Verses on Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle

The Poe-Doyle relationship continued to be featured in ironic jibes in periodicals long after Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* condescendingly dismissed Poe’s Dupin as a “very inferior fellow” and Gaboriau’s Lecoq as “a miserable bungler.” Therefore two bits of verse may be of interest in regard to the Poe-Doyle connection. These verses have apparently attracted no previous notice from Poe scholars. In “Letters to the Literati,” *Life* 5 December 1912: 320, the popular comic writer Arthur Guiterman addressed the creator of Holmes:

To Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Gentle Sir Conan, I’ll venture that few have been
Half as prodigiously lucky as you have been.
Fortune, the flirt! has been wondrously kind to you.
Ever beneficent, sweet and refined to you.
Doomed to the practise of physic and surgery,
Yet, growing weary of pills and physicianing.
Off to the Arctic you packed, expeditioning.
Roving and dreaming, Ambition, that heady sin,
Gave you a spirit too restless for medicine:
That, I presume, as Romance is the quest of us,
Made you an Author—the same as the rest of us.
Ah, but the rest of us clamor distressfully,
“How do you manage the game so successfully?
Tell us, disclose to us how under Heaven you
Squeeze from the inkpot so splendid a revenue!”
Then, when you’d published your volume that vindicates
England’s South African raid (or the Syndicate’s),
Pleading that Britain’s extreme bellicosity
Wasn’t (as most of us think) an atrocity—
Straightaway they gave you a cross with a chain to it—
(Oh, what an honor! I could not attain to it,
Not if I lived to the age of Methusaleh)—
Made you a knight of St. John of Jerusalem!
Faith! as a teller of tales you’ve the trick with you!
Still there’s a bone I’ve been wanting to pick with you:
Holmes is your hero of drama and serial:
All of us know where you dug the material!
Whence he was moulded—’tis almost a platitude;
Yet your detective, in shameless ingratitude—
Sherlock your sleuthhound with motives ulterior
Sneers at Poe’s Dupin as very “inferior!”
Labels Gaboriau’s clever “Lecoq,” indeed,
Merely “a bungler,” a creature to mock, indeed!
This, when your plots and your methods in story owe
More than a trifle to Poe and Gaboriau,
Sets all the Muses of Helicon sorrowing.
Borrow, Sir Knight, but in decent borrowing!
Still let us own that your bent is a cheery one,
Little you’ve written to bore or to weary one,
Plenty that’s slovenly, nothing with harm in it,
Give me detective with brains analytical
Rather than weaklings with morals mephitical—
Stories of battles and man’s intrepidity
Rather than wails of neurotic morbidity!
Give me adventures and fierce dinotheriums
Rather than Hewlett’s ecstatic deliriums!
Frankly, Sir Conan, some hours I’ve eased with you
And, on the whole, I am pretty well pleased with you.

Guiterman’s “Letter” was reprinted in *London Opinion*
14 December 1912: 460, with minor changes in phrasing (e.g.,
“More than a trifle” becomes “Clearly a trifle”; “as most of
us think” becomes “as some of us think”). Either Guiterman
made the revisions, or Lincoln Springfield, the editor of Lon-
don Opinion, made them. Whatever the case, Doyle more than
likely read Guiterman’s verses in *London Opinion* rather than
*Life*, for his rejoinder appeared in the former periodical 28
December 1912: 521:

“Round the Town”
Sure there are times when one cries with acidity,
“Where are the limits of human stupidity?”
Here is a critic who says as a platitude,
That I am guilty because “in ingratitude,”
Sherlock, the sleuthhound, with motives ulterior,
Sneers at Poe’s Dupin as very “inferior.”
Have you not learned, my esteemed commentator,
That the created is not the creator?
As the creator I’ve praised to satiety
Poe’s Monsieur Dupin, his skill and variety,
And have admitted that in my detective work,
I owe to my model a deal of selective work.
But is it not on the verge of inanity
To put down to me my creation’s crude vanity?
He, the created, the puppet of fiction,
Would not brook rivals nor stand contradiction.
He, the created, would scoff and would sneer,
Where I, the creator, would bow and revere.
So please grip this fact with your cerebral tentacle.
The doll and the maker are never identical.

(Continued on page 2)
The Boston Evening Transcript ("Writers and Books" 11 January 1913, Part 3: 8) reprinted Doyle's London Opinion rejoinder, commenting that "it is naturally supposed [that from both earlier writers Doyle] "gathered some ideas that have served him well in writing his extraordinarily popular career as a writer of detective stories." That supposition has indeed been long cherished, from the time when the Holmes stories first appeared well into the present. [See my "Poe in the 1890s: Bibliographical Gleanings" ARLR 8 (1994): 142-68 and "Poe and Detection" in this Newsletter 21 (Spring and Fall 1996)]. Doyle repeatedly and forthrightly—in print and in speech—acknowledged debts to Poe. Guiterman was either unaware of or intentionally ignored these acknowledgments. Guiterman's verse was reprinted in his The Laughing Muse (1915) and in Lincoln Springfield's autobiography, Some Piquant People (1924). Doyle's precise distinction between creator and literary creation goes to the heart of another Poe—Poe's personal circumstances with characters and events in his writings.

Benjamin F. Fisher
University of Mississippi

Editor's Note: The next issue of the newsletter will be edited by Barbara Cantalupo (Pennsylvania State Univ., Allentown). Please send Barbara any items of interest to PSA members and friends. We wish Barbara well, and have high hopes that the best days of the PSA are ahead (KPL).

POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

The newsletter of the Poe Studies Association, Inc.
Published at Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Editor: Kent Ljungquist
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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College of the Holy Cross

Design/Production: Peggy Isaacson

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, English Department, California State Univ., Pomona, CA 91768. The PSA Newsletter is published independently of Poe Studies, published at Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164, subscription $8 per year (two issues).

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. Please send information on publications and completed research. Queries about research in progress are also welcome. We will consider scholarly or newsworthy notes, which bear relevance to the PSA membership. Send materials to Kent Ljungquist, Department of Humanities and Arts, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA 01609-2280, or e-mail kpl@wpi.edu. We welcome suggestions designed to make the newsletter a more stimulating and useful publication.

PSA CURRENT OFFICERS

President: J. Gerald Kennedy
Louisiana State University

Vice President: John T. Irwin
Johns Hopkins University

Secretary-Treasurer: Roberta Sharp
California State University, Pomona

Members-At-Large: Joel Myerson
University of South Carolina
Richard Kopley
Pennsylvania State University, DuBois

Organizations

The following slate of officers has been elected for two-year terms in the PSA: J. Gerald Kennedy (Louisiana State Univ.), President; Richard Kopley (Pennsylvania State Univ.), Vice President and Program Chairman; Joel Myerson (Univ. of South Carolina); and Terence Whalen (Univ. of Illinois, Chicago), Members-At-Large. Roberta Sharp has one more year to serve as Secretary-Treasurer.


A group of rooms has been reserved at the Richmond Omni Hotel for a sesquicentennial conference on Poe to held 7-10 October 1999. Additional information will appear in future issues of the newsletter.

The American Literature Association will sponsor a Conference on the American Renaissance (Cancun, Mexico, 11-14 December 1997). The conference will concern canonical writers, including Poe, as well as lesser writers of the period. Proposals for 3-paper sessions or round table discussions may be sent by 15 August to Richard Kopley, 608 Hillsdale Ave., State College, PA 16803 (office 814 865-9243; email rxk3@psu.edu).

John Moon has become the new director of the Poe Museum in Richmond.
Current Research and Publications


Shawn J. Rosenheim's The Cryptographic Imagination: Secret Writing from Edgar Allan Poe to the Internet (266 pp., $47.50) has been published by Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

Craig Werner's 1993 Baltimore Poe Society lecture, Gold Bugs and the Powers of Blackness, has been published by the Poe Society and the Library of the University of Baltimore.


Professors Yuri Luchinsky and Vladimir Cherednichenko of Kuban State Univ. in Russia have published Edgar Allan Poe: Essays, Papers, Reviews, a pamphlet that provides Russian readers access to Rufus Griswold's "Ludwig Article" (with commentary by Luchinsky) and translations of several poems by Poe. Two new poems honor the 150th anniversary of "The Raven." Also included is an essay by the Russian futurist David Burljuik (1882-1967) and a new translation of "The Raven" by Vladimir Sarishvili.

René van Slooten of the Netherlands has published several articles about Poe's scientific theories in Eureka, including a piece in the 15 March 1997 Dutch newspaper, Trouw.

The winter 1996 issue of the Poe Messenger includes Burton R. Pollin's "Poe: The 'Virtual' Inventor, Practitioner, and Inspirer of Modern Science Fiction" and Richard Kopley's "Hawthorne's Transplanting and Transforming The Tell-Tale Heart."

The Murder of Edgar Allan Poe (Carroll & Graff Publishers, $21.00, 224 pp.), a novel by PSA member George E. Hatvany (St. John's Univ.), is scheduled for spring 1997 publication. In this historical mystery Auguste Dupin journeys to America to investigate the circumstances of Poe's death. Hatvany, who has written on Poe's contemporary Horace Binney Wallace, is the author of a novel, The Sator, and a number of short stories.


Hugh C. MacDougall has prepared "The Cooper Screens: An Inventory" as pamphlet No. 8 in the James F. Cooper Society Miscellaneous Papers. The pamphlet includes background on a 27 June 1836 letter from Poe to Cooper, which is imprinted on a Memento Screen at the New York State Historical Association.

Reference Shelf

Frederick S. Frank and Anthony Magistrale have published The Poe Encyclopedia (Greenwood, $89.50, 440 pp.). In addition to a chronology of Poe's life and a brief introduction on Poe's literary contributions, the authors present 1900 alphabetically arranged entries on the following topics: Poe's reading, his impact on subsequent writers, his views on subjects ranging from mesmerism to phrenology, critical synopses of his tales and poems.

Daniel Wells's The Literary Index to American Magazines, 1850-1900 (Greenwood, $85, 464 pp.) lists references to Poe in major magazines of the period.

Gordian Discount: The Gordian Press, Inc., is offering members of the Poe Studies Association a 25 percent discount on its five Poe volumes. Volume 1 of the Pollin edition of Collected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe—The Imaginary Voyages: Pym, "Hans Pfaall" [and] "Julius Rodman"—is available in newly printed, corrected version for $52.50. Volume 2, The Brevities, is available for $37.50; Volumes 3 and 4 of the edition (The Broadway Journal) may be purchased as a set for $56.25; and volume 5, The Southern Literary Messenger, edited by Pollin and J. V. Ridgely, is forthcoming in 1997—please inquire about the price (718-273-4700). Pollin's Word Index to Poe's Fiction is offered for $30.00. Orders should be sent to The Gordian Press, P. O. Box 304, Staten Island, NY 10304. Please mention the discount offer when placing your order.

Correction: In the last issue of the newsletter, Burton R. Pollin's name was omitted from the list of contributors to The Companion to Poe Studies, edited by Eric W. Carlson. The editors regret this omission.
the editors continued the theme of uninvited intrusion into a domestic scene with "The Haunted Pasty" by E. A. Poh. Just as these intruders sample food from a kitchen, we sample stanzas from this parody of "The Haunted Palace":

On a clean shelf in our pantry,  
Rat and mouse be-tenanted;—  
Once a noble pie stood sentry,  
Pie with spices powdered.  
In the cook’s especial region  
It stood there;  
Than a canvass-back or widgeon,  
More tempting fare.  

Pilgrim now, within the larder,  
Through the nibbled pastry see  
Creeping things, in foul disorder,  
Feasting gluttonly.  
While, like hidden Stygian river,  
Its deep chasms o’er,  
Fitful puffs come wiffling ever—  
Sweet no more.

On 2 January 1847: 140, Yankee Doodle printed a brief paragraph, signed Poh, which playfully treated the names of New York periodicals. On 16 January 1847: 172, without mentioning Poe’s name, the editors complimented fellow newspaper writers for their "delicacy" and "forbearance" in treating "the temporary misfortunes of a distinguished author" (Thomas and Jackson Poe Log 682).

Edited by Cornelius Mathews, Yankee Doodle suspended publication in the fall of 1847. The periodical is perhaps best known for printing Melville’s "Authentic Anecdotes of Old Zack," satirical treatments of Zachary Taylor.

Over the past several years we have printed several parodies of "The Raven," the most widely celebrated and imitated of Poe’s poems. One parody that has escaped attention is "The B-D B-G and No Other Poems" by E. A. Poh, Yankee Doodle 19 December 1846: 120. After discovering an unexpected intruder on his couch, the narrator of this parody notes:

So my watch I straight did handle, and I lit another candle—  
When I saw a raven* bed bug that had stepped upon the floor.  
Oh, the sight of such a monster would have made the gravest don stir  
It was such a mighty bed-bug as you never saw before.  
And I hope to see no more.  

And the loathly reptile sprawling still is crawling, still is crawling,  
And I can’t give him a mauling, though thereby I should set store;  
And his fangs they work as greedy as an ogre’s that is seedy,  
And with demon-aided speed he flies about from pore to pore,  
And my body from his pincers that have marked me o’er and o’er,  
Shall be shielded never more!

"The Raven" was not the only poem by Poe dissected by contributors to Yankee Doodle. On 21 November 1846: 76, the editors continued the theme of uninvited intrusion into a domestic scene with "The Haunted Pasty" by E. A. Poh. Just as these intruders sample food from a kitchen, we sample stanzas from this parody of "The Haunted Palace":

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PSA at ALA

The Poe Studies Association sponsored two sessions at the Convention of the American Literature Association, 22-25 May 1997 (Stouffer Harbormort Hotel, Baltimore). Chaired by Richard Kopley (Pennsylvaniana State Univ.), "Poe and British Literature: A Literary Debt Credited" included Alexander Hammond (Washington State Univ.), "The Palmer Holt Poe Collection and Poe’s Debt to Scott"; J. Lasley Dameron (Univ. of Memphis, Emeritus), "Poe, ‘Simplicity,’ and Blackwood’s Magazine"; and Burton R. Pollin (CUNY, Emeritus), "Poe’s ‘The Bells’ and Dickens’ ‘The Chimes.’" Chaired by J. Gerald Kennedy (Louisiana State Univ.), "Second Guessing the Anthologies: Poe Stories We Should Be Teaching" included Dana Nelson (Univ. of Kentucky), "Just the Man for His Time: Teaching Poe’s ‘Some Words with a Mummy’"; David Leverenz (Univ. of Florida), "Teaching ‘The Man That Was Used Up’ and Other Stories"; Barbara Cantalupo (Pennsylvania State Univ., Allentown), "A Few Passionate Sentences": Teaching Poe’s ‘power of words’; and Michael Williams (Univ. of Wisconsin, Stevens Point), "Teaching the Un(der)read Tale."

Palmer Holt Poe Collection

A unique collection of Poe materials has been donated to the Holland Library of Washington State University. The Palmer C. Holt Poe collection includes over 400 19th-century books, journals, and reference works that were identified as direct or indirect sources for Poe’s writings. They were assembled by Palmer C. Holt, an independent scholar who began research into Poe’s sources in the late 1930s. Holt recorded his findings directly into his source texts, and thus his annotations and notes offer insight into Poe’s borrowings and his literary relationships. In addition to the donated volumes, the library will receive Holt’s scholarly correspondence and his handwritten concordance to Poe’s poetry and tales. Queries may be directed to Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Holland Library, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164-5610.
**Review**


The emphasis of this book is clearly on reading, and this is where its chief virtues are to be found. In accordance with recent trends, Elmer strives to retro-fit some of the old standbys of high post-structuralism—chiefly Lacan and Derrida—in order to create an interpretive method more responsive to social and historical issues. I was not always satisfied by the attempt to extrapolate an entire social formation from a few stray anecdotes; nor was I always persuaded by the tendency to see every Poe text as an illustration of some piquant paradox. Still, many of Elmer’s interpretations are developed with admirable skill, and they contain significant insights into the intersubjective complexities of Poe’s writings.

The book comprises four chapters preceded by a theoretical introduction that develops the concept of a “social limit.” Following Homi Bhabha and others, Elmer suggests that words such as “nation” and “society” do not simply designate pre-existing entities; these words also construct or produce such entities through the act of enunciation. At this point several complications arise, one concerning the meaning of limit, the other concerning the meaning of social. Bhabha emphasizes, rather murkyly, the “liminality of the nation,” by which he means the ambivalent, vacillating manner in which the idea of a nation is produced in the “enunciatory present” of some narrative. At issue here is the imagined nation, that is, the nation as an elusive effect of language. Elmer, however, seems to convert “liminality” from a quality or condition to a physical space: “What Bhabha calls the liminality of the nation, I will call the social limit, and I will return throughout the book to the way Poe’s work posts itself at this limit, manipulates it, and makes what is often invisible there forcefully present” (19). The transformation of the “social” into a space leads to a second complication. According to Elmer, the social limit “is less between the democratic individual and the sovereign people than it is internal to both simultaneously” (19). One may well wonder what it means for an enunciative effect of language to be inside itself. But regardless of what it means for the social to be inside itself, the social is also inside the self: “This is the social limit, simultaneously exposing the self as social, unnervingly plural, and the social as self, uncannily singular” (20). In many respects, then, Elmer’s social limit is a spatial version of the Lacanian Other, and for this reason the book is somewhat equivocal about history, society, and other shades of the Real.

Chapter One, “Publicity, Plagiarism, and the Mob,” explores the difference between a group of “empirical individuals” and a public properly so-called. Elmer starts with the work of William Carlos Williams, then deftly rehearses claims by Derrida and Michael Warner about the politico-linguistic paradoxes of the Declaration of Independence. For Elmer, these paradoxes also illuminate Poe’s critical and literary writings. Using “The Man That Was Used Up” as one of his primary examples, Elmer argues that “the reader is asked to see himself in the General, to see his own absorption in the nothing of the public, an absorption that is coincident with a reading experience both present and always past, immemorial” (55). Elmer then discusses Poe’s attitude toward plagiarism and toward criticism as a genre. The point of this section is not always clear, and sometimes Poe’s positions are a bit distorted. For example, Elmer’s claim that Poe had “nothing but scorn” for literary nationalism seems to underrate the complexity of Poe’s predicament (59). The chapter concludes with a close reading of “William Wilson” which links the anxiety over plagiarism to the anxiety over self-ownership. According to Elmer, the very existence of this anxiety “is also the undoing of the all possibilities of ownership or possession” (92).

Chapter Two focuses on sentimentalism and sensationalism, which Elmer sees as the two most enduring and efficacious modes of imagining and experiencing the ‘impossible’ body of mass culture” (95). The sentimental is represented primarily by Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, especially the deathbed scene of Little Eva. Contrasted to this are Poe’s sensational deathbed scenes from “Berenice,” “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar,” and other tales. Although Elmer had introduced Poe as a writer who exposes or makes “forcefully present” the social limit, in this chapter Poe is often described as doing the opposite. “Berenice,” for example, is presented as a tale which renders the social limit “illegible, indeterminate, distorted, distended” (108). Like Chapter One, this chapter ends in an ecstasy of impossibility. “Valdemar” is seen as a “resubstantiation of an impossible communication”; the reader’s response is described as “the impossible enjoyment of the symbolic”; and ultimately, according to Elmer, we are all left recoiling from the “impossible body of sociality” (124-5).

Chapter Three, “Confessing the Crime of Confession,” considers the status and meaning of criminal confessions made by the condemned. Does confession function as a justification after the fact, or is it a self-incrimination made to correspond to a prior, official incrimination? The chapter begins with an account of a television interview with murderer Ted Bundy, and then proceeds to consider Poe’s confessional tales. Elmer sees the confession in Poe as a manifestation of the principle of perverseness, which is in turn interpreted as a kind of “excess.” At stake for Elmer is the equilibrium of the self. Disputing parts of Stanley Cavell’s interpretation, Elmer offers his own Lacanian formulation: “Rather than the static, optical mode of Cartesian reflection, the social cogito obeys the temporal syncopation Lacan returns to again and again in his thinking; I appear there where my enunciation has placed me, before I appear in any statement recuperable by me in reflection” (133). For Elmer, the criminal confessor “embodies” or “opens up” the social limit, and this is what he strives to demonstrate in readings of such stories as “The Black Cat” and “The Man of the Crowd.” In all of these readings, it is the criminal, more than the madman, who best exemplifies the social limit, and from this Elmer concludes with another paradox involving anxiety and sociality: “in our dismay of frustration at the affective manipulations to which [Poe’s] narratives subject us, in these

(Continued on page 6)
Review
(Continued from page 5)

very gestures of recoil, we constitute ourselves as a public that is always elsewhere, we join ourselves in a sociality ruled by disjunction” (173).

The final chapter is entitled “The Cultural Logic of the Hoax.” Basing his analysis upon the example of P. T. Barnum and of course Poe himself, Elmer sees the hoax as an “expression of a cultural contradiction,” variously identified as the contradiction between statement and enunciation, or between the cognitive and the affective, or more generally between the self and the mass. The crux of the argument is that the hoax appeals to the desire for self-exemption from the blindness of the duped mass, but this very desire is what causes the individual to join the crowd at the Barnumesque spectacle. To develop his position, Elmer discusses an eclectic mix of social commentary from the likes of Adorno, Lewis Lapham, and Richard Sennett. Next Elmer offers a very stimulating reading of “The Raven,” which, in tone and occasionally in content, evokes the best work of Paul de Man. The chapter—and the book—concludes with a discussion of narcissism and masochism, especially as manifested in Eureka.

In sum, I think this is a well-executed book which is worth reading, particularly if one understands its limitations in regard to terminology and approach. One should also understand that Elmer’s arguments tend to culminate in paradox and impossibility, and it seems to me that such a rhetorical tendency must itself function as a kind of limit to the suppleness of interpretation. But as I have suggested, these limits do not at all overshadow Elmer’s fine readings.

Terence Whalen
Univ. of Illinois at Chicago

Poe and ...


This fictionalized life of Edgar Allan Poe ought to be thought of as a fantastic rhapsody, for much of the book ranges from the known details of Poe’s life. The novel manages several distinct plots that are run concurrently. Two of these plots do explore possible actual events in Poe’s life: his activities during the five days after he arrived in Baltimore from Richmond in October, 1849, and his death on October 7, and his relationships with his wife, Virginia Clemm, her mother Maria (whom Marlowe calls “his dead father’s sister,” 11), Anne Lynch, Frances Sargent Osgood, Marie Louise Shew, Frederick W. Thomas, John Sartain, Rufus Griswold, and other lesser figures. Of most interest here, perhaps, is Marlowe’s imaginative treatment of the early days of Poe and Virginia’s marriage. Marlowe elaborates in some pleasantly lyrical writing of the gradual approach to the consummation of their physical relationship which ripened, briefly, before Virginia’s first attack of tubercular hemorrhaging, into a tender and passionate love. In contrast, Poe’s experience while locked up in a Whig crib on the Baltimore waterfront are vividly described but obviously flamboyantly elaborated.

Another brief but interestingly developed plot explores what might have happened when Poe, drunk, showed up at the Tyler White House and verbally attacked Longfellow and Daniel Webster.

Other completely fantastic plots center around a beautiful, blonde haired, black silk top-hatted young woman known alternately as Nolie Mae Tangerie and Noli me tangere: Poe’s life in Paris as friend of Alexander Dumas and frequent visitor of C. Auguste Dupin at his lodgings at 16 Place Vendôme; Poe’s stint as lighthouse keeper on an island “two hundred miles from the nearest land,” as a member of the Compagnie Générales des Phares d’Outre Mer, where he attempts to write a story about the end of the world; a narrative by Thomas W. Frederick (inversion of F. W. Thomas’ name) describing the murder of his family on the plantation, Panchatan, located across the river from Hopewell, where Poe and Virginia spend their honeymoon. These stories are carefully inter-related by key details; for example, the freed slave, Obadiah, shows up in three of the narratives, one of which, an incident at Gunner’s Hall shortly before Poe is hauled out drunk and taken to the hospital, recurs three times in the novel. There are many of these relational details which show Marlowe’s concern to keep his account coherent; however, they oblige the reader to pay attention and remember, when such detail occurs, where and in what context it occurred before in the action. Also, there are long gaps in the narrative sequence which require sustained attention. For example, chapter 35 begins with Poe approaching the lighthouse after his disappearance from the narrative (he had been hypnotized by Count Dionisio di Tangeri, Nolie Mae’s father, in chapter 27). Similarly, Poe heads out to cast multiple votes in chapter 38, long after he was last seen in the Whig crib in chapter 8.

Marlowe varies his point of view and mode of narration. Many chapters are told in first person by a variety of narrators, including Dupin, an imaginary character, Phidias Peacock, and Virginia. But some of the chapters centering on Edgar’s activities are told from the third person perspective. Some sections are in dialogue form, as those between Poe and Dupin and between the Doctor who cares for Poe in the hospital, John J. Moran, and his wife, Mary. In some of the later chapters, the narrator shifts, sometimes without clear indication. For example, in chapters 43 through 50, the narrator may be Dupin in dialogue with Poe, then suddenly Moran interrogating his wife.

Some sections of the novel offer interesting conversation about Poe’s work (e.g., Eureka in chapter 34). After Edgar and Virginia consummate their love in chapter 10, Marlowe quotes “Eleonora.” Other sections are satirical: for example, the ongoing ridicule of the practice of hiring voters for one dollar a vote. Frequently the voter cannot even remember the address of the now-deceased voter whose vote he casts. Marlowe’s satire of Marie Louise Shew’s husband, a water-cure therapist, is bitingly funny.

The last eleven chapters of the novel are quite confusing. Though Nolie Mae seems to represent the idealized woman of Poe’s stories (she is called “the untouchable,” 239, and portrays the spiritual side of Poe’s love of woman), her
activities in these concluding chapters seem wild and treacherous. She has had relationships with Poe’s brother, Henry, whom she seems to love and seeks to find again after his disappearance from his lodgings in la Rue de la Gaite; with whom she seems to love and seeks to find again after his

erous. She has had relationships with Poe’s brother, Henry, although there were many men of genius who condemned

Morrison and Chris Baldick. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, End of the World is good fun to read, especially if we do not deviates from the truth of Poe’s actual adventures. But in the other begins?” (305) So, too, Marlowe has chosen to write writer like Edgar writes from his secret dreams to banish obsessions more, the more its ending eludes him—with senses Marlowe’s intentions. As Dupin comments to Dumas, “Edgar by now is confusing the story—which has come to obsess him the more, the more its ending eludes him—with the events of his own life. Who are we to gainsay him? A writer like Edgar writes from his secret dreams to banish irksome reality. But can anyone say where one leaves off and the other begins?” (305) So, too, Marlowe has chosen to write an imaginative version of Poe’s life. Some if it obviously deviates from the truth of Poe’s actual adventures. But in the realm of fiction, who can say what is “true” and what is fanciful? Of one thing we can be sure. The Lighthouse at the End of the World is good fun to read, especially if we do not question its plot too closely.

Glen A. Omans
Temple University


To quote Poe (May 1842 review of Hawthorne’s Twice-Told Tales), here’s a book of “those tales of effect, many fine examples of which were found in the earlier numbers of Blackwood.... They were relished by every man of genius; although there were many men of genius who condemned them without just ground.” The 17 tales in the Oxford collection span 1817-32. Among them are “The Buried Alive,” “The Man in the Bell,” and “Passages in the Diary of a Late Physician,” which Poe mentioned (if not always with precise titles); we also find William Mudford’s “The Iron Shroud,” “Le Revenant,” and “The Thunder-Struck and the Boxer”—all inspirations for some of Poe’s works. Actually, Poe could have adapted any one of these tales because they feature characters and situations that, wrought by him into far greater art, became emphatic in his recurrent stock-in-trade. As the editors state in their Introduction, Poe’s revamping of the typical Blackwood’s tale of terror affected “momentous consequences for the tradition of the short story in English” (xiii). Poe and his Blackwood’s predecessors and contemporaries recognized that a successful terror tale necessitated a foundation in realism, and the introductory observa-

tions on this practice are lucidly set forth. Morrison and Baldick deliberately winnow from the famous Scottish magazine’s first sixteen years, those during which “its short fiction made the most distinctive impact on the world of letters.” Likewise they eliminate the “sentimental and comical fiction of that period” because it is essentially “unpalatable to modern readers” (xvii): wise principles these. Textual matters are tersely explained; surprisingly, we learn that reprints of the earliest volumes of Blackwood’s created variants. Good explanatory notes, a list of brief biographies of the authors whose tales appear in this volume, and a “Select Bibliography” (I noticed one error in my inspection—Robert Mayo’s influential article on Gothic fiction in magazines appeared in Modern Language Review, not Modern Literary Reviews) enhance the usefulness of this book, one that should appeal to the Poe world. Links between Poe and Blackwood’s have long been known, and several additional studies might be cited, e.g., those by E. Kate Stewart (“The Raven”), Bruce I. Weiner (wide-ranging coverage), and mine (on “Murders”). Overall, this book ought to spur still farther-reaching investigations (BF).


In this time of retrenchment at just about every reputable press, the appearance of this book is refreshing. Editor Kane has assembled a useful collection of thirty-two writers in the Poe era, extending from Sigourney through Adah Isaacs Menken and Emma Lazarus. We expect to find selections from Bryant, the other “fireside poets,” Emerson, Melville, Dickinson, Whitman, and Poe in such an anthology, but how about Fuller, Osgood, Howe, Hawthorne, Brownell, Phoebe Cary, and others not customarily the fare in such gatherings? The only one I miss is R. H. Stoddard, and this absence is forgiveable—or so many readers of nineteenth-century poetry would say. Kane points out that, although New England commanded great influence on American literature during the nineteenth century, more than half the writers who appear in this book worked outside that region. The introduction, the headnotes to the selections, and the explanatory notes are generally sensible (an exception being what Kane terms the “invented” place names in “Ulalume”: Auber, Weir, Yaneek (371). The fourteen poems by Poe place him in ranks with Dickinson, Whitman, Very, and Emerson as regards quantity. No sloughing off Poe as a “minor” author in this collection. Twelve female poets constitute a great advance over representation of women poets in any other anthology of verse from the era. Even John Hollander’s recent Library of America volume 1 of nineteenth-century poets (with twenty-four Poe titles) includes just seven women (unlike Kane, though, he represents Sarah Helen Whitman—by one piece; Hollander’s two volumes select from twenty-one women poets over a longer time span). Let us hope that Kane’s book enjoys a long shelf life; it will be extremely useful in the classroom (BF).

(Continued on page 8)

"We live in Gothic times," Carter wrote in 1974, as she meditated on Poe’s central influence on her work, and her fascination with "Gothic tales, cruel tales, tales of wonder, tales of terror, fabulous tales that deal directly with the imagery of the unconscious" (459-60). The specter of Poe looms everywhere in the shadows of Carter’s posthumously published collection *Burning Your Boats*. Poe’s “Valley of Many-Colored Grass” mingles with the incest-tinged Eden of her story “Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest.” Baudelaire’s rum-soaked mistress, in “Black Venus,” finds she “can’t look at the cat without wanting to strangle it” (232). In “A Souvenir of Japan,” the female narrator muses on her Japanese lover: “I should have liked to have had him embalmed and been able to keep him beside me in a glass coffin, so that I would watch him all the time and he would not have been able to get away from me” (30).

Deaths of beautiful women abound. Carter memorably stages the death of Poe’s mother in “The Cabinet of Edgar Allan Poe,” after her last night as Ophelia, eyes glittering with “a febrile brilliance that was not of this world” (265). Elizabeth Poe left her son with a “memory of hunger and thirst endlessly unsatisfied,” an “awareness of mortality,” a flair for “theatrical illusion,” and a belief that his mother’s other selves still lived in the dressing-room looking glass (266-67). And so he married a young girl with a “forehead like a tombstone” (269), whose death left him haunted by ghosts. Desperate to change his appearance, he shaved off his mustache, only to discover the horrifying image of Virginia’s face reflected back from the mirror. If the painter of Poe’s oval portrait drains the life from his subject as he paints her vibrant likeness, so Carter’s Poe seems to dematerialize before our eyes, dissolving in the “laser light” of a Baudelairean republic where there were no shadows to hide in. (For comments on Carter’s appropriation of Poe in her fiction, see Burton R. Pollin, “Poe’s Presence in the Fiction of 1987,” *PSA Newsletter* 15 [Fall 1987]: 7.)

Gothic fiction such as Poe’s, Carter writes, “grandly ignores the value of our institutions,” and retains a singular moral function—“that of provoking unease” (273). This is equally true of Carter’s own tales, which are perversive, macabre, haunting, feminist, provocative. Poe would have been suffering from rabies. Desperate to change his appearance, he shaved off his mustache, only to discover the horrifying image of Virginia’s face reflected back from the mirror. If the painter of Poe’s oval portrait drains the life from his subject as he paints her vibrant likeness, so Carter’s Poe seems to dematerialize before our eyes, dissolving in the “laser light” of a Baudelairean republic where there were no shadows to hide in. (For comments on Carter’s appropriation of Poe in her fiction, see Burton R. Pollin, “Poe’s Presence in the Fiction of 1987,” *PSA Newsletter* 15 [Fall 1987]: 7.)

A Pro Poe

The economics of electronic versions of rare books is the subject of a two-year study undertaken by the University of Virginia Library with financial support from the Mellon Foundation. 582 first editions of novels and stories published between 1775 and 1850 will constitute the Electronic Archive of Early American Fiction, and will include all first editions of Poe’s works. The project will make accessible rare and fragile volumes, which will be searchable via computer. If a researcher looks up a specific word, he will get a list of quotations showing how early American fiction writers used that word.

The January 1997 issue of *Poetry Calendar* included a cartoon, “This Old Poem with E. A. Poe,” a cross between “This Old House” and “The Philosophy of Composition.”

Allen Ginsberg’s “Is About” (*The New Yorker* [10-21-96]) invoked Poe.


In the fall of 1996, Amtrak, in cooperation with the American Poetry and Literary Project, distributed 10,000 copies of *The Raven and Other Favorite Poems* on its Northeast Corridor trains. This distribution was part of a campaign to promote literacy and to encourage more people to read poetry. Andrew Carroll, head of the literacy project, also coordinated the distribution with Delta Airlines and vehicle inspection stations in Washington, D. C.


A profile of composer Augusta Read Thomas, appearing in the 30 March *Boston Globe*, mentioned her opera based on “Ligeia.”

Acknowledgements

With this issue of the newsletter, the current editors wish to thank all those who have provided information on Poe and Poe-related activities since their first issue was published at WPI in 1991. Special thanks go to Diran Apelian, John Carney, Peggy Isaacson, Penny Rock, and Carol Garofoli at WPI. For regular provision of news items, the editor owes debts of gratitude, in particular, to Burton R. Pollin, Benjamin F. Fisher, and Daniel Hoffman. Others who have been faithful supporters of the newsletter include Lasley Dameron, Jerry Kennedy, Richard Kopley, and Jeffrey Savoye. We are also grateful for the sustaining support of our sister Poe organizations in Baltimore and Richmond (KPL).