Seventeenth Annual Meeting
Poe Studies Association

The annual meeting of the PSA at the Modern Language Association Convention included two sessions at the Washington Sheraton on December 29th, the first at 8:30 a.m., the second at 3:30 p.m. The treasurer’s report showed a membership of 191. Income for 1989 (to Dec. 15) was $1301.38, expenses $1414.85, leaving a cash-on-hand balance of $1170.12. Interest from the Prime Reserve fund was $164.57, bringing the fund to $2004.57. Total assets were $3174.69.

A Citation naming PSA’s newest honorary member, Patrick F. Quinn (Wellesley College) was read by Richard Kopley (Penn State, DuBois). (See “Citation.”)

Speakers at the first session, chaired by Al Omans (Temple), were John Carlos Rowe (UC Irvine), “Poe and Race in the Antebellum South”; David Leverenz (University of Florida), “Poe and Gentry Virginia”; and William J. Scheick (University of Texas, Austin), “An Intrinsic Luminosity: Poe’s Use of Optical Theories.” Speakers at the second session, chaired by Liliane Weissberg (University of Pennsylvania), were Leland S. Person, Jr. (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale), “Reading and Composing The Raven”; James Postema (Concordia), “Formal Pressures in Poe’s Dream Poems”; Marty Roth (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis), “Reading under Erasure: The Poe Text”; and Bruce Krajewski (University of Chicago), “The Simple Hermeneutics of The Purloined Letter.” Also on December 29th, a special session on Poe was held at the Washington Sheraton at 1:45 p.m. Chaired by Richard Kopley, the session featured speakers James L. Machor (Ohio State University, Lima), “Poe’s Criminal Readers”; Martin A. Orzech (Temple), “Embedded Readers and Interred Meanings: The Indictment of Audience in ‘The Black Cat’ and ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’”; Monika M. Elbert (St. John’s, Staten Island), “‘The Man of the Crowd’ and the Man outside the Crowd: Poe’s Narrator and the Democratic Reader”; and Mary H.G. McFadden (Temple), “‘Mystification’—An Allegory of Failure.” More than 50 people attended each of the three meetings. The topic for the 1990 meeting, to be held at the MLA Convention in Chicago, is “Fictional Voyages.”

Citation

For forty years, Patrick F. Quinn has distinguished himself in Poe studies. In his classic work, The French Face of Edgar Poe (1957), he discerningly investigated the French admiration of Poe, thus sharpening our perception of Poe as a writer of great reason illuminating that which is beyond reason. This volume’s treatment of Poe’s fiction is memorable; its analysis of The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, for example, “the crucial text,” tellingly identifies and elaborates the novel’s “theme of deception” and its “pattern of recurrent revolt.” In subsequent studies, Professor Quinn continued his examination of Poe and France, and also offered thoughtful readings of Eureka and “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Over the past twenty years, he has written numerous reviews and review-essays concerning Poe-related works, critiques which reveal his keen regard for evidence, scholarly thoroughness, and clarity of expression. Professor Quinn’s major recent effort, the editing of The Library of America’s Edgar Allan Poe—Poetry and Tales (1984), has yielded a fine volume, one which allows Poe’s imaginative writing—including Eureka—to be readily and handily available to the general reader. His work-in-progress, reflective of his abiding interest in Poe and France, is a translation of Henri Justin’s massive French dissertation on Poe. Notably, even as Professor Quinn has published extensively on Poe, he has also served the field through his teaching Poe at Wellesley College, his encouraging and advising younger Poe scholars, and his evaluating Poe-related manuscripts. It may be remembered that in 1957, in The French Face of Edgar Poe, Professor Quinn predicted “a rediscovery of Poe”;
in the years ensuing, such a rediscovery did occur, and it is still with us. Patrick F. Quinn has been—and continues to be—a vital contributor to that rediscovery. Accordingly, the Poe Studies Association is proud to welcome Professor Quinn as an Honorary Member.

Richard Kopley
The Pennsylvania State University, DuBois Campus

Scholarly Poe Events

At the 1989 conference of the Pennsylvania State Universities (Indiana, PA; October 5-7), Claudia Davy (Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania) presented a paper titled "The Art of the Hoax in Edgar Allan Poe's 'William Wilson' and Herman Melville's 'Billy Budd': A Psychological Comparison."

At the American Comparative Literature Association Convention (University Park, PA; March 29-31, 1990), Johann Pillai (SUNY at Buffalo) presented a paper titled, "The Translated Image: Readings of Poe's 'The Raven' by Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Odilon Redon and Edouard Manet."

Two Poe sessions will be offered at the American Literature Association Convention (San Diego, Bahia Resort Hotel, May 31 - June 3). The first of these, chaired by Ben Fisher, will include Denise Schimp (Western Oregon State College), "The Narrator in 'The Masque of the Red Death';" Dennis W. Eddings (WOSC), "Mining 'El Dorado's Gold';" and Ruth Clements (USC), "Alcoholism and Poe's 'Hop-Frog.'" The second of the two Poe sessions, chaired by Glen A. Omans (Temple), will feature Sam Worley (Univ. of North Carolina), "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym and the Ideology of Slavery"; Jack G. Voller (SIU-Edwardsville), "Poe's Ancient Mariners: The Failure of Community"; and David Daniels (Carnden County College), "Poe and the Machinery of Analysis: Maelzel's Automaton Revisited."

On Sunday, October 7, 1990, Richard Fusco (St. Joseph's University) will offer The Sixty-Eighth Annual Poe Lecture at The Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. Considering the influence of "The Gold-Bug" on subsequent detective fiction, he will focus on such writers as Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Raymond Chandler, Dashiel Hammett, and Dorothy Sayers.

The Poe Studies Association will offer two sessions at the Modern Language Association Convention (Chicago; December 27-30, 1990); both will be chaired by Liliane Weissberg (Univ. of Pennsylvania). Speaking at the first session will be Jorgen Holmgaard (Univ. of Aalborg), "Space and Time in Poe's Fictional Voyages"; Arkady Plotnitsky (Univ. of Pennsylvania), "Out of Space—Out of Time"; and R. C. De Prospo (Washington College), "Pym, Prometheus, and the Mariner."

Presenting at the second session will be Hans-Ulrich Mohr (Universität Bielefeld), "Poe's Aesthetic Voyages into Organic Nature"; Nancy Bentley (Boston Univ.), "Poe and the Disfiguring of Travel Writing"; Paige Matthey Bynum (Univ. of North Carolina), "Racial Anthropology and The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym"; and David Kadlec (Univ. of Chicago), "The Flowering of Miss Jack Tar."

The Poe Studies session of NEMLA 1991 (Hartford; April 5-7) will concern "The Logic and Rhetoric of Science in Poe's Storytelling." Send proposals, abstracts, and papers by October 1, 1990, to the chair of the session, Susan E. Welsh, Dept. of English, Murray Hall, CN 5054, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903.

Other Poe Events


The National Endowment for the Humanities has made a substantial grant for production of The Film Odyssey documentary of the life of Poe. The producer of the documentary is Karen Thomas; the writer is Dan Smith (Univ. of Kentucky).

Jean Mudge of Viewfinder Films, Inc. has written a script for a thirty-minute Poe documentary, "Edgar Allan Poe: Architect of Dreams." She will produce the documentary, poet Dave Smith will serve as host, and actor Norman George will offer the voice-over and perform as various Poe characters.

On April 17, 1990, Bruce V. English, President of the Poe Foundation, Inc. and Director of the Poe Museum, presented a talk on "Poe and the Poe Museum" at Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, during the fifth anniversary celebration of the Olin Library. Dr. and Mrs. English presented a copy of the Edmund Quinn bust of Poe to Rollins College in honor of retiring president Thaddeus Seymour and in memory of his father, Whitney North Seymour, lawyer and Poe devotee.

Poe’s tale "The Man That Was Used Up" has been included in the 1990 volume, The Oxford Book of Humorous Prose, edited by Frank Muir ($35.00).

The Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site in Philadelphia is sponsoring a Poe-related after-school program and will, in late June and July, sponsor the Summer Magazine Club, which employs Poe's writings to inspire writing in neighborhood children.

Stephan Loewenthel, owner of The 19th Century Shop, will publish a Poe catalogue in the late spring of 1990 featuring some of the items he purchased at the recent H. Bradley Smith will serve as host, and actor Norman George will offer the voice-over and perform as various Poe characters.

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In honor of its tenth year anniversary, the Edgar Allan Poe House and Museum in Baltimore will sponsor a week-end of Poe talks at The Enoch Pratt Free Library. On Saturday, October 13, 1990, Michael Deas will speak on "The Faces of Edgar Allan Poe," and Tamaki Hone (Sononda Women's College) will elaborate "Poe's Influence on Japanese Literature." On Sunday, October 14, Frank Shiwrs will discuss "Edgar Allan Poe and Baltimore," and Chris Scharpf will explore the question "Where Did They Bury Edgar Allan Poe?" During the last two week-ends of October, dramatic readings of Poe's works will be presented at the Poe House.

The PA Renaissance Faire Actors' Conservatory will offer a Poe Festival at the Mount Hope Mansion in Cornwall, Pennsylvania on October 27, 1990.
Poe at Auction

Bidding is quick at the auction of American literature from the H. Bradley Martin collection at Sotheby's in New York City on the afternoon of January 30, 1990.

"At fifty thousand, standing in the back."
"Sixty, in the center of the room."
"Seventy, on my left now."
"Seventy-five, against the wall."
"Eighty, new place."
"Eighty-five, out of the woodwork."

The auctioneer's sharp eye and colorful palaver are almost as fascinating as the sums of money ventured by the slightest nod, hand gesture, at times only a meaningful glance.

Some bids come in over one of the many phones at the front of the room.

"Ninety, on the telephone, now."

As the price clears one hundred thousand, bidders drop out by lowering and shaking their heads, sometimes almost in anger.

The pace quickens even more and sprints for the final sum.

"One hundred ten."
"Twenty."
"Thirty."

It is difficult to comprehend that the bid is rising ten thousand dollars at a jump, as quickly as the auctioneer can move his hand to the location of the next bidder. Then comes a pause.

"One hundred fifty thousand."
"Any advance? All through?"
"Fair warning."

And down comes the gavel on lot 2191, Tamerlane, and Other Poems. By a Bostonian. Noted in the catalogue (for which Richard Kopley served as consultant) as "First Edition of the Author's First Book, and the most celebrated rarity in American Literature." Sotheby's premium of ten per cent will be added to bring the total price to $165,000.

Inevitably, one wonders: what would Poe have done with $165,000?

The other big ticket Poe items are Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque (Phila.: Lea and Blanchard, 1840), volume one only, "Poe's own copy, full of numerous and extensive autograph manuscript corrections," $130,000; The Raven, and Other Poems (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1845), inscribed by Poe to Sarah Helen Whitman, $65,000; Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems (Baltimore: Hatch and Dunning, 1829), first edition of Poe's first published book, $55,000; The Prose Romances, Uniform serial edition, No. 1, the first separate edition of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," $55,000 (the winning bid made over the telephone); three autograph letters mounted in a case, $45,500 (also a telephone bid); Tales (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1845), $45,000; and Eureka: A Prose Poem, Poe's own copy, "copiously revised and corrected by him," $45,000.

Lot 2192, Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems, brings "only" $55,000, five to twenty-five thousand less than anticipated. But lot 2214, Histoires extraordinaires, Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires, and Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym, all three published by Michel Levy frères, expected to go for five hundred to eight hundred dollars, is knocked down at one thousand seven hundred. The editor of the PSA Newsletter obtains The Conchologist's First Book, second edition, for one hundred seventy-five dollars. And so they go, more quickly than one would ever have imagined, at the largest sale of Poe items, and many other classics of American literature, since the Wakeman sale of April 28-29, 1924.

The winning bidder on Tamerlane, and Other Poems, William Self, president of his own production company, is an enthusiastic collector of works by nineteenth-century authors, mainly English—the Brontes, George Eliot, Dickens, and Lewis Carroll—but also of material by Mark Twain and Poe, "when I can find it." Self bought the Tamerlane to "augment" his Poe collection, which he describes as "decent, but not a great one."

It includes several first editions, one of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," for example, the manuscript of "For Annie," and several single page manuscripts of Poe's shorter poems. A graduate of the University of Chicago, Self has not studied Poe formally but is an enthusiastic reader of Poe's work. Though a resident of California, he has visited the Poe house and grave in Baltimore, the Poe houses in Philadelphia and the Bronx, and the Poe Museum in Richmond. Though he keeps his rarest pieces in a vault, he is pleased to show them to friends on request.

© William Wrenn

The successful bidder for the H. Bradley Martin first edition of Poe's Tamerlane was William Self (second from the left), President of William Self Productions. To his left is his wife Margaret; to his right are (from left to right) Denise Bethel, Vice President of Sotheby's and former curator of the Poe Museum; Holt Edmonds, member of the Board of Trustees of the Poe Foundation, Inc.; and Norman George, Poe actor.

An active successful bidder on first editions and letters by Hawthorne and Melville, in addition to Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems (1829), the edition of The Raven, and Other Poems inscribed by Poe to Sarah Helen Whitman, Poe's copy of Eureka, an autograph manuscript of "Elizabeth,"
and several other Poe items, is Stephan Loewentheil, owner and manager of The 19th Century Shop in Baltimore. He
describes the auction as "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to
secure rare Poe materials. A number of the items Loewentheil
purchased will be featured in a forthcoming (late spring) 19th
Century Shop catalogue which he promises "will be of great
interest." Mr. Loewentheil recently made the news in a most
positive way and earned the gratitude of the scholarly com-
unity when his trained eye was attracted by faded notations
made in red ink in a three-hundred-year-old volume of Henry
V for sale in a Philadelphia book store in late February.
Through the notations, made by 18th-century Shakespearean
scholar Edward Cabell, Loewentheil was able to identify the
volume, and many other volumes and letters, as missing from
the Rare Book Room of the University of Pennsylvania's Van
Pelt Library. His modest comment to the Philadelphia
Inquirer: "All I know is, I saw books which intuition told me
belonged somewhere else." Loewentheil's knowledge and
bibliophilic instincts led to the return of the materials and the
arrest of the alleged culprit. No doubt, the high prices which
rare books and autographs now command, so vividly demon-
strated at the Sotheby sale, prove a powerful temptation.
Again, one wonders: what might Poe have become with
$165,000?

Glen A. Omans
Temple University

Poe Entry Sold

An entry Poe wrote on October 23, 1826, as Secretary
of the Jefferson Literary and Debating Society of the University
of Virginia has been sold by the Archdiocese of Los
Angeles to the Jefferson Society. The entry, long ago cut from
the original record book (no longer extant) reads: "On Monday
the 23d there not being a quorum the Society did not proceed
to business - E A Poe." This entry, with an annotation by
Lancelot M. Blackford, a member of the Society in the 1850s,
will be permanently displayed in the Rotunda of the University
of Virginia.

Recent and Forthcoming Poe-Related Books

Several new Poe-related books not reviewed in this issue
are The Perfect Murder: A Study in Detection, David
Lehrman (NY: The Free Press, 1989), 242 pp., Cloth, $19.95;
The Library of H. Bradley Martin: Highly Important
American and Children's Literature, consultant Richard
Kopley (NY: Sotheby's, 1990), unpaged, Cloth, $80.00; The
Raven and Other Poems, Edgar Allan Poe, illus. Gahan
Wilson (NY: Berkley, 1990); Images of Poe's Works-A
Descriptive Inclusive Catalogue of Poe Illustrations, Burton
Pollin (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1989), 440 pp., Cloth,
$49.95; and Concordance to the Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe,
comp. Elizabeth Wiley (Sellingrove, PA: Susquehanna Univ.
Press; London and Toronto: Associated Univ. Presses, 1989),
745 pp., Cloth, $85.00. In August 1990, Paragon House will
reissue Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe, by Daniel Hoffman
(Univ. of Pennsylvania). In 1992, Twayne will publish the
Masterworks Series volume on Poe's The Narrative of Arthur
Gordon Pym, written by J. Gerald Kennedy (LSU).

Geddeth Smith, The Brief Career of Eliza Poe. Rutherford,

Stripped of notes, chronology, and blanks, this life of
Poe's mother makes a monograph of scarcely more than a
hundred pages. Even so, the amount of information it provides
about Eliza Poe much exceeds what has been available in the
opening chapter of Arthur Hobson Quinn's biography. Some
of the new information appears in more generous quotations
than Quinn gave of contemporary newspaper reviews of her
acting. Some comes from newspapers not used and perhaps
not consulted by Quinn or his researchers, especially from
smaller cities like Petersburg and Fredericksburg.

An actor himself, Smith observes Eliza Poe's career from
an actor's-eye view. He makes vividly clear each step in her
rise, as she builds her repertoire, takes on more challenging
roles, and is cast against more skilled and better-known actors.
Smith is well-informed about the plays, players, and play-
houses of the period. As a student of theatrical history, he
comments revealingly on the sort of difficulty various parts
presented and the risks and opportunities of acting in particu-
lar American theatres of the early nineteenth century, before
particular audiences. From the sympathetic and knowledge-
able perspective offered, the shape of David Poe's career also
emerges a little more clearly than before, although the nearly
universal condemnation of Poe's acting makes Mr. Smith's
gentle emphasis on his ability seem too charitable.

Smith's energetic research leads him to one important
conclusion and one surprising correction. Eliza Poe was not
just another actress. Talented, ambitious, a grueling worker,
she was at the time of her death widely known in America and
stood poised to do her best work, having performed with some
of the best actors in the country and played nearly three
hundred roles. And her name was Eliza, not Elizabeth, Poe.
Smith points out that the name "Elizabeth" was first used in the
Poe literature by Ingram, although no documentary evidence
supports it. As "Eliza" she appears in her marriage bond with
David Poe and in an obituary notice of her in a New York
newspaper.

On the down side, Smith commits regrettably often some
ancient biographical sins. Sometimes he presents idle con-
jecture as logical inference, fancying what the Poes could, would,
or might have done: "It must have been with mixed feelings
that Eliza and David greeted the arrival of the child who was
destined to become so great a writer" (100). Other times he
confounds social history with biography: Philadelphia in 1799
contained many French refugees, so Eliza, being there, "prob-
ably met" them (49). Differently damaging is a pervasive
careslessness in reproducing the punctuation, capitalization,
and italicization of primary sources, undermining confidence
in the soundness of the research. Still, Smith helps us see Eliza
Poe, not as background material, but as a person, and gives her
back her name.

Kenneth Silverman
New York University


These three single-author collections of essays, each devoted only partly to Poe, mark extremes of much contemporary criticism. The volumes by Day and Pahl, both recent dissertations now in book form, represent one extreme. Inspired by recent French criticism, chiefly Barthes and Todorov in Day’s case, Derrida and Lacan in Pahl’s, both offer ahistorical deconstructionist close-readings which assume that Poe’s tales are extraordinarily carefully written matrices whose every peculiarity inscribes transgression and indeterminacy on a world of pure textuality.

Day’s reading of “Murders in the Rue Morgue” is more predictable than Pahl’s readings of “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Assignation,” and the frame of Pym. To Day, the seemingly old-fashioned and realistic “Murders” is actually the slingshot with which Poe proved himself “distinctly modern” in assaulting the Goliath-like “monolith which realism became” in the nineteenth century (25). The smooth stones of Poe’s David are a number of apparently “trifling inconsistencies” in terminology (38): the “murders” aren’t really murders; the tale is avowedly a “commentary” on an introduction which merely “prefaces”; Dupin, the man of pure imagination, displays a “freak of fancy”; the “voice” of the “brutal” murderer is the squeal of a brute; and the Prefect is said to be now “too profound” and then “too cunning to be profound.” These pebbles, deployed by a narrator of “uncertain status” (35) in the slings of “a discourse which articulates itself through the propagation of intertextualities” (39), completely subverts Dupin’s avowedly “positivist and deterministic” realism (54). Reversing the last line of the story, Day claims it is Dupin (and thus Poe), not the Prefect, who is profoundly “denying what is and explaining what is not” (64).

The significance Day finds in Poe’s ironic word-choice, Pahl finds in Poe’s supposed puns and etymologies. The house of Usher is a text, he says, since “text” derives from the Latin word for web and the house is adorned with a “web-work” of fungi. Madeline Usher is a text since her name puns on “mad lines.” Roderick, whose hair is “web-like” and whose name connotes “line” (rod) and “twist” (Middle English “wrick”), is the perfect inter-text. Elaborating Marie Bonaparte’s theory of Poe’s mother obsession, Pahl views the narrator of “Usher” as seeking to “read” the text of his originary self in the pure textuality of the womb/crypt/library of Usher, but, failing, is only “ushered” (“metaphorized” in Greek) into successive misreadings. With much the same ingenuity, Pahl uncovers a nearly identical plot of “textual estrangement” in “The Assignation” before moving on to Pym where this “problematic” culminates in the bringing of the “author himself” into the inescapably misread text (42). There Pahl finds “e a p” (Poe’s initials) inscribed in the Tsalian charms but “E O P” (Poe backwards) in their cul-de-sac. All of this makes sense if, with Pahl, we view Poe “not as a historic identity, . . . but as an Interpretive fiction, in other words, as the series of texts that are attached to that name” (40).

Such sense must, however, appear specious to one at the opposite extreme of critical thought, an ardant historicist like the author of the third collection, who views Poe not as interpretive fiction but as verifiable fact. In sharp contrast to deconstructive tyros like Day and Pahl, the avowedly old-guard Rubin is primarily interested in offering an interpretation of Poe’s life illustrated with only the briefest commentary on a wide variety of Poe’s texts. Rubin takes his “facts” from secondary sources, most notably Hervey Allen’s Israel and, which, he complains, is “e oly romanticized” (152). Yet his own imaginative re-creation of Poe’s life is just as fictive. We are asked to envision Poe as “a talented, overly emotional youth” in Richmond (181), “eavesdropping raptly in the cellar of the Allan residence, as the slaves conversed and told stories” (183), while fleeting the “soulless, unimaginative, money-grubbing [white] people [who] dared to make insinuations about his dead mother and father, . . . talented actors!” (180). The main question asked in this biographical melodrama is why Poe wrote “almost nothing” about the South (133). To answer it, Rubin completely disregards the most explicit of that almost nothing: “The Gold-Bug,” the early SLM reviews and Julius Rodman chapters which characterize Jefferson and Virginia, and the reviews of Ingraham’s The South-West and Longfellow’s Poems on Slavery, which comment on the slave question. Instead he prefers to speculate on various reductive identifications: the house of Usher as Monticello, M. Maillard of “Tarr and Fether” as Thomas Jefferson, the alarm bell of “The Bells” as Jefferson’s “fire bell in the night” (the Missouri Compromise), the fire in “Hop-Frog” as the Richmond theatre fire of 1811, etc. He denies, indeed, that Poe consciously intended such historical allegory, but intentionality is not what interests him. Rather, he seeks to read Poe’s imaginative works as the Rorschach of a regional mind so sensitive that its literary fantasies encoded Souther realities as surely as Pharaoh’s dreams encoded Near Eastern ones.

Whether Rubin’s historical inkblots are less interpretive fiction than Day’s and Pahl’s textual deconstructions remains to be seen. But all three writers clearly join hands with the Prefect (or Dupin?) in “denying what is and explaining what is not.”

Kenneth Alan Howe
University of Texas at San Antonio


Kenneth Alan Howe
University of Texas at San Antonio


Bloom sets off his study against the (back)ground of the "occult" conceptually inserted in the form of the daemonic: "an unnamed origin monstrously repressed" that "Poe and Freud both try to name, continually trying to make it present and visible" by means of tropes which "embody the origin yet point to it as 'outside' of themselves." He then explores the relation between psyche and textuality insofar as each insulates the process of analysis—a process whereby the origin (absent) itself is made visible (present) in its very figuration. While Poe and Freud employ a similar "technique" (narratives of analysis), Bloom argues that they "propose opposite functions for their discourses in which Freud uses the discourse of fiction to find truth and Poe exploits the discourse of truth to create fiction." In this respect, Bloom examines "Freud's production of a model of the psyche and its processing through and functioning in language and Poe's model of textuality as it is processed through and functions within a model of the psyche." This distinction forces (is forced by) Bloom to conclude the opposite of what appears to be its logical import: ". . . reality for Freud is the ultimate referent and arbiter . . . as language is the ultimate reality for Poe, in whose stories reality itself becomes a fiction." At their very center, however, both discourses reveal the absence of truth—that is, truth as nothingness, the place/space in which a "lost" origin is (re)inscribed.

Bloom traces the relation between this lost and "originating structural cause" and "the textual structure that represents it" to the Oedipal scene, and concludes that " . . . the Oedipal quest is itself put into place by a transcendent term: the Phallus, a mythologized bodily part . . . a 'physical' representation of a prohibition operating in the structure." For Poe, in turn, Oedipus "stands for the scene of an enigma . . . the secret of the origin of knowledge." Such (self)knowledge "resides within the eyes of the daemonic and doomed female figures." Thus Bloom concludes: "Both Poe and Freud find their quest for an ultimate referent beyond the process of signifier and signified held as a secret by a woman." That is, " . . . the Phallus as ultimate referent and as transcendent meaning turns inside-out as a reversed mirror image of itself and becomes the image of the womb: receiver and deliverer of meaning"—witness Freud's "Dora" and Poe's "Ligeia."

Bloom draws these conclusions precipitously, with little attention to the development and coherence of his own thinking, as though his book is in a hurry to finish itself. Similarly, his individual readings of texts seem forced, confusing/confused, and misdirected in their brevity, in their attempt to do too much in too little space. Regarding the central notions of authority, recollection, and beginnings/origins in Freud and Poe, Bloom passes over such seminal thinkers as Said (*Beginnings*) and Irwin (*American Hieroglyphics*). Moreover, his cursory treatment of the primal scene ignores the dual significance of "repetition" within the context of analysis and transcendence: that is, the "fabrication" of a textual knot around a negative moment (recollection backward) and positive moment (recollection forward) which, taken together, structure what never, in the first place, "took place" as such—the (knot of the subject's being, its very textuality. Finally, Bloom's readings 1) rely on the psyche, 2) confute "early" and "late" Freud, 3) condemn the notion of the phallus to the status of a (Kleinian) partial object (if anything is partial, it is the drive), and 4) refuse the "difference" in the discourse these narratives address: the very difference between a "story" that can (possibly) recover its absence to itself (origin) in a meaningful way, recuperating this "hole" as its end, its "not," and a "story" that would (impossibly) coincide with its origin, recover it as a "whole." The former is "neurotic" (Freud); the latter is "psychotic" (Poe). While this book offers an occasional insight into several of Poe's tales, its reading of "Freud" at the very intersection of that configuration of texts called "Poe" is generally disappointing.

Wuletich-Brinberg's study is less ambitious than Bloom's in its scope, but considerably more so in its intention: "I have tried to get under Poe's skin, to read his mind, and to study him as he consciously created his art from the depths of his being." At its depth, Wuletich-Brinberg discerns the uncanny as "the axis and the center of Poe's art." Its constituent elements include the self as impotent (paranoia) and omnipotent (megalomania). And these, in turn, inform the very heart of Poe's oeuvre regarding which the uncanny mirrors the phenomenon of repetition and its relation to "pre-oedipal human development, where the complexities of the family romance are simplified into the relationship between child and mother-as-world." From here, Wuletich-Brinberg short-circuits Freud to incorporate Otto Rank's explication of the "double" as a structural principle: " . . . the infant feels himself omnipotent whenever he recovers his closeness to his first world (his mother) and conversely impotent when deprived of that contact." Poe's use of the double is thereby understood as this place/space of repetition: the return of the repressed. Upon this site, however, Wuletich-Brinberg chooses to dis-place the very space of negation in the texts with Poe's intention: "The repetition of certain techniques and themes can be seen, then, as manifesting less 'the principle of repetition compulsion in the unconscious' than the artist's conscious reaffirmation of meanings expressed in earlier tales." Whereas Poe's tales of ratiocination obscure the unconscious, pass over it, his tales of passion address it with conscious abandon: " . . . his most memorable tales portray characters who fail to stave off unpleasant emotions . . . . Their inability to control (repress) their uncanny selves humanizes them and reveals that Poe himself was profoundly aware that reason used defensively . . . could not control passion, that passion was reality and truth and that unless he exhumed his buried self . . . he would, quite simply die, at least as an artist." Thus, through his characters, Wuletich-Brinberg concludes, Poe "imagined fulfilling himself through violence and destruction." And while " . . . it would have grieved him to think that no one could hear the appeals of his moral affirming self," it was Poe himself "who subverted and mutilated it almost beyond recognition."

My reservations, here, are even greater than with Bloom's study. While Bloom at least addresses the notion of repetition in terms of its Oedipal configuration, Wuletich-Brinberg de-
plays it as a pre-Oedipal event—that is, a phenomenon prior to the subject's inscription in language. It makes little sense to speak of the infant as omnipotent (megalomania) or impotent (paranoia) when it has yet to enter the cut or wound of discourse—when it has yet to enter the register of the symbolic by way of the Father, the Law (castration). The double, the uncanny, the return of the repressed: these make "sense" only to a subject—a being "beyond" the mirror stage (Imaginary), a being beyond "identification" with the Mother (the One), a being that does not/cannot coincide with itself and therefore can be in (dis)possession of itself—an Oedipal being. Otherwise, it is—indeed—paranoid. How can one speak of a family romance "between child and mother-as-world?" What "romance?" To read Poe in this light is to ignore the Freudian fort-da as a writing effect, to ignore the defiles of the signifier, to relegate Poe's texts to the Imaginary despite (in spite of) the fact that these are narrative events. Such are the implicit dangers of conflating author and oeuvre. Similarly, to say of Poe's doubles that they constitute "a reflection of and thus a confirmation of Poe's narcissism overflowing into homosexuality" seems equally mirrored in the Imaginary, encapsulated in the scopic drive itself.

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Ronald L. Smith's Poe In the Media is sure to be greeted enthusiastically by Poe aficionados everywhere. Smith attempts to enumerate as many of the appearances of Poe's works in the media as possible. The contents page lists the book's tripartite construction: Short Stories (the greater part of the book), Biography (works about Poe, and the shortest section), and Poems. Poe's works are listed alphabetically within each section, beginning with Spoken Word (if any) and followed by Music (again, if any) and Film.

The book's many positives are, however, offset by several glaring negatives. The first thing any scholar looks for in a reference work is an index. Unfortunately, Poe In the Media does not provide one. This puzzling omission detracts considerably from the book's usefulness. For instance, on pages 83-84, Mr. Smith discusses Alfred Hitchcock's love for "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and the Impressio Poe's works made upon the great director. A film scholar, or just a fan, picking up the book and coming upon the Hitchcock passage, would be tempted to look for other Hitchcock citations in the index—if any existed. I wondered if any other "pantheon" directors had either directed a Poe-based film or wanted to do so. Since the book had no index, I had to page through the book to find the answer (which seems to be no). Similarly, anyone wanting to find quickly all the references in the book to Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, or Basil Rathbone—or even Brother Theodore—has no easy way to do so.

Further, the author does not list his sources, either in the text (as footnotes, endnotes, or simple parenthetical citations) or at the end of the book in the form of a bibliography. A listing of sources would seem to be a minimum requirement for any scholarly work which aspires to be taken seriously or to serve as a resource.

Since many of the listings, Spoken Work especially, are lengthy and present a number of recordings, the transition to another work would be easier to find quickly if the title of each new listing were printed in bold type. On page eight, for example, three different recordings of "The Black Cat" are listed. Bold type would make the transitions apparent immediately.

Smith's unpretentious (if too jokey) style is refreshing and readable, but his 1990 popular culture references may not age well: on page 43, he compares a speaker's voice to the voice of Emo Philips—a little-known '80s comedian whose future recognizability is questionable. On the same page, he at least identifies Dudley Do-Right as the Mountie in the Jay Ward cartoons.

To his credit, Mr. Smith has done a lot of research—and it shows. His film analyses seem generally on target, and his critiques of the various film versions of "Murders in the Rue Morgue" are especially pointed and insightful. Smith's labors to put between two covers as much information on "Poe in the media" as possible are laudatory if, presumably, less than all-encompassing.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in Edgar Allan Poe. It is unfortunate, however, that an otherwise admirable addition to the Poe scholarly canon is marred by its lack of a basic scholarly apparatus.

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The striking and strange quality of almost all the forty-one photographs in this book can be explained, according to the dust jacket, chiefly by Marsden's use of infra-red film and specialized printing techniques which give grainy textures and stark contrasts. Perhaps they justified a month-long show at "The Special Photographers Company" London headquarters, but the student of Poe probably expects a better correspondence of text and illustration than in this repetitious and superficial set of an artist's "readings." Marsden speaks of collecting his pictures through the lands of Poe's ancestry and life in his Introduction—one crowded with erroneous ideas and facts, and ungrammatical, misspelled, and pretentious sentences. The USA, England, Ireland, Scotland, and France (because of Baudelaire!) gave him a variety of scenes of architecture and nature: leering gargoyles, crumbling manorhouse facades, funeral monuments, mouldering or cobwebby figurines, old furnishings, enshadowed windows and portals, gnarled trees, swirling clouds, and inky birds (inspired by the last of the Doré "Raven" sketches). These are scattered through a two-column reprint of seventeen tales and six poems. Perhaps five to ten of the melancholy pictures are germane to the text, as in "Monos and Una," but most are pictorial gaffes and irrelevancies: for example, a "Black Cat"
that is not black; a low, two-story and unmoated, tarmless "House of Usher"; a sphinx (for the tale) looking simply like a stone Egyptian figure; a baroque stone rider atop a fountain for "Metzengerstein"; a waterless, swampless landscape for "Silence"; and a tranquil, toothless woman's stone face for "Berenice." Marsden is clearly partial to old world estates and also uses a posed pair of aristocrats for two interpretations, but the result is simply a fantasy-trip caught by the lens of a special effects camera in a somewhat tedious and unpenetrating way. Besides, other photo-artists have dealt keenly with Poe—in 1969, the Romanian M. Dragomir and D. Petrescu, and in 1976, Willfried Satty, although with far less architectural support. Still, this effort by Marsden is useful to some readers and may advance a style of illustration that deserves further use and development.

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David Ketterer's contribution to Authoritative Studies in World Literature published by York Press certainly fulfills the avowed purpose of the series—to provide students of literature and young scholars with an inexpensive research tool that succinctly covers the life, work, and criticism of a single author. The book's chief virtue is its great concision. The student or young researcher seeking access to Poe will find a short biography, a chronological list of Poe's works, commentary on Poe's major works, a discussion of important critical issues, and a selected annotated bibliography all in a single slim volume. The five sections offer the reader rewards of varying magnitude.

The biography is a satisfying account of Poe's brief troubled life; it touches on the influential relationships and points out the events that shaped both Poe's personality and his art. In a short space, Ketterer effectively demonstrates "the compelling affinity that exists between Poe's life and his work."

A student in need of a quick look at the facts in the life of Poe will be served by this section, as will the scholar who wants to review the facts.

Anyone studying Poe will find helpful the chronological list that constitutes Section II. The dates and venues of publication are supplied along with information about the contents of books. An easy-to-follow key, a cross-referencing system, and notations on sources containing republication contribute to the usefulness of the listing.

Ketterer's treatment of the major works is a good guide to Poe's aesthetics, but it is also the portion of the book most seriously curtailed by the series format. Ketterer's use of an explication of "The Assignation" as an "open sesame" to Poe's creative concerns provides a glance at the complex relationship between imagination and intuition in the tales and highlights the difficulty of arriving at a definitive answer about how seriously the reader should take "Poe's visionary pretensions." Ketterer also does a good job of listing the central critical questions that scholars have asked about The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym. Unfortunately, his discussions of "The Fall of the House of Usher," the Dupin tales, "The Philosophy of Composition," and Eureka are limited to only the salient aspects of these works.

Section IV is recommended by a number of interesting points, including a convincing examination of the unity of the tales, poetry, and the cosmological treatise, Eureka; an explanation of Poe's use of the terms "grotesque" and "arabesque"; and an investigation of Poe's reputation among American and French critics. This final concern is augmented by the selected annotated bibliography.

This book can serve as a starting place for those searching for research opportunities, but it will best serve literature students seeking a handle on the major critical issues in the Poe canon and an understanding of the interconnections of Poe's creative output.

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