" (1976), and Richard David Finhelt's "The Murder of Moby Dick: Mad Metaphysics and Salvation Psychology in American Fiction" (1975).

CRITICAL NOTICES

THE SHORT FICTION OF EDGAR ALLAN POE: An Annotated Edition. Edited by Stuart and Susan Levine. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1976. \$9.95.

This new collection contains sixty-nine items, including the not-so-often-reprinted "The Light-House." Stuart Levine has furnished a sixteen-page general Introduction touching upon Poe's life, his personality, and his "new image." The Introduction is followed by two bibliographies. The first of these consists of one hundred four "Works on or About Poe" and the second of forty-four wide-ranging items identified as "Other Works Utilized." The editors have grouped the tales themselves under fifteen headings, each of which is prefaced by a statement about the group as a whole as well as about each individual tale. Notes to the text of the tales are gathered at the close of each group.

Impressive though it may appear in outline, the book itself is a distinct disappointment. Presumably pitched to the secondary-school market, Levine's Introduction is both jejune and fatuous, at one point even reducing itself to dragging out some of the soiled linen of Poe scholarship. Levine's bibliography of "Works on or About Poe" is seriously deficient, especially in items published since 1970. Among its glaring omissions, for example, are the Dameron-Cauthen bibliography (1974) and recent book-length studies by Hoffman (1972) and Halliburton (1973) which treat Poe's fiction at length. Levine's list of "Other Works Utilized" (e.g., THE WORKS OF WILLIAM COWPER, Griswold's THE PROSE WRITERS OF AMERICA, and THE KORAN) appears to serve no purpose beyond an attempt to impress the reader with the breadth of the editors' research. Though perhaps not entirely arbitrary, the headings into which the tales themselves are grouped (e.g., "Unimpeded Visions," "Salvation Through Terror," "Moral Issues," "Slapstick Gothic," "Multiple Intention," "Occult Fantasies") promote the idiosyncrasies of the editors' own interpretations of Poe. Equally idiosyncratic are the introductory comments to the individual tales. It is difficult to understand, for example, how the editors can justify devoting only sixty words to a major tale such as "The Tell-Tale Heart" while giving one hundred fifty to "X-ing a Paragrab" and three hundred thirty to "The Spectacles." The most helpful feature is the notes, but even here the book falls far short of the "fully-annotated edition of the complete short fiction" that Levine prepared us for in the Preface to his EDGAR POE: Seer and Craftsman (1972). The greatest disappointment in this collection, however, is its format.

The publishers have squeezed everything — preface, bibliographies, introductions, texts, notes — into less than six hundred and seventy-five pages. They accomplished this feat at the expense of readability, but not, let it be noted, the readability of the editors' introductory comments. Here the type is generous and the text is laid out in single columns per page. Not so with the tales themselves and the notes. Here the print is small and the text is in two columns per page with scarcely a centimeter of inner and outer margin and less than half a centimeter between columns. This kind of crabbed layout seriously limits the usefulness of the book as a classroom text. Perhaps even more important, the format constitutes in itself a sad commentary upon the focus, or lack of proper focus, of the publisher.

For a complete edition of the fiction, the old Quinn and O'Neill Knopf edition (reprinted just this spring) is preferable to Levine. A generous, readable, two-volume text handsomely bound in cloth and boxed, Quinn and O'Neill offers all the tales (including *Pym*) as well as the poetry and a selection of criticism. It is a far better bargain even at twice the price (\$20.00 vs. \$9.95).

John E. Reilly

Poe and His Heirs: The Detection Game

Gavin Lambert. *The Dangerous Edge: An Inquiry into the Lives of Nine Masters of Suspense*. New York: Grossman Publishers, 1976. 272 pp.

Chris Steinbrunner, Otto Penzler, et. al. eds. *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976. 436 pp.

Fans of mystery and detection will find much value in these books, although both have flaws. Lambert's chronicles of writers from Collins to Hitchcock pays more than passing respects to Poe, even if no chapter is his alone, as well it might be because (a) he fathered much of what recurs in these successors and (b) Lambert's psychoanalytic approach could be applied to him as well as to others — considering that his method is more manageable and credible than that of Marie Bonaparte. Lambert's implicit agreement with J.T. Shaw about Poe's "end" (pp. 212-213) may stagger some; surely *Black Mask* writers did not turn their backs upon him, nor do his detective tales lack "emotional dimension." *The Dangerous Edge* suggests needs for greater study of Poe's influence, most emphatically on Collins, as well as, more generally, on later writers. Poe receives just due in the *Encyclopedia*, in five pages accorded to him, with two more on Dupin (which are outnumbered only by eight to "Holmes, Sherlock"). His adumbration of all types of "detective-mystery-crime" fiction is stressed. The biographical section burbles off into vagueness on matters of alcohol, drugs, marriage, and insanity — all treacherous areas, as Poe scholars know. There is good information on other aspects of the mystery-detection field, including the Gothic novel's presaging modern detective fiction. Names familiar and otherwise are highlighted (although one looks in vain for *The Armchair Detective*): C.B. Brown, Clemens, Collins, Dickens, A.S. Hardy, Julian Hawthorne, Leroux, Mary Shelley, Sayers, Stoker, and Sue. The book invites numerous returns, managing to enlighten and entertain about the known and the obscure.

Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, Hahnemann Medical College

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 1977

Our appeal for payment of 1976 dues met with a good response. Membership is by the calendar year. Prompt payment of 1977 dues from a larger number will enable us to keep the fee at \$3, which is only half of what many other societies charge. It is your dues that largely make possible the printing and mailing of 1200 copies of this letter twice a year to scholars in Canada, Europe, Japan, USSR, as well as in the U.S. Please mail your check to our secretary-treasurer,

Prof. Richard P. Benton, 14 Rockwell Place, W. Hartford, CT 06107

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