Two Poe panels are scheduled for the American Literature Association conference this May. “My Life with Poe: A Panel Discussion” will be chaired by Joel Myerson, University of South Carolina, with G. R. Thompson, Purdue; Kenneth Silverman, NYU; and Kent Ljungquist, WPI as participants. “The Experimental Poe” is the other panel with Stephen Rachman, Michigan State University, “A Priori Evidence: Poe’s Philosophies of Experimentation;” Theresa de Langis, University of Illinois at Chicago, “The Usual Suspects?: The Politics of Perversion in Edgar Allan Poe and Angelina Weld Grimke;” and Terence Whalen, University of Illinois at Chicago, “The Investigating Angel: Poe, Charles Babbage and ‘The Power of Words.’”

The most prominent and influential of the popular eighteenth century “Graveyard Poets” was Edward Young, author of The Complaint; or, Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality (“Nights” I-VII, in 1742; VII-IX, added in 1745). Although Poe, in his reviews and essays, shows himself as familiar with this work, no study links Young and Poe, especially for an important tie in “Premature Burial” (1844 and 1845), even though Poe planted a directional sign, as he often did when using earlier material (see Writings [Brevities] 2: x.x.xiv). The tale’s penultimate paragraph includes this: “I [thenceforth] read no ‘Night Thoughts’—no fustian about churchyards—no bugaboo tales—such as this...I dismissed forever my charnal apprehensions, and with them vanished the cataleptic disorder” and ends: “Alas! the grim legion of sepulchral terrors cannot be regarded as altogether fanciful.” In his related note, Mabbott mentions only Young’s being “immensely popular in America” but omits reference to his text, especially that of “Night IV”—relevant here and elsewhere in Poe (Collected Works 3: 969, 971).

In The Brevities including the “Pinakidia” (39 and 40) of August 1836 and partially repeated in various of the “marginalia” of later dates, Poe cites Young’s Night Thoughts. Certainly it is material that he has taken, unacknowledged, from Isaac Disraeli’s Curiosities of Literature: a borrowing by Young adapted from Samuel Butler’s Hudibras (Brevities 32) and a Young bon mot, later adapted by Oliver Goldsmith for a poem and included in The Vicar of Wakefield. Both occur in “Marginalia” 139A (Brevities 239) of August 1845: “Man wants but little, nor that little long” in “Night IV” (1.118). In “Pinakidia” 130, Poe refers to Young’s pamphlet, A True Estimate of Human Life, Part I (of 1728), in a satirical jest on the promised Part II as never having been issued, inaccurately implying that he had read Part I.

(continued on page 2)
In his January 1837 SLM review of William Cullen Bryant’s Poems, Poe appositely cites Bryant’s “Earth” for two passages which “remind us of . . . portions of Young.” Then he italicizes, within the excerpts, several Young-like beautiful portions: “wander through the gloom,” “darkness dwells all day,” “The forgotten graves . . . utter forth their plaint” (Harrison, Complete Works 9:283). They serve to prove Poe’s real acquaintance with Young’s Night Thoughts. Further along, comparing Bryant with Cowper and Young, Poe very fairly declares the American to have “a more delicate imagination” (305). Later, in his “Literati” sketch of Bryant (April 1846), Poe links the same three poets as having “the old-school manner” but similarly defends Bryant as showing “genius . . . of a marked character” (Harrison, Complete Works 13:130).

Clearly, this extended interest in Young’s Graveyard Poetry is shown in “The Premature Burial,” with its odd reference to “bugaboo tales.” This first word occurs (as “bugbear”) almost at the start of “Night IV” in a context with many concepts occurring in Poe’s full tale:

Why start at death? Where is He? Death arriv’d, Is past; not come, or gone, he’s never here. Ere hope, sensation fails; black-boding man Receives, not suffers, death’s tremendous blow. The knell, the shroud, the mattock, and the grave; The deep damp vault, the darkness, and the worm; These are the bugbears of a winter’s eve, The terrors of the living, not the dead. Imagination’s fool, and error’s wretch, Man makes a death, which nature never made; Then on the point of his own fancy falls; And feels a thousand deaths, in fearing one.

(lines 6-17)

A shorter passage, further on in the same "Night," gives several more distinctive aspects of "Premature Burial":

As when a wretch, from thick, polluted air, Darkness, and stench, and suffocating damps, And dungeon-horrors, by kind fate discharg’d, Climbs some fair eminence. . . .
His heart exults, his spirits cast their load;
As if new-born, he triumphs in the change.

(lines 562-8)
After "The Raven": "The Radical Club" by "An Atom"

On page two of the 8 May 1875 Boston Times, readers were treated to "'The Radical Club,' A Poem Respectfully dedicated to 'The Infinite,' by An Atom." "Atom," identified only by a punning pseudonym, "D. Scribe," irreverently "d-scribes" reigning Boston intellectuals. The author, in fact, is Sherwood Bonner (Katherine Sherwood Bonner McDowell, 1849-1883) of Mississippi. In a tone reminiscent of the best eighteenth-century satires and of Lowell's 1848 Fable for Critics, Bonner's "Radical Club" directly borrows its versification form Poe's popular "The Raven."

"The Radical Club" draws humorous, unflattering caricatures of a number of revered citizens—among them Bronson Alcott and Elizabeth Peabody, immediately recognizable despite their presentations as "an ancient Concord bookworm" and "the Kindergarten mother." According to an annotated copy of the poem owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society, Julia Ward Howe appears as "A lady fair and faded," while respected author and reformer Ednah Dow Cheney is mischievously depicted as "another magnum corpus, with a figure like a porpoise." John Sargent (Mr. Pompous), John Weiss (Mr. Wiseman), T. W. Higginson (the Colonel), Henry Ward Beecher (Beecher), Bradlaugh (the British Lion), C. A. Bartol (the kindred spirit), Louise Chandler Moulton (matron), Francis Ellingwood Abbot (Mr. Fairman), Ferrette (the bishop), and Christopher Cranch (rarely gifted mortal) appear as well.

Although the tone is playful rather than vitriolic, proper Boston did not smile at the intended humor any more than they had appreciated Poe's Lyceum speech in 1845. The poem created a sensation with lasting repercussions. In response to popular demand, the poem was reprinted in a later issue, and subsequently made it marketable in New England literary circles, it ultimately cut her off from a number of influential social and professional connections.

The following is the text of the original newspaper publication with introductory paragraphs by Times editor, Robert C. Dunham:

"This Club was once quite famous and promised to rival the renowned salons of Paris, but its glory has departed. No longer do the New York papers rival the metropolitan journals of the Hub in reporting its proceedings. The Club of the unutterable and den of the unintelligible has been found to be a mere cave of wind—full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Even although it is reported a sign of wisdom to talk so that not one in ten can understand you, it must be confessed that it is something of a bore to draw rations at such decimal distributions of the bread of life."

If the Radical Club is remembered at all it will be quite as likely to live in the brilliant seasons that we print in another column as in the reports of its own debates. Those who have been in the habit of attending its aesthetic seances will instantly recognize the manners as one after another they appear in the canvass.

"We do not know the author. We found the manuscript on our desk one morning without note or comment, or any clue whatever to its authorship. If it is the production of a new writer, we can only say of him as Pope said of Johnson, "he will soon be deterred"—although nothing seems to deter him.

[P.S.—This is a pun.]

Dear friends, I crave attention to some facts that I shall mention:

About a club called "Radical," you haven't heard before;

Get up to teach the nation, was this new-light federation;

To teach the nation how to think, to live, and to adore;

To teach it of the heights and depths that all men should explore;

Only this and nothing more.

It is not my inclination, in this brief communication,

To produce a false impression—which I greatly would deplore;

But a few remarks I'm making on some notes a chisel's been takin',

And if I'm not mistaken, they'll make your soul yearn;

As you bend your eyes with eagerness, to scan these verses o'er;

Truly this—and something more.

And first, dear friends, the fact is, I'm sadly out of practice,

And may fail in doing justice to this literary bore.

But when I do begin it, I don't think 'twill take a minute

To prove there's nothing in it. (as you've doubtless heard before.)

But a free religious wrangling club—of this I'm very sure;

Only this, and nothing more! (continued on page 4)
After "The Raven" (continued from page 3)

"This is a rather remarkable, one-bright-morning-of-themorning,
Such-say-seclusions-never-seen-before.
After-careful-deliberation-on-the-importance-of-the-commission,
To-begin-the-organization-Mr.-Empire-took-the-floor,
With-air-shake-self-composed-straight-up-and-took-the-floor,
As-he'd-often-done-before!

With-air-of-conviction-he-heard-their-close-attention.
To-an-even-from-a-whispered-in-theological-parlance,
He-himself-mad-the-pleasure-of-a-short-glance-at-the-brochure,
And-in-stained-ornaments,-said-he-had-a-tune-in-the-stoic:
Then-he-waved-his-hand-to-water,-and-resigned-to-him-the-floor.
Only-this,-and-nothing-more.

Quick-and-strenuous,-short-and-arid,-with-a-look-profound,-yet-fiery,
Mr.-Whitman-now-stepped-forward,-and-eyed-us-decked-over.
By-the-pretty-trustee-rolled-in-from-the-place-beside-the-door,
Was-offered-to-the-reader,-in-the-corner-of-the-floor,
And-he-took-the-chair-he-sure.

Then-with-arguments-elastic,-and-a-voice-and-eye-seemastic,-
Mr.-Whitman-into-filming-in-the-Holy-Bible-moves,-
And-he-proved,-beyond-a-question,-that-the-god-of-Whitman's-moment
Was-a-frandulent-invention-of-some-Hebrews,-three-or-four,
And-the-Son-of-God's-assumption-an-imaginary-scar!
Only-this,-and-nothing-more.

Each-moment-then-achieved-that-his-parts-were-well-acquainted,
For-his-slow-impression-means-means-had-touched-the-to-the-crow,
He-felt-sure-as-he-scared-off-through-his-spins-that-he-had-played-them,
And-was-proud-that-he-had-made-them-all-astonished-by-his-love;
Nay-a-continental-can-he-for-the-fruits-such-lessons-bore,
So-he-bowed-and-left-the-floor.

Then-a-Colonel,-cold-and-stylistically,-with-a-statesman-beguiling,
Who-baptizes-his-paragraphe-on-Newport's-sounding-shore,
To-destroy,-in-this-old-city,-the-belief-it-had-borne
In-the-ancient-supersitious-of-the-blessed-days-of-yore.
This-he-said-and-something-more.

Orthodoxy-he-lamented,-thought-the-Christian-world-dismayed.
Yet-still-he-felt-a-new-sense-as-he-read-the-Bible-over,
And-thought-the-improvement,-though-a-poor-stick-for-a-teacher,
Or-a-broken-read-like-Beacher,-ought-to-have-his-clause-looked-over;
Nay-the-'tyranny-of-science'-was-implied,-he-felt-quite-sure,
Our-danger-more-and-more.

His-remarks-out-quickly,-when-a-British-Lion-stricken.
With-his-wondrous-self-importance,-he-knew-everything-more.
Said-he-to-his-fellow-fellow,-and-he-made-his-declaration.
That-in-spite-of-all-creation,-he-found-no-God-to-adore.
And-this-voice-was-like-the-ocean-as-it-sang-loudly-more.
Only-this,-and-nothing-more.

As-though-she-sees-the-glory-of-the-comings-Lord-no-more.
Crushed-the-British-Lion's-rearing-by-a-reverent-outpouring
Of-a-faith-forever-scarifying-into-golden-barrow;
She-was-listened-to-intently-by-each-member-on-the-floor,
For-her-genius-they-adore.

But-the-interest-now-grew-laurean,-for-an-ancient-concord-bookworm,
With-authoritative-three-braced-forward-and-took-the-floor,
And-the-improvised-baptism-on-transcendental-shore.
And-the-concrete-mysticism,-till-we-yawned-in-anguish-scare;
For-still-he-kept-the-floor.

Then-uprose-a-kindred-spirit-almost-ready-to-inherit
The-rare-and-radiant-[sic]-Aiden-that-he-bagged-us-to-adore.
His-smile-was-beaming-brightly,-and-his-soft-hair-fluttered-whitely.
And-we-forgave-the-arguments-worn-years-before.
For-we-love-this-saintly-bone.

The-argument-made-the-kisses-in-the-loveliest-of-dreams,
And-with-eyes-that-shine-more-brightly-than-the-diamonds-that-they-saw,
Phrases-of-such-happy-months-that-we-clapped-our-hands-for-more.
And-we-thought-"Sara-Wright's-Hearts"-were-made-for-all-men-to-adore,
As-with-peace-she-left-the-floor.

Then-a-lively-little-dancer,-notably-a-dress-refresher.
Because-that-mystic-genius-called-a-chimera-she-saw,
But-that-she-thought-would-please-us-to-lock-her-figure-over.
For-she-wore-no-buckles-anywhere-and-consists-she-felt-sure.
Should-squeeze-her-nevermore.

This-pretty-little-bee,-said-of-course-the-true-religion
But-that-no-ascension-could-ever-core-with-our-union
Until-the-aggregation-of-the-clothes-that-were-wear\
Were-suspended-from-the-shoulders,-and-smooth-with-every-gore.
Plain-behind-and-plain-before!

Her-needs-were-full-of-noon,-but-a-little-out-of-assem.
And-the-proper-tone-of-talking-Mr.-Salman-did-restore.
And-what-spontaneous-teaching,-said-he-sought-forevermore.
Truly-this,-but-something-more!

Then-with-eyes-as-bright-as-Bosheus,-and-hair-dark-as-Bibles-[sic],
In-her-aspect-she-looked-regular,-though-her-waves-were-far-wide-and-fascible.
But-she-waved-this-logic-legally,-as-pure-as-golden-core.
And-implied-the-Joakim-editor-in-every-word-she-scare.
And-said-nothing-more.

Then-a-tall-and-red-faced-mather,-large-and-loose-and-otherwise-later,
(And-thought-it-was-shyly,-he-the-name-of-bishop-bone)
Said-she-if-life-ever-required,-she-should-courage-up.
And-then-fell-to-shame.
The-religion-so-clarified-by-bush.-by-the-shore.
But-bone-and-gold-in-his-need-he-stop-this-saying-more.
And-we-all-cried-out-again.

The-Kingdom-enchanted-her-chin-box-to-this-brother.
And-her-curls-left-holding-quite-from-the-queen-headless-she-wore.
And-then-another-samn-corpus,-with-a-figure-like-a-pun.
In-wonder-did-separate-us-as-she-viewed-our-numbers-over.
And-talked-about-the-"Oxen",-and-other-mystic-lore.
Natalier-her,forever-more.

Then-a-rarely-gifted-metal,-to-show-the-triple-portable.
Of-Music,-Art-and-Poesy-had-opened-years-before.
With-a-look-of-scolding-warning,-depths-within-his-soul-revealing.
Leaving-room-for-no-appealing,-he-decided-over-and-over.
The-old,-old-asking-questions,-of-the-why-and-the-wherefore.
And-touched-us-nothing-more.

There-are-others-I-could-already-who-take-part-in-this-contestation.
At-first-"weay-intention,-but-at-present-I-forbear;"
And-then-a-second-Sparrow,-who-was-struck-by-the-door.
If-you-could-only-see-then,-you'd-laugh-until-you-were-sore.
And-then-you'd-laugh-more.

But,-dear-friends,-I-want-close,-of-these-Relics-alas-dispose.
In-their-wild-booms-dreaming-and-improbable-scheming.
For-a-sinful-world's-scheming,-common-sense-flies-out-the-door.
And-the-long-drawn-scheming-are-not-words-and-nothing-more.
Only-words-and-nothing-more.

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Poe in Cyberspace

The source cited for the reprint of "Abort, Retry, Ignore" in the Fall 1997 PSA Newsletter is "from somewhere in cyberspace." This lack of specificity may not strike us as strange for what is, after all, a widely-circulated parody of "The Raven" on the Internet. Yet we would surely react sharply upon encountering the counterpart citation, "from somewhere in print." Indeed, whether we call it cyberspace, the Internet, or the World Wide Web, the new electronic realm remains unfamiliar, exotic, and even frightening to most of us. This column dedicates itself to exploring this new academic terra incognita, suggesting opportunities and pointing out hazards that await Poe scholars. (Note: This article is available online with live hypertext links at http://newark.rutgers.edu/~ehrlich/psa98a.html.)

First, some basics. If you have access to the Web from home or at work, you are ready to begin. The casual, random quality of much Web activity is suggested by the very names: a Web reader is called a browser and exploring is called surfing. In hope of discovering some structure on the Web, many beginners start with a popular index, such as Yahoo. Please ignore its improbable name, and let it seriously search and sort the Web for you. To use Yahoo, fire up your computer, connect to the Internet, activate your Web browser, select File, select Open, type www.yahoo.com and press Enter. In a few seconds, you should see the Yahoo screen. Type Poe in the query box and click on Search. In a recent trial, I quickly produced 145 hits.

These sample hits, which may seem to be somewhat randomly arranged, included individual Poe works, large text collections of his works, general Web sites specializing in Poe, hypertext editions of individual works, wider collections by genre (poetry, fiction, gothic, detective), historic sites, museums and societies, musical adaptations, secondary material, research aids, computer-aided manipulations, t-shirts, other merchandise, and personal comments. (We won't discuss references to other Poes: the singer, rock band, billiards parlor, car dealer, insurance agent, investment service, real estate broker, food inspector, plastics manufacturer, motorcycle accessories dealer, bait and fishing shop, or the computer in Virginia called poe.acc). Unlike library card catalogs, which use the Library of Congress, Dewey Decimal, or other standard systems of classification, Web page indexes treat everything on the same level, relying heavily on self-proclaimed titles and the first few words of each Web document. (Can you imagine books classified according to the words that begin the first paragraph?) Although electronic resource librarians are making progress in creating subject classifications, they have a formidable task indeed!

Yahoo courteously provides links to several competing indexes. In a recent test, there were many more Poe hits (as shown) on the rival indexes than on Yahoo itself: Alta Vista (134,450), WebCrawler (1,178), HotBot (70,702), Lycos (N/A), Infoseek (25,135), Excite (21,168), Image Surfer (4) and DejaNews (3,511). Anyone pursuing these matches would quickly discover that considerable redundancy of results exists among various indexes. They differ not only in the quantity of hits they produce but also in the quality and nature of those hits. Prolonged and repeated searching with various indexes continues to yield occasional interesting results. Because the Web is in vigorous flux, with old locations constantly expiring and new ones ceaselessly springing up, no electronic index can be more than a rough approximation of the whole. It is estimated that there are now some 320 million documents (called pages) on the Web; only a third have ever been indexed. This should cause no discomfort to those familiar with chaos theory.

Happily, there are several ways of improving the odds. One useful shortcut is to start a search not with an individual index, such as those mentioned above, but with a meta-index, such as MetaCrawler or ProFusion, harnessing together multiple search engines or indexes with a single command. Although searching for Edgar Allan Poe should produce more specific results than Poe alone, unfortunately the misspelling Edgar Allen Poe often appears about as often on the Web as the correctly spelled name. Once the search process takes the researcher to a document known to contain Poe's name, it may often be close to hopeless to find the exact location by looking for poe when that request brings up countless instances of poem, poetry, and poetical (in such cases, try Edgar instead). Occasionally the global search of the whole Web for a distinctive or unique phrase will be unexpectedly rewarding: although searching for The House of Usher will produce many unwanted associations, borrowings, and adaptations, the search for soundless day produces only locations of the text of the tale.

Entrepreneurs constantly devise new Web indexes and search engines to cope with the unprecedented constitution of the Web. Several third generation Web indexes are beginning to appear. The Special Collection (continued on page 6)
of www.northernlight.com contains articles and reviews published in several thousand journals since 1995 (in some cases since 1990) and all proprietary texts hitherto not found on the Web but now available for the payment of a fee, currently about $1.00 per article. Another new index, www.sideclick.com, is heavily structured by subject affiliations, allowing you to drill down to material of interest—and then to click sideways on links to material on similar subject classifications.

Although Poe Studies/Dark Romanticism http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~7English/PoeStudies.html and the PSA Newsletter http://www.an.psu.edu/bac7/poe.html both maintain Web sites, as yet, no full academic Poe site is on the Web. Nevertheless, much useful information can be found in other places, such as these sites devoted to American Literature generally or the Nineteenth Century American Literature in particular:


Although not intended for academic use, the following general starting points for Poe contain much usable material, often hidden deep beneath the surface:


[5] If you have the patience to figure out and endure the graphics, there is useful material on Gothic Net: http://www.gothic.net/poe/.

To locate full electronic Poe texts on the Internet by title or author, use these search engines:


[7] Book Stack indexes about 6,000 texts but has not been revised since mid-1997: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~anat0010/bookstack/.

Once within the following collections of electronic texts, search for specific words or phrases (see local directions for simple and compound searching):


The standard archives containing Poe e-texts are Internet Wiretap, the Oxford Text Archive, Virginia Tech Eris Collection, University of Virginia Electronic Text Center (ETC), and University of Michigan Humanities Text Initiative (HTI), each of which is described with live hypertext links in my Poe Webliography:


Within the last year the following noteworthy Poe electronic editions have been added to the Web:


[15] Several Poe works will be included in an edition of 440 titles of Early American Fiction, now in preparation at the University of Virginia Library, to be released commercially on CD-ROM with some items on the Internet http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/eaf/.

(HEYWARD EHRLICH HAS GRACIOUSLY AGREED TO BE OUR POE WEB REPORTER; EACH NEWSLETTER WILL HAVE A COLUMN WRITTEN BY EHRlich TO UPDATE US ON NEW AND/OR REVISED POE SITES. B.C.)
November 1, 1845: “We never go into the woods (for fear of the owls).”
(Pollin, Collected Writings, 3:300).

June 7, 1845: “Who thinks of making his critique a work of art in itself—inde pendently of its critical opinions?”
(Pollin, Collected Writings, 3:137)

August 16, 1845: “emphatically a critic—brilliant, epigrammatic, startling, paradoxical, and suggestive, rather than accurate, luminous, or profound.”
(Pollin, Collected Writings, 3:212)

1953: “For language is never innocent; words have a second-order memory which mysteriously persists in the midst of new meanings ....
A stubborn after-image, which comes from all the previous modes of writing and even from the past of my own, drowns the sound of my present words .... mere duration gradually reveals in suspension a whole past of increasing density, like a cryptogram.”

1953: “For literature is like phrenology: it shines with its maximum brilliance at the moment when it attempts to die.”


New Poe Related Releases and Discounts

A Companion to Poe Studies, edited by Eric Carlson (ISBN 0-313-26506-2) is available to PSA members at a 20% discount; call 1-800-225-5800 and mention source code F462 to order this title for $79.60. Offer expires 7/15/98—contact Ellen Louer, Product Manager, Greenwood Publishing Group, elouer@greenwood.com.

Poe: The Musical by Jack Aaronson is available on CD ($12) and video ($15); complete libretto ($20), and individual sheet music ($7.50) are also available. A review of the musical will appear in the next issue of this newsletter. For more information: jaaronson@umherst.edu.

A 25 minute video interpretation of Poe’s “The Oval Portrait”—written and directed by Phillip A. Roland—has been released by Athens Entertainment ($149.99); see http://www.Athenstntertainment.com for details.

The first issue of an on-going monthly comic book series called, simply, Poe, was published by DogStar Press in October 1997; the first six issues by comic-writer Jason Asala that precede this book “will be collected into a trade paperback that should be available in April 1998” (Introduction to Poe, Issue One). For more information: JasonAsala@aol.com.
In their introduction, Shawn Rosenheim and Stephen Rachman point out that "although The American Face of Edgar Allan Poe is deeply concerned with historical issues, it represents no simple injunction to 'historicize!'" (xi). That's certainly true: particularly in the first half of the book ("Literary Relations" and "Generic Logic"), the writers tend to be more interested in connecting Poe to Descartes, Walter Benjamin, or Ernst Bloch than in connecting him to, say, Nat Turner or P. T. Barnum. The second half of the book addresses issues of gender and culture, but even so, with this collection, Poe seems more malleable to a variety of intellectual interests than ever, and his face looks only slightly more American. Of course, malleability to various critical and theoretical approaches tends to keep a writer's reputation alive (or revive it after a premature burial), and this collection's great strength is the way it expands the contexts in which Poe can be usefully considered, from Cartesian philosophy in the collection's first essay to J. B. Lamarck and the history of life sciences in the final essay.

In fact, Gillian Brown's essay on Poe and biology, "The Poetics of Extinction," provides the most provocative new context in the book, putting a new slant on "the death of a beautiful woman" and Poe's preoccupation with the preservation and rejuvenation of the dead. Lamarck argued against the idea of extinction, providing a "preservationist context for Poe's necrophilic interests" (340). Brown relates this parallel to the misogyny of Poe's fiction: paradoxically, women in Poe rarely reproduce (Morella is the exception) because "[c]ontinuance through generation . . . images the male individual's successors, and marks his end." Poe's narrators and poetic personae are driven to preserve the individual male consciousness, so that even the "regeneration of women's bodies . . . prolong[s] not themselves but men's minds" (341). Other essays expand the range of Poe scholarship by investigating marginal Poe texts, as in the case of Rachman, who discusses Poe's authorial pose in the "Marginalia" series. Elsewhere, Laura Saltz usefully examines "Marie Roget" in light of the anti-abortion movement of the 1840s, and Louis Renza uncovers the politics of Poe's plate articles "The Island of the Fay" and "Morning on the Wissahiccon."

Some of the best work in the collection explores the more familiar Poe texts and contexts from intriguing new angles. For example, Rachman's essay deals with the well-worn topics of plagiarism and Charles Dickens, but he not only makes new (to my knowledge) claims about Poe's "borrowing" from Dickens in "The Man of the Crowd" but suggests a subtle reading of Poe's central metaphor in that story: "The text then refuses to be 'alone'; it suffers from a problem of textual autonomy. It is a composite text, plagiarized and permeated with other texts; it is the text of the crowd" (74). Rosenheim returns to Freudian psychoanalysis, but not to psychoanalyze Poe or his narrators. Instead, he explores the similarities between detective fiction and psychoanalysis, reading "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" as a "gloss" on analysis: Dupin parallels the analyst, the sailor the analysand; as for the orangutan, it "represents both [Marie] Bonaparte's murderous infant, poised at the moment of discovering sexual difference, and a liminally human, highly evocative image of the body's resistance to signification" (170). David Leverenz also explores territory familiar to readers of Poe biography, the Allan's world of "gentry Virginia," but his original and provocative reading of Poe's fiction--especially "The Man of the Crowd" and "The Cask of Amontillado"--against that milieu is one of the collection's highlights. Combining biography, Virginia history, and close reading of the fictional texts, Leverenz demonstrates Poe's knack for undermining the aristocratic self he fashions: "By the mid-1840s, his fiction not only deconstructed idealized British models of the gentleman but dramatized the clash of the gentry hierarchy with capitalist dynamics" (233). Although it might have meant succumbing to Jameson's "simple injunction to 'historicize!,'" the editors could have used a few more essays like Leverenz's.

Of course, it's unlikely that any reviewer would find every essay in such a wide-ranging collection (continued on page 9)
Reviews (continued from page 8)

enlightening. My biggest complaint—with about half of the selections—is the writing's tendency to lapse into something like a parody of academic prose, overloaded with intellectual posturing and jargon. Sometimes it's worth fighting through the verbiage, but, too often, I wonder if Ritzer von Jung is at work as a scholarly ghost writer. And though it is standard practice to include previously published essays in collections like this one, six of the thirteen in American Face are readily available elsewhere; John Irwin's essay had already appeared in Raritan as well as in Irwin's The Mystery to a Solution. On the other hand, Irwin's "A Clew to a Clue" and Barbara Johnson's previously published "Strange Fits" certainly enrich the collection. Their essays, along with a handful of those published for the first time here, could change the way one reads Poe. Though some of the American Face essays seem like exercises in mystification, the best of them break new ground and provide a broader context for thinking about a writer whose face is continually changing.

Scott Peeples
College of Charleston


Distinguished writer and editor Joel Myerson, Carolina Research Professor of American Literature at the University of South Carolina, is clearly one of the greats of American literary study; it is therefore very satisfying to see this scholar recognized with the publication of a new collection, edited by Wesley T. Mott and Robert E. Burkholder, Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson. The book features fourteen essays relating to Emerson by an exceptional roster of Americanists: Albert J. von Frank, Lawrence Buell, Len Gougeon, Frank Shuffelton, Ronald A. Bosco, Robert D. Richardson, Jr., Larry A. Carlson, Phyllis Cole, Gary L. Collison, Kent P. Ljungquist, David M. Robinson, Daniel Shealy, Helen R. Deese, and Philip F. Gura. Of particular interest to students of Poe is Ljungquist's study, "'Valdemar' and the 'Frogpondians': The Aftermath of Poe's Boston Lyceum Appearance."

Ljungquist honors both Myerson and Myerson's "sturdy brand of historicism" (the apt phrase of Robert A. Gross) by presenting hitherto-unknown newspaper pieces relating to Poe's Lyceum lecture and to his tale, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar." The finest discovery in the essay is an anonymous parody of "Valdemar," published in the Boston Daily Mail: "The Facts of Another Case of Artificial Existence." In this work, the narrator electromagnetizes his just-deceased black servant Nero and hears Nero speak of his visit to Hell, during which the Devil scorned the "foolish stories" of Edgar Allan Poe. The spirit of Nero departs as his body contracts to the size of a thimble; then, with a tear from the narrator, it explodes. Ljungquist carefully shows that derision of the original work mingles with regard here. The skillful parody seems to suggest that the parodist, annoyed by Poe's hoax, nonetheless recognized what Elizabeth Barrett Barrett referred to in connection with this work, as "the power of the writer." Ljungquist's recovery of the Boston Daily Mail parody of "Valdemar" contributes significantly to scholarly understanding of Poe's contemporary reception in "Frogpondium."

Notably, Ljungquist spiritedly links spirits and spiritualism in his essay, as well as the Lyceum lecture and the "Valdemar" story; and while he doesn't always wholly persuade, he does always engagingly provoke. His thoughtful conjecture that the Robert Collyer letter on "Valdemar" may be another Poe hoax is new and entirely plausible. And his Emersonian frame for his essay is graceful and very gracious in light of the work's transcendental company.

Readers of the PSA Newsletter will be interested to read this essay—a modern-day re-entry of Poe into New England—and to know that even as Myerson is honored by editors Mott and Burkholder and their contributors, Ljungquist will shortly be honored by the PSA. Fittingly honoring these scholars, the profession honors itself.

Richard Kopley
Penn State DuBois Campus

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Express, are now being made by Peter Fawn, to be held in Prague in Poe's grave. This year, dressed in ordinary clothes, the man slipped the first to hear the 13-minute work commissioned expressly for the based on the Poe story of that title, "thrilled and chilled the audience, Midnight" at the Page Auditorium, Duke University on March 24-25, 1998.

Preparations for a conference on Poe, funded by American Express, are now being made by Peter Fawn, to be held in Prague in 1999. Those interested could contact him at Ruska 102, 101 00 Prague 10, Czech Republic.

Poe in Prague, Czech Republic:

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Poe in Durham:


Poe in Long Beach:

On January 19, 1998 at the Terrace Theater, an original composition by Lowell Liebermann, “Loss of Breath, Opus 58,” based on the Poe story of that title, “thrilled and chilled the audience, the first to hear the 13-minute work commissioned expressly for the [Long Beach Symphony]” (Press-Telegram, 19 January 1998). The piece composed for large orchestra was described by LA Times music reviewer, Timothy Mangan, as a “thoroughly tonal, audience-friendly piece...breezy and likable music...juiced with demonically sawing strings, threatening brass motifs and overtly comic touches from slide whistle and oboe reed, all of which capture the black humor of Poe” (LA Times, 19 January 1998). “The music’s modern persona was voiced by a colorful muscular line. Its humorous charms lead the audience to laugh outright” (Downtown Gazette, 26 January 1998). For more information on the score, write to Wottonmus@aol.com.

Poe in India:

Professor D. Ramakrishna reports that the Indian Chapter of the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore is organizing the next national seminar on Poe's influence on contemporary American fiction and poetry to be held the first week of July 1998. The seminal nature of Poe's writing and the multiplicity of his styles have led to the perennial interest in Poe even for authors writing in styles beyond post-modernism. For additional information contact: R. Ramakrishna, Professor of English, Kaktiya University, Warangal 506009, A.P. India.

Recent Dissertations


Elise Virginia Lemire, "Making Miscegenation: Discourses of Interracial Sex and Marriage in the United States, 1790-1865 (Edgar Allan Poe, Jerome B. Holgate)," DAI-A 57/06: 2478.

Peter Vernon Sands, "'A Horrid Banquet': Cannibalism, Native Americans, and the Fictions of National Formation (Herman Melville, James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Montgomery Bird)," DAI-A 57/07: 2482.


Mark Alan Canada, "Poe In His Right Mind (Edgar Allan Poe, Right Brain, Neurology, Phrenology)," DAI-A 58/04: 1278.


Robert Lucas (books@lucasbooks.com) asks: Is anyone familiar with a “Raven” “precursor” in the form of a poem entitled, “In the Silent Midnight,” published anonymously in the May 13, 1843 number of The Philadelphia Saturday Museum (Vol. 1, no. 22)? I have the complete text of the poem on page 34 of our 1986 Catalogue 30 which was entitled “Edgar Allan Poe” and the item number was 145 (sold in 1986). A transcription of the poem copied from the complete issue of the Saturday Museum follows:

In The Silent Midnight
“He Standeth at the Door and Knocketh”

In the silent midnight watches, -
List - thy bosom-door!
How it knocketh, knocketh, knocketh -
Knocketh evermore!
Say not 'tis thy pulses beating;
'Tis thy heart of sin;
'Tis thy Saviour knocks, and crieth
'Rise, and let me in!'

Death comes down, with reckless footstep,
To the hall and hut:
Think you death will tarry knocking,
Where the door is shut?
Jesus waiteth, waiteth, waiteth -
But the door is fast:
Grieved, away thy Savior goeth;
Death breaks in at last.

Then 'tis time to stand entreating
Christ to let thee in;
At the gate of heaven beating,
Wailing for thy sin:
Nay! alas, thou guilty creature!
Hast thou then forgot?
Jesus waited long to know thee,
NOW HE KNOWS THEE NOT!

As a footnote to this transcription, the editors of the Saturday Museum stated: “the contributions of Mr. Poe, who we sincerely regret to state is laboring under severe indisposition, will always appear in our columns under his own signature or initial.”

G. Adair (GAdair5062@aol.com) asks: Although I'm sure I'm paraphrasing, I'm interested in a quote attributed to Poe: "Horror is not of Germany, but of the soul." Any leads to the source or what this quote was in response to would be gratefully appreciated.

Richard Kopley responds: Check Mabbott, 2:472: "If in many of my productions terror has been the thesis, I maintain that terror is not of Germany, but of the soul, —that I have deduced this terror only from its legitimate sources, and urged it only to its legitimate results." The source is the Preface to Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.

Kent Ljungquist responds: For background on where Poe might have gotten the interesting phrasing, "not of Germany . . .", see Thomas Hansen (with Burton Pollin), The German Face of Edgar Allan Poe.

Barry Popik (Bapopik@aol.com) asks: “Had Poe seen “The Black Raven” at the Walnut Street Theatre? What was that production about, anyway?” Popik notes the following from The Public Ledger, 28 February 1843, pg. 2, col. 3: “‘The Black Raven,’ as produced now at the Walnut street Theatre, is a decided improvement upon the former performances. Russell is a very nimble fellow, a good dancer, and plays his part well. Miss Wallace, as Columbine, does excellently, and her dancing is much admired. Davenport plays the part of the Old Roue with much credit; and Barnes, the clown, grows more comical in his tricks at every performance. It draws well, and is worth seeing.”

Molly Bernard responds: I believe it was written by Poe in an introduction to his Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque, in response to accusations that he’d jumped on the bandwagon and was writing gothic horror that came out of the romantic movement that sprang (according to some) from German philosophy.

Poe meant, I believe, that he wasn’t copying the external horror stories that had a monster from the outside attacking and being conquered by the victims, but rather the truer horror of that one finds within oneself, when the monster is oneself, and to kill the monster is to destroy oneself. (cf "William Wilson.")

Poe thought that was stronger horror. Poe had a point.

(Responses to queries can be made directly to the e-mail addresses provided with a cc to bac7@psu.edu and/or can be mailed to the editor for publication in the next issue.)