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 Influence
- Poe and His Contemporaries
- Poe and Periodicals
- Poe's Critical Reputation
- Poe Biography
- Poe Bibliography
- Poe and Popular Culture
- Poe and the Short Story
- Poe and Music
- Poe and Dance
- Poe and the Visual Arts
- Poe and Detective Fiction
- Poe and Philosophy
- Poe and the Gothic
- Poe's Social Commentary
- Poe and Science Fiction
- Poe's Contemporary Reception
- Poe's Lyric Poetry
- Poe's Richmond
- Poe's Pym
- Poe and Film
- Poe and Science
- Poe and Humor
- Collecting Poe
- Editing Poe
- Teaching Poe
- Poe's Lectures
- Poe Portraiture
- Poe Sites
- Poe Folklore
- Poe and the South
- Poe and Religion
- Poe Abroad
- Poe and Race
- 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 nx3@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 variarum 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.poec.edu to the Professional Office Equipment company, www.poec.org to a rock music band led by a girl who performs under the name Poe, www.poec.net to Apache: Red Hat Linux Web Server, and ea-poec.org to Jered Koenig, a high school student in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Heyward Ehrlich
Rutgers University
Reviews


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 extracts 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 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 Southern Literary Messenger contents page, Allan's home, and others.

Eric W. Carlson
Professor Emeritus
University of Connecticut

POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
The newsletter of the Poe Studies Association, Inc. Published at The Pennsylvania State University, Berks-Lehigh Valley College
Editor: Barbara Cantalupo
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The Poe Studies Association Newsletter is published twice a year. Subscriptions, which come with membership in the Poe Studies Association, are $8 per year. Send checks, payable to Poe Studies Association, to Roberta Sharp, 1010 Rosemary Lane, LaVerne, CA 91750. The PSA Newsletter is published independently of Poe Studies, published at Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164. 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 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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University of Illinois at Chicago

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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.


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 Emilio de Menezes (1917), Gondim da Fonseca (1928), Milton Amado (1943), Benedito Lopes (1956), and Alexei Bueno (1960). 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 Luiz 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


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 Crévecouer, 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
University of Pennsylvania

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

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 rereading 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
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 orphandom 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.


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


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...
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 Strouse (Annie), and Kurt Weill appears to be dominant. This would be natural and beneficial if it were linked to an original talent for songwriting, 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 Grisse’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
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 chamel in the image of gloom. There is the faint phosphorus 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).
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 Colloquium, 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 impersonators David Kelz 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, Poe@juno.com or check http://www.eapoe.org/balt/poe@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.
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_

*On a morning dark, as I looked upon the scary*

_Ebba's 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 sought—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 muddied As investment options mount, and you try to stay out of hook.*

_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?”*_

_“Look!” said I, “today and ever, rolling like a huge green river*

_Comes the cash flow of the top four, towering, immutable!*_

_By that Greenspan high above us, by that pundit we adore!*

_With them, or alone? And will they all continue growing? Can you that substantiate?”*_

_“And what,” I cried, “of Welch and Gerstner? Procuring these,*

_you could do worse 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,*

_Earnings? Cash flow? Hey, who’s counting? Something had to*

_give, and soon.”*_

_“Some consultant, then,” I muttered, “out to earn his*

_bucks galore. Only this and nothing more.”*_

_“Oh! I knew—and well I sought—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!*

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_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.”*_

_“ Monster!” said I. “Callous booster! Monster still if sage*

_rolls dice.”*_

_“Look!” said I, “today and ever, rolling like a huge green river*

_Comes the cash flow of the top four, towering, immutable!*_

_By that Greenspan high above us, by that pundit we adore!*

_With them, or alone? And will they all continue growing? Can you that substantiate?”*_

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_Philip Morris, doing fine, is up a notch, from 10 to 9,*

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_‘Bout the wise and prudent answer we will build on solid rock.*

_Quoth the broker: “Buy more stock.”*_

_“ 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! I screamed in anguish. “You won’t have to*

_tell me twice!”*_

_Quoth the broker: “How ya doin’?”*_

_“Pal,” he chirped, “you look befuddled, about your choices*

_deeply muddied As investment options mount, and you try to stay out of hook.*

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_Recent Dissertations_

**1997**


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.


**1998**


Peter C. Norberg, "Stranged 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.


_Treasures' 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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