Report of the 1993 Meeting of the Poe Studies Association

The annual meeting of the Poe Studies Association, held at the 1993 convention of the Modern Language Association in Toronto, Canada (27-30 December), consisted of two sessions on the topic, "Rethinking Poe's Poetry." The first session, chaired by J. Gerald Kennedy (Louisiana State Univ.), met at 10:15 the morning of December 28th. Speakers were Amy Clampitt, "Rereading Poe's Poetry"; Chris Keams (Indiana Univ.), "Poe's Recoil from Reason: Poetry of the Countersublime"; and Joan C. Dayan (Univ. of Arizona), "Poe's Love Poems: Race, Magic, and Remembrance."

The second session, chaired by Liliane Weissberg (Univ. of Pennsylvania), met at 1:45 the afternoon of December 30th. Speakers were Dave Smith (Louisiana State Univ.), "Poe and the Nightmare Ode"; Daneen Wardrop (Western Michigan Univ.), "Still Form: Poe's Uncanny Valentines"; and Leland S. Person, Jr. (Southern Illinois Univ.), "The expanding eye to one love object: Poe's Poetics of Desire."

Attendance at the first session ranged between 50 and 60, reflecting the comings and goings typical of MLA sessions. The second session, held during the next-to-last scheduled time-slot, was attended by 24 hardy souls who did not have to leave early and who braved the sub-zero cold that prevailed during the entire conference. [It is time for an amendment to the MLA constitution forbidding December conferences north of the 54th parallel.] The topic for the 1994 PSA program, to be held at the MLA convention in San Diego, will be "Strategies of Power in Poe's Fiction." Send inquiries to J. Gerald Kennedy, Program Chairman.

EDGAR ALLAN POE AT ALA
Presiding, Kent P. Ljungquist, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Alexander H. Hammond (Washington State Univ.), "Dis-Figuring the Woman Writer: Poe's 'How to Write a Blackwood Article / A Predicament'
Roberta Sharp (California State Polytechnic Univ.), "Von Kempelen Discovered"
Benjamin F. Fisher (Univ. of Mississippi), "Poe in the 1890s"

The American Literature Association (ALA) is devoted to the study of American authors. Representatives of the PSA look forward to seeing you in San Diego, June 2-5, 1994, at the Bahia Resort Hotel.

Organizations

The Poe Museum of Richmond has received the sculpture, "The Edgar Allan Poe Memorial," from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Executed by Richard Henry Park (1832-1902) and commissioned by a group of New York actors, the memorial is a bronze relief of Poe, situated within a classical marble entablature. The inscription on the tablet is by William Winter.

At the NEMLA Poe session (Pittsburgh, April 8-9, 1994), the following papers were delivered: David S. Hogsette (Ohio State Univ.), "Mediating the Literary Marketplace: Poe's Self-Duping in 'The Man of the Crowd';" Richard Kopley (Pennsylvania State Univ., DuBois), "Transplanting and Transforming 'The Tell-Tale Heart';" Wheeler Winston Dixon (Univ. of Nebraska), "The Transmogrified Vision of Edgar Allan Poe in the Cinema: Alternate Realities and Unrealities." Session chair was Stephen Hahn (William Paterson College); secretary Stephen Rachman (Yale Univ.).

Michael Burdick (Tennessee Technological Univ.) will deliver the annual lecture at the 1994 meeting of the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore in October. His tentative title is "Poe and Catholicism."

The second seminar of the Indian Chapter of the Poe Society will take place at the American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad, in July 1994.

Poe in Performance

On 20 March 1994, the Richmond Poe Museum sponsored "An Afternoon in Poe's Richmond" featuring David Keltz as Poe and Marie Mills as Elmira Royster Shelton. The presentation included Poe's reminiscences of his days in Richmond, a recitation of "The Raven," and a rendering of "The Tell-Tale Heart."

In the fall of 1993, BAC, as part of the Off West-End British Festival of Visual Theatre in London, presented "Penny Dreadful." Inspired by texts of Poe and Raymond Chandler as well as the clowning of Jacques Tati and Laurel and Hardy, this production presented a tabloid tale of Victorian melodrama in which a mysterious figure named Madeline plays a pivotal role.

On 20 November 1993, "The Broken Hearts of Edgar Allan Poe," directed by Jaz Dorsey, was presented in the Church of St. Paul & St. Andrew, New York City. In addition to several of Poe's poems, the production included Signora Psyche Zenobia and her unusual predicament. Director Dorsey indicates that the dramatization was partially inspired by Daniel Hoffman's Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe.

After appearing in "Once Upon a Midnight: The Confessions of Edgar Allan Poe," Paul Clemens of Los Angeles has developed "An Evening of Mystery and Imagination," based on Poe's works.


On 10 September 1993, Steven Berkhoff's adaptation of "The Fall of the House of Usher" was presented at Crickdale Theatre, Andover, Hants, England.

The New York premiere of Anne LeBaron's "Devil in the Belfry" was presented by the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble in Merkin Concert Hall on 23 November 1993. According to a reviewer in the New York Times, who commented on this piece for violin and piano and its evocation of Poe's fastidiously ordered borough of Vondervotteimittis, "It was fun to listen for the stultifying regularity of the civic rhythm and its swift demise, and Irish tunes dredged up by the triumphant devil and his fiddle."

Excerpts from an opera version of "Ligeia," music by Augusta Read Thomas and libretto by Leslie Dunton-Downer, received a preview by Baltimore's Peabody Opera Theatre on 20 February 1994. Commissioned by Mstislav Rostropovich, the full opera will be presented for the Evian-les-bains Festival in France in May 1994. The operatic excerpts preceded "Poe . . . A Visit to the Haunted Palace," performed by David Keltz.

Other events in January's Baltimore Poe Birthday Celebration, commemorating the 185th anniversary of his birth, included "The Heart Disclosed," a monodrama based on "The Tell-Tale Heart," and dramatic renderings of "Berenice."

POE STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

The newsletter of the Poe Studies Association, Inc.
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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 noteworthy notes, which bear relevance to the PSA membership. Send materials to Kent Ljungquist, Department of Humanities, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA 01609-2280. We welcome suggestions designed to make the newsletter a more stimulating and useful publication.

PSA CURRENT OFFICERS
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The Poe Studies Association Newsletter is published twice a year. Subscriptions, which come with membership in the Poe Studies Association, are $8 per year. Send checks, payable to Poe Studies Association, to Dennis Eddings, English Department, Western Oregon State College, Monmouth, OR 97361. The PSA Newsletter is published independently of Poe Studies, published at Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164, subscription $8 per year (two issues).
Current Research and Publications

Lois Vines (Ohio Univ.) is editing and contributing to a collection of essays, *Poe Abroad: Influences, Reputation, Affinities*, which will commemorate in 1995 the 150th anniversary of the first literal translation of Poe into a foreign language, "The Gold-Bug" into French in 1845. Professor Vines reminds us that the period 1995-1999 will mark the sesquicentennial of several important events that launched Poe’s international renown: E. D. Forgues published the first analysis of Poe’s work into a foreign language (1846); Baudelaire translated "Mesmeric Revelation" (1848) and four years later wrote an essay that would spread knowledge of Poe’s works into many countries; and, of course, Poe’s death (1849).

The much delayed special issue of *Poe Studies* on "Poe and Gender" will contain essays by Joan Dayan, Jacqueline Doyle, and Monika Elbert. Guest editor Michael Williams contributes a review essay on the topic.

John E. Reilly has uncovered another possible source for Poe’s "Diddling," to be presented in a forthcoming issue of *Poe Studies*.


Douglas Tallack’s *Nineteenth-Century American Short Story: Language, Form, and Ideology* (Routledge), dealing with Poe and others, approaches the genre from a deconstructionist perspective.


Jerome Loving (Texas A & M Univ.) begins *Lost in the Customhouse: Authorship in the American Renaissance* (Univ. of Iowa Press) with a discussion of Irving, Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, Thoreau, and Emerson.

Joseph Andriano’s *Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction* (Pennsylvania State Univ. Press) deals with Poe, Irving, and others.

With Pamela Palmer, J. Lasley Dameron (Memphis State Univ., Emeritus) has published *An Index to the Critical Vo-

Kent Ljungquist (Worcester Polytechnic Inst.) has contributed the entry on Poe to the *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* (1994).


Omitted from the list of recent Poe-related dissertations in the last issue of the *PSA Newsletter* was Carola Elfriede Wittmann, "Schlegelian Traces in Nineteenth-Century American Literature" (Univ. of Washington Ph.D. Dissertation, 1990).

*Utopho*, the magazine of the Gothic Society, is published bi-monthly. Subscriptions ($42 US) may be addressed to Chatham House, Gosshill Rd., Chislehurts, Kent, England BR7 5NS.

Reminiscences of Poe in Baltimore

As John E. Reilly points out in "Robert D’Unger and His Reminiscences of Poe in Baltimore," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 88 (1993): 60-72, accounts and impressions of Poe’s contemporaries—acquaintances, friends, competing or collaborating writers and editors—have played a crucial role in shaping Poe biography. In his article, Reilly identifies and reprints a ten-page autograph letter by Chicago physician Robert D’Unger, who claims to have met Poe several times in Baltimore between 1846 and 1849. The letter, written in 1899, is part of the Ingram-Poe Collection in the University of Virginia Library.

Another reminiscence of Poe, also dating from 1899, has recently been discovered among the family papers of Poe biographer Eugene Lemoine Didier. On the fiftieth anniversary of Poe’s death Didier apparently drafted a commemorative article that he submitted to several periodicals. He based his article on the account of an unidentified Baltimorean “recently living in California.” Didier transcribed the account of the Californian, who claimed to have been "an intimate associate of Edgar Allan Poe for many years.” The reminiscence describes one of Poe’s favorite resorts in Baltimore, and offers an account of his death. For additional information, see the article entitled "Bard in the Coop," which appeared on the opinion pages of the 15 February 1994 issue of the *Baltimore Sun*. 
Notes and Queries

Martha Grimes on Poe
In The Horse You Came in on (New York: Knopf, 1993), mystery writer Martha Grimes provides her twelfth case for Scotland Yard’s Richard Jury and his two colleagues, Wiggins and Melrose Plant. Poe provides major episodes and scenic effects throughout the narrative: a murder at the January 19th vigil of spectators awaiting the unknown visitor to his monument in Baltimore’s Westminster Churchyard; a bogus Poe manuscript which is spun out in installments; two logical teachers of writing, one of whom avoids death via her amusing involvement with the manuscript; and frequent references to Poe’s family, life, and works. There is even a glancing reference (neutrally presented) to a well known Poe scholar (95). Grimes has indeed become familiar with Poe lore and criticism for this spin-off from Dupin’s yarns.

Burton R. Pollin
CUNY, Emeritus

C. W. Webber Notes “Valdemar”
Poe thought highly of the Western fiction of Charles Wilkins Webber, reserving special praise for his “Jack Long; or the Shot in the Eye,” a novella that contained a number of Poe-esque elements [Sanford Marovitz, “Poe’s Reception of C. W. Webber’s Gothic Western, ‘Jack Long; or, The Shot in the Eye’” Poe Studies 4 (1971): 11-13]. Poe even compared Webber favorably to Hawthorne. A journalist and explorer, Webber (1819-1856) was a contributor to the American Whig Review when Poe’s “The Facts in M. Valdemar’s Case” (later retitled “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar”) appeared in that magazine in December 1845. The widespread credulity inspired by the mesmeric hoax of “Valdemar” apparently impressed Webber, for a decade after the tale’s publication, he alluded to Poe in his own non-fictional survey of unaccountable mysteries. In ‘Sam’; or The History of Mystery (Cincinnati: H. M. Rulison, 1855), the title character embodies life’s mysterious circumstances, often attributable, in Webber’s view, to either superstition or religious bigotry. From Webber’s survey of religious persecution emerges the example of Philip Smith, who in Hadley, Connecticut in 1684, was a victim of attempted murder by witchcraft. The delirious and tormented Smith, his speech becoming incessant, offers a defiant deathbed cry: “I shall not be dead, when tis thought I am!” Webber adds, “After the opinion of all had pronounced him dead, his countenance continued as lively as if he had been alive; his eyes closed in slumber, and his nether jaw not falling down” (Webber 37). His face tumefied and discolored, Smith survives in a state of near suspended animation for over twenty-four hours. Webber further notes, “All the modern children of Sam will recognize in it [the incident in Connecticut] the original and perfect skeleton of the celebrated, ‘Valdemar case’ of Edgar A. Poe exhumed” (Webber 36) - Ed.

A Poe Letter for Sale
An interesting letter from Poe to Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, written on 20 October 1836 (misdated by Poe as “Oct: 20. 1837”), was recently offered for sale. The letter, #75 in Ostrom’s edition (Letters 1: 105-06), appears in a fine 6 1/4” x 7 3/4” facsimile in the Fall/Winter 1993 issue of autograph dealer Joseph Maddelena’s Profiles in History. This letter, which appeared in an Anderson Galleries Catalog in 1925 (Letters 2: 479), appears to be the last surviving letter Poe wrote before stepping down as editor of the Southern Literary Messenger on 3 January 1837; the original manuscript is approximately 8” x 10” in size, and carries a price tag of $39,500.

Joel J. Brattin
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Editor’s Note: Mr. Maddelena’s address is 345 N. Maple Drive, Suite 202, Beverly Hills, CA 90201.

Query: Information on “Cask” Sources Requested
Harry Eiss (Eastern Michigan Univ.) is working on Poe’s sources for “The Cask of Amontillado.” He requests that any information concerning work done on this topic be sent to him at the following address: Dept. of English, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197.


Newly Published:

Honors for PSA Members

Three members of the Poe Studies Association have received "Governor’s Citations" from William Donald Shafer of Maryland. Benjamin F. Fisher and Alexander Rose III, both PSA Honorary Members, and Jeffrey A. Savoye, Secretary-Treasurer of the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, received citations dated 16 January 1993 (and presented at the October 1993 meeting of the Poe Society). They were recognized for “impressive commitment to helping preserve and promote the legacy of a legendary writer who, although often misunderstood and unfairly characterized even to this day, has been wisely described as ‘a man who understood the temper of his times, and (who) foreshadowed so much of the future of literature.’” They were also honored for their support of the Poe House and Museum and the annual Poe Birthday Celebration.


1993 Treasurer’s Report

Membership in the PSA at year’s end was 187. Income for the year was $1697.65, expenses $618.66, leaving a cash balance of $4682.19. Interest in our investment account was $61.66, bringing the fund to a net value of $2436.43. [The amount of the fund’s value reported in the 1992 Treasurer’s Report — $2713.28 — was a misprint. The actual closing amount in the fund at the end of 1992 was $2374.77.] Again, the generosity of Worcester Polytechnic Institute in funding the PSA Newsletter has enabled us to build this reserve. That funding ends in two years, and if a new sponsor of the Newsletter is not found, we will at least be in a position to carry on with our own resources.—DWE.

Reviews


Tailored to the format of “Twayne’s Studies in Short Fiction,” this book will find uses among students and experienced Poe scholars alike. May’s goal—“All Poe’s short fictions are either analyzed in some detail or commented on in relation to their generic subtype or their use of short-story generic conventions” (ix)—is ambitious, but he achieves it with grace and persuasiveness, showing how Poe’s techniques evolved from and blended traditions of realism and romance devolving from eighteenth-century essays and novels, from gothicism, from lyric poetry, and from drama. According to May, “Poe was, if nothing else, a thoroughgoing formalist” (13), and thus in the stories meaning and technique become inseparable—and make Poe’s work a stimulant to structuralists and post-structuralists. Drawing on Russian formalist outlook and Poe’s own theories of beauty and unity, May analyzes the stories, offering fresh readings bolstered by an impressive command over secondary materials. His considerations of the importance of “Metzengerstein” in the canon, his explication of “Usher” as Poe’s “masterpiece” (103-107), his sensible perceptions regarding Poe’s comic art—these are but highlights of much worthwhile work. Proofreading might have caught misspellings for “Eleonora,” “Mellonta Tauta,” Harry Levin, J. A. Leo Lemay, or substituting March for April 1841 for publication of “Murders,” place/date of publication for A. H. Quinn (instead of Patrick). Nonetheless, Poe fans should by all means read this book.

Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV
The University of Mississippi

Devarakondam Ramakrishna. Explorations in Poe. Delhi (24 A. Siram Road, Civil Lines, India 110 054): Academic Foundation, 1992. 140 pp. $10.00, cloth.

Dr. Ramakrishna, Associate Professor of English at Kakatiya University in Andhra Pradesh, India, has been devoting his efforts, for over thirty years, to the study of Poe and the promotion of Indian awareness and understanding of his works, through lectures and research and editorial work for an American studies journal and many other activities of the Hyderabad American Studies Center. He has made trips to Poe centers in the United States, some through grants, and he demonstrates in this small collection of eleven essays the breadth of his interests in Poe and the common-sense nature of his approach, usually tied to objective evidence

Continued to page 6
and sound reasoning. Three articles come from the *Emerson Society Quarterly* and the *Explicator*, the first, in the book, on "Eureka and Hindu Philosophy," being the most valuable, in part for two endnotes incorporating epistolary information from Professor Mabbot. These substantiate a possible magazine source for a few key ideas in *Eureka*, but the parallels between Poe's work and specific sacred-writings' passages, I find unconvincing. Four more articles developed from papers given by Dr. Ramakrishna in India offer excellent although, by now, rather standard material on "Women in Poe's Writings," "Poe as Humanist" and "Poe and Popular Culture" (then and now). The last deserves our attention particularly: "Poe's attitude toward Indians and Negroes," although the author misses a few of the important perspectives in "Julius Rodman." The third group of studies evolved from grants without designation here of previous publication or lecture delivery. He rightly stresses the importance of Poe's formal or intrinsic detective-story structure presented, in pioneer fashion, in the semi-serious "Thou Art the Man"; the "unfinished exploration" of *Pym*; and Poe's "Explorations in the World of Comedy." The very last article of the group appealed especially to me -- "Poe and Stephen King" -- in part, because he makes a few of my own observations in a very long study of the same subject, of early 1991, which will appear, somewhat delayed, in the fall 1993 issue of the *Journal of Fantasy in the Arts*. I have no quarrel with his inferences about the importance to King of Poe themes and passages and great admiration for the scope and variety of his supporting sources and texts. In general, Dr. Ramakrishna is decidedly commendable for his grasp of major Poe themes and aims and for the steadfastness of his devotion to the spread of Poe studies in India. His collection of essays is worth placing within reach of American undergraduates who wish to broaden their knowledge of Poe's works.

*Burton R. Pollin*  
Professor Emeritus, CUNY


Editor Robert Scholnick says in the first of the thirteen essays collected in *American Literature and Science* that they "work together to define the changes in literature and science over the course of American history," but concedes that "beyond a common attention to the specificity of historical circumstance, no one synthesis unites them" (3). In an attempt to establish a "possible synthesis" and to "eliminate the new scholarship that will make it possible," this collection surveys relationships between literature and the sciences from the beginnings of American literature to the present. The articles range from the "Paracelsian alchemy" of Edward Taylor, through the "religious urgency" toward nature of Thoreau and Emerson, to the concluding selections that consider cybernetics and futuristic concepts from a feminist point of view. Authors discussed in other chapters include Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Mark Twain, Hart Crane, John Dos Passos, Charles Olson, and Edgar Allan Poe.

William Scheick's article on Poe, "An Intrinsic Luminosity: Poe's Use of Platonic and Newtonian Optics," considers Poe at the crucial time when science was diverging from other fields of knowledge. Scheick's focus on human perception and the imagination includes a useful background discussion of Plato, Aristotelian, and Newtonian concepts about light and vision. Scheick perceptively applies these concepts to Poe's fiction, but he tends to overemphasize their symbolic significance. In citing Augustus Bedloe of "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains" as an example of a character symbolic of the artist, whose eyes project light from within, "the light of the imagination shining outwardly" (81), Scheick ignores the explicit attribution in the tale of this intensity for the most part to Bedloe's habitual use of morphine. He overlooks the text's full physical description of Bedloe which pictures him as resembling a walking cadaver with his long, emaciated limbs and bloodless complexion and omits a puzzling part of the tale that would seem relevant to his thesis: Bedloe's "memory" of dying in Benares and looking down on his corpse with a "sense of elasticity and of light," which he "felt — not saw."

A more comprehensive view of Poe's attitude toward science reveals that he used it extensively for literary effect. Judith Yaross Lee's chapter in the text titled "(Pseudo-)Scientific Humor" establishes that traditionally American writers have treated science humorously and satirically. If one looks at the full body of Poe's prose including the hoaxes and considers context, tone, and purpose, Poe's use of science clearly falls into this tradition. Scheick apparently assumes that Poe took science very seriously, but for Poe, science was useful as a source of instruction and amusement, not so much in studying the material world as in creating his fictional effects. More than casually acquainted with Brewster's *Letters on Natural Magic*, Poe used information directly from that work but did not necessarily accept all claims of science without reservations. While Brewster discussed science to dispel or explain mystery, Poe used it imaginatively, often playfully, to create a mysterious or other atmosphere. The "shrouded human figure" that appears near the end of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, for example, conforms to Brewster's explanation of spectre images seen at twilight. Brewster explains that such images, invariably white, cause the mind to attribute supernatural explanations to them, which is precisely what Poe invites his readers to do.
Indeed, Poe could be considered a critic of science, and the literary effects he created with scientific or pseudoscientific ideas do not necessarily represent great profundity or Poe's genuinely held beliefs. When Scheick quotes a speech by the character Vankirk of "Mesmeric Revelation" as evidence of Poe's "Newtonic account of how the eye sees" (83), he ignores the fact that Vankirk is a character in the tale which Poe declared in "Marginalia" to be "a pure fiction from beginning to end" (James A. Harrison, ed., The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, 1902; rpt. 1965, XVI, 71). Apparently taking science more seriously than did Poe, Scheick overlooks the playfulness of Poe's hoaxes, his satire, and the creation of effects. Crediting Poe with a "pyrotechnical display of mathematical learning" (79), Scheick quotes Poe from Eureka: "the diffusion — the scattering — the irradiation [of light], in a word — is directly proportional with the squares of the distances" (79). What Scheick does not tell readers is that Poe's source for this line was an elementary textbook, An Easy Introduction to Astronomy for Young Gentlemen and Ladies, by James Ferguson [Leon Howard, "Poe's Eureka: The Detective Story that Failed," in Mystery & Detection Annual, ed. Donald Adams (Pasadena, California: Castle Press, 1972), 11].

Interesting as it is to apply concepts about optics to selections from Poe's prose, Scheick's article falls short of defining the "true place of science in Poe's thought" (77). The bibliography that follows this collection of articles is valuable, but the text's claim of a "new field," as desirable as that may be, seems dubious. Even though the text is a start to ward its goal of a synthesis, a focused comprehensive study of the relationship of science and American literature is still needed.

Roberta Sharp
California State Polytechnic University


In the penultimate essay of this collection, John Barth begins with the gesture of offering "some innocent observations" (218) regarding Pym, but his response is far from innocent; typical of Barth, he undercuts this posture with witty, learned allusions, concluding that he and readers like those who attended the 1988 Nantucket conference (from which these sixteen essays are collected) are least likely to accept Pym as "a bona fide novel" (220). I know now that it's to be the Rocky Horror Picture Show after all" (225). Clearly, however, as David Ketterer's comprehensive, incisive and informed (and sometimes biting) bibliographical essay proves, many readers/critics have read Pym without pop-or props in hand. Using the organizational frame of Douglas Robinson's "Review of Pym Criticism, 1950-1980" (adding two categories: influences and adumbrations), Ketterer outlines the various approaches to reading Pym (1980-1990) and points to those that seem particularly promising. Reviewing "distinct readings" (psychoanalytic, deconstructive, visionary, etc.), Ketterer maintains that Poe's "apparent meanings" (254) should not be denied or overlooked, suggesting that Poe's ironic undercutting is a "defense mechanism protective of that meaning" (254).

Kopley's astute positioning of these last two essays effectively balances the tendency to accept "innocently" Poe's assertion of Pym's "silliness." Noting "the extraordinary critical pluralism evident concerning Pym" (2), Kopley successfully offers such a sampling in Poe's Pym. The collection is self-consciously aware of its historical moment (a list of attendees is included) as well as its being "the first volume of criticism devoted to Pym" (3), and includes essays by prominent Poe scholars in categories such as "literary origins," "figurations," "sociohistorical contexts," and "prefigurings." Primary research and theoretical readings are given almost equal weight, providing an attractive resource for scholars who value dialogue rather than divisiveness.

The first section includes seven essays on literary origins. Susan Beegel and Joan Mead consider the influences of the Globe mutiny and Falconer's Dictionary, respectively, while J. Lasley Dameron attempts to persuade us that Scoresby's Journal allowed Poe to use verisimilitude to induce "the effects of 'novelty and wonder'" (35) in the last chapter of Pym. Bruce Weiner contextualizes Pym within the expectations of the popular novel of Poe's time and argues that Pym not only failed to meet those expectations, but that its sensationalism "complicated the Blackwood's formula, leaving in doubt the triumph of common sense" (53). Yet this failure, Weiner argues, paved the way for Poe's "best thrillers." In the last essay in the section, Burton Pollin argues for the "predetermination of sources, according to the total personality and situation of the master-artist" (103), suggesting that Pym is particularly revealing since it "was produced at the midpoint of [Poe's] career" (102).

Of controversial note in the next section ("sociohistorical contexts") is John Carlos Rowe's argument that suggests a "reconsideration of twentieth-century critical approaches to Poe" (117) based on Poe's "proslavery sentiments" (117). He argues that Poe's "repressed fears regarding slave rebellions ... are the psychic contents that provoke the poetic narrative" (127). Such poetics, Rowe continues, produce an elite class who are privy to its codes, allowing for access to the "verbal authority" implicit to political control — or, in other words, to owning the "power of words."

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Reviews
Richard Kopley
Continued from page 7

Set aside in its own category, David Hirsch’s essay argues for “the uncanny accuracy of Poe’s prophetic vision” (143) of “our post-Auschwitz age,” an age, in Hirsch words, of “dehumanized man” (146), “violent death and murder” (148), the “dissociation of sensibility and the atrophy of human conscience” (149).

In “Prefigurings,” John Irwin’s essay considers Browne’s quincunx and how the presence of this figure in Pym influences its reading while G. R. Thompson considers the way the quincunx “frames” the “chaotic puzzle” that informs Poe’s work. Irwin navigates through all the permutations of the sign’s geometry, concluding that with Pym’s blindness to this design, Poe asserts his expectation that the reader can recognize what the writer himself cannot. Yet, in such recognition, Irwin argues, the reader, too, “is likely not to recognize how much...any given meaning in such a case is determined by an unperceived shadow which the reader’s own self casts upon the text” (187).

In light of this observation, this collection is most helpful in its diversity, providing a multitude of shadows, each suggestive of further explorations (e.g., around Mead’s point of Poe’s “lying to”). In addition, Ketterer’s lengthy bibliography of recent scholarship, the thorough chapter notes, and detailed index enhance its value as a significant resource for Poe criticism.

Barbara Cantalupo
Pennsylvania State Univ.
Allentown Campus

A Pro Poe

Brett C. Millier’s Elizabeth Bishop: Life and the Memory of It (Univ. of California Press, 1993) mentions an unpublished poem, among the author’s papers at Vassar College, entitled “Edgar Allan Poe.”

Both Associated Press and UPI carried stories on the mysterious visitor who annually deposits a bottle of spirits on Poe’s grave in Baltimore. The story was reprinted in many major newspapers in January.

As reported in the Fall 1993 PSA Newsletter, the August 27 1993 Baltimore Sun conducted a poll of fans expressing their preference for the name of a possible expansion football team. A substantial percentage of respondents favored “The Ravens.” The Sun also presented a profile of Poe’s career as well as a parody of Poe’s classic poem by Susan Fragola Shelby.

PSA Newsletter Founding Editor John E. Reilly was interviewed by Worcester Telegram columnist James Dempsey in the fall of 1993. Reilly recounted his researches into sources of “The Tell-Tale Heart” and “The Black Cat.”

The lions “Patience and Fortitude,” standing in front of the New York Public Library, were decorated for Halloween in the fall of 1993. A photograph in the 26 October 1993 New York Times captured the lions, adorned with spectacles and reading Poe’s “The Raven.”