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## Poe as Magazinst

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Poe as Magazinst

by

Kay E. McKamy

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
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College of Arts and Sciences  
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## Abstract

Edgar Allan Poe has long been recognized as one of American literature's most intriguing authors, usually for reasons other than his writing. Most literary studies examine one or two of his tales and perhaps one or two comments he made about the short tale. This dissertation will instead look at the work Poe did while involved in the world of early-American magazines for the last seventeen years of his life. It will explore how the magazine world affected his writing and his theories, especially his theories on the genre of the short story, a genre that Poe essentially described and formed in the magazines, but a genre he did not name. Poe worked with many magazines in his career: one magazine, *Graham's* under George Graham, owner and editor, will be examined to see how Poe worked within this medium to shape short fiction.

## Preface

I initially experienced the psychological probing, mystery, and horror of Edgar Allan Poe's tales in junior high school, where most people first read Poe.<sup>1</sup> I did not care for his stories. I did not think they were scary, and I was not comfortable or interested in reading about someone being buried alive. When I became a literature major in college, Poe was not an author represented in my American-literature anthologies. I dismissed him.

Then, as a college professor, I began to teach short stories, and students asked to read works by Edgar Allan Poe. I picked up a collection of Poe's tales to consider including in a literature course as an enticement to those students who hated to read but loved horror stories. After a little research I found a reason to include Poe in a short-fiction class: his definition of the short story. Eureka!<sup>2</sup> Poe was more serious about his writing than I had thought. He reminded me of another writer whom students love to read—Stephen King, also a writer I had never read or assigned in my college literature classes. Poe published his theories of writing in magazines; Stephen King wrote his memoir and advice in *On Writing*, a book published in 2000. Although Poe was poor almost to the point of starvation and King very wealthy, they have much in common: both had fathers who left<sup>3</sup> and never came back when the authors were young; both

wrote shocking horror stories; both chose writing as their careers<sup>4</sup> and wrote prolifically; both had trouble with alcohol; both fought for the blending of commercial and literary qualities in literature; and both were denounced by critic Harold Bloom.<sup>5</sup> Both embraced a new medium: Poe, magazines; King, the Internet.<sup>6</sup> Both popularized the short story, called the "tale" or "short fiction" in Poe's day.

As I began to look beyond the mysterious, horrific details of many of Edgar Allan Poe's stories and discovered his description of short fiction, first written in 1842 in a now obscure magazine, I was a little surprised. First, I thought that short stories had been around as long as the novel or the poem and had no idea the phrase "short story" was not used during Poe's lifetime. Second, I thought that someone more acknowledged in the literary world should have been credited with the glory of establishing the criteria for the genre that came to be called the "short story." I was wrong on both counts. I ventured to the microfilm room in the college library to find the issues of the original magazine, *Graham's Magazine*, in which Poe had defined some of the qualities he associated with good short fiction. I chose two issues, a year apart, to examine. Each of these issues listed Poe as an editor and contributor. I wanted to see for myself what kind of magazine and what kind of environment Poe needed in order to begin to formulate criteria for a new genre.

I wondered if it was just the nature and form of the magazine that led to the creation of Poesque short fiction. An article by Joseph Urgo<sup>7</sup> declares that



the short story was created specifically for the business of magazines. That meant literature and art were directly tied to business and commercialization. Did that make short stories strictly commercial? Wasn't I, as a literature professor, supposed to be decrying commercial fiction and exalting literary fiction? Was there a compromise between the two types? Edgar Allan Poe seemed to be in the middle of the two worlds: he wrote short fiction for the last seventeen years of his life in a commercial market, striving to create literary art.

A close look at what Poe accomplished while a magazinist could help today's audience—teachers, students, readers—elevate the status of Poe as an author, who was and is “the most misunderstood of America's major writers” (Regan 1).

## Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe, who died in 1849, is still in the news. On the anniversary of Poe's birth, January 19, 2011, an article appeared in many of America's newspapers about the late-night visitor to Poe's grave in the Westminster Hall and Burying Ground in Baltimore. An anonymous visitor dressed in a black cape, white scarf, and wide-brimmed hat has for sixty years left a half-filled bottle of cognac and three roses at Poe's grave ("Poe Grave"). The visitor's identity was known only to Poe House and Museum curator Jeff Jerome, who watched for the visitor to give a secret sign before entering the cemetery each year. What made the news in 2010 and 2011 is that the visitor, called the Poe Toaster, has failed to show up for the last two years. Perhaps, Jerome reflects, the visitor chose to end the ritual in 2009, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poe's birth, or the visitor died and his survivors chose to end the ritual in 2009. Still dozens of Poe enthusiasts, reporters, and Toaster imitators gather to await the event each year ("Poe Grave"). Poe continues to intrigue us.

We are still curious about how Poe died. Speculation about the cause of his death abounds. Perhaps if Poe's Detective C. Auguste Dupin<sup>8</sup> (or any of the contemporary CSI investigators) were involved, all of the clues could be deciphered to determine how and why he died. Dr. Roger A. Francis, as recently

as 2009, analyzed all the newspaper and magazine articles and letters on Poe's death. He studied all that was written of Poe's medical history and listed all the symptoms. On October 3, 1849, an unusually cold day,<sup>9</sup> Poe, wearing cheap clothing, was found in bad condition outside Gunner's Hall,<sup>10</sup> a tavern and polling place, and was taken to the nearest hospital, Washington College Hospital. He awoke but appeared unaware of his surroundings. His symptoms were "tremors, sweating, delirium, and hallucinations (talking to walls)" (Francis 168). The next day he was still delirious<sup>11</sup> and calling out "Reynolds"<sup>12</sup> or "Herring"<sup>13</sup> (Silverman 435). On the fourth day, October 7, 1849, Poe seemed calmer and said, "Lord help my poor soul" and died (Francis 168). From his symptoms, the possible diagnoses of the cause of Poe's death are the following:

1. drug or alcohol intoxication followed by withdrawal symptoms;
2. trauma to the brain;
3. intracranial infections including viral encephalitis (including rabies), meningitis (including tuberculous infection), and rare conditions including brain abscess;
4. brain tumors;
5. seizure disorders (epilepsy);
6. stroke or transient ischemic attack;
7. metabolic conditions such as diabetes with coma; and/or
8. other disease (heart disease, syphilis, etc.). (Francis 168)

No death certificate or hospital records exist; evidence comes only from the eye witnesses and medical personnel who were with Poe in the last few days ("The Mysterious Death"). One eyewitness, Susan A. T. Weiss, wrote that Poe had been seriously ill a few days before, but he was sober when he left the tavern that night ("The Last Days"). However, Weiss had admired Poe as a young girl; he had complimented her poetry; therefore, she might not be a reliable witness. Poe himself had written to his Aunt Maria Clemm in the days leading up to his death: "I have been so ill," and later, "I have had the cholera, or spasms quite as bad" (*Letters* I: 451, 454). Elmira Shelton, to whom Poe was supposedly affianced, stated that Poe had a fever on the night he left her in Richmond, September 26 (Silverman 432-33). Dr. Joseph Snodgrass,<sup>14</sup> who saw Poe and helped him get to the hospital on October 3, swore that Poe had been drinking, perhaps exaggerating the details that he later used in Poe's story incorporated into his lectures to the Temperance<sup>15</sup> Society. Dr. John J. Moran, who attended to Poe at the hospital, swore that there was no smell of alcohol on Poe's breath; and when he wrote Mrs. Clemm about Poe, he was vague: "presumably you are aware of the malady of which Mr. Poe died" (qtd. in "The Mysterious Death"). For several years, Dr. Moran lectured about what happened the night the famous Edgar Allan Poe died, frequently altering details; he published his account in *Defense of Poe* in 1885. A Baltimore paper stated the cause of death as congestion of the brain, a typical phrase used when the real cause would be embarrassing to the survivors ("The Mysterious Death"). Mrs.

Marie Louise Shew, who had been Virginia Poe's nurse, had previously noticed a scar on Poe's left shoulder. Since she had been with the Poe family during Virginia's illness, she had observed Edgar Poe, speculating that he might have had a brain lesion, which would lead to brain fever ("The Mysterious Death"). Jeffrey Meyers thinks Poe's symptoms prove that Poe "suffered from hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar—possibly brought on by chronic liver disease" (256). James Hutchisson believes the main cause of Poe's death was a brain tumor "as well as cerebral inflammation, or encephalitis, brought on by exposure" (247). Christopher Shea, a researcher at the University of Maryland Medical Center, reported in 1996 that Edgar Allan Poe's symptoms revealed he had died of rabies, perhaps by a bite from his pet "Cat"<sup>16</sup> ("Researcher Says").

After a Dupin-like analysis of all the symptoms and various reports of Poe's death, Dr. Roger Francis believed that Poe's symptoms and family history (his father and brother were both alcoholics) point to the cause of death as "the effects of alcohol intoxication followed by withdrawal syndrome, delirium tremens, and possibly a neurological complication such as central pontine myelinolysis" (Francis 172). Since the hospital had not given Poe fluids or other medication, he would have gone into a coma and died. At least two biographers—Jeffrey Meyers, Kevin Hayes—are sure that alcoholism killed Poe.

If Poe was indeed drunk the night of October 3, what brought on the drinking that led to his death is also shrouded in mystery. One rumor is that Poe was a victim of "cooping": kidnapped by a political gang, kept in a room, forced

to drink alcohol and take opium, disguised by wearing different clothes, and taken around to various polling places to cast illegal votes ("The Mysterious Death"). Cooping evidently was a well known, but highly illegal practice that would not have made the papers. One rumor has Poe hounded and forced to break his temperance pledge by Sarah Elmira Royster's brothers, who wanted to end the couple's engagement ("The Mysterious Death"). Mrs. E. Oakes Smith wrote in 1867 that Poe had been beaten by "ruffians" at "the instigation of a woman," and brain fever followed ("The Mysterious Death"). This unending interest in how Poe died continues. As Jeffrey Meyers states, readers have a constant "creepy delight in stories about Poe" (263).

But the creepy stories and mystery do not end with Poe's death. Before it could be placed at his grave in Baltimore, Poe's tombstone was broken by a freak train accident at the mason's yard (A. Quinn 643; Meyers 256). There is also a story about Poe's wife's bones being uncovered when the cemetery was destroyed in 1875. William F. Gill, an early Poe biographer, took the bones home in a box, kept them under his bed, and brought them out to let people touch Poe's "beloved" (Meyers 263). This story ends when Virginia's bones were reunited with Poe's in the same Baltimore cemetery where crowds still gather on the anniversary of Poe's death to watch for a mysterious visitor with roses and cognac.

The story of Poe's life is quite as sensational as his stories. John Reilly writes, "Poe's popularity is based also upon our fascination with Poe himself, not

so much with the historical person as with the popular image that has evolved, the image of a strange, haunted, and suffering spirit, the weird victim of both his own genius and a cruel fate" (472). Poe's life story and his image have been hijacked by storytellers not in search of art or the truth.

After Edgar Allan Poe's death in October of 1849, his literary executor, Rufus Griswold,<sup>17</sup> gave Poe a legacy that has been hard to forget. Griswold wrote Poe's obituary for the *New York Tribune's* October 9, 1849 issue and signed it "by Ludwig." The article characterized Poe as a mad man: "He walked the streets, in madness or melancholy, with lips moving in indistinct curses, or with eyes upturned in passionate prayers for the happiness of those who at that moment were objects of his idolatry, but never for himself, for he felt, or professed to feel, that he was already damned" ("Death"). Griswold continued to paint Poe as a madman in his 1850 "Memoir," that introduced the third publication of a collection of Poe's works. In the preface, Griswold stated how he hated the task of writing about Poe's life, but praised Poe's writing: both statements were intended to soften the blow of what was to follow.

Griswold offered letters, later proved to be altered or forged, to support his lies about Poe's life and work. Griswold stated Poe was expelled from the University of Virginia; serious Poe biographers state Poe left the University in December 1826 because he could not pay his debts. Griswold claimed Poe seduced the second wife of John Allan, the man who raised him; Poe was barely acquainted with her. Poe deserted the army; Dwight Thomas and David Johnson

record that Poe, who signed up as Edward Perry, was discharged from the army in April 1829 (90). Poe's editors—Thomas White, George Graham, and Billy Burton—considered Poe a consistently unreliable assistant editor with "infirmities" (qtd. in A. Quinn 672); yet both Burton and White left their magazines in Poe's hands for weeks at a time, and Graham defended Poe before and after the writer's death. Poe had "relations with men" (qtd. in A. Quinn 675), an accusation never proved and apparently disproved by the stories of Poe's love for his young wife and, after she died, his several romantic entanglements with women.<sup>18</sup> Poe admitted to having used an idea of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's, the same one that he later accused Longfellow of stealing;<sup>19</sup> Longfellow himself disputed the truth of this. Griswold stated, "As a critic, Mr. Poe was aesthetically deficient" (qtd. in A. Quinn 659); this line was altered from James Russell Lowell's original statement about Poe as "the most discriminating, philosophical and fearless critic upon imaginative works who has written in America" (qtd. in A. Quinn 659). Poe was a drug addict; this was disproven by friends and Dr. Thomas Dunn English<sup>20</sup> who said they had never seen a sign of drug use. Poe died during days of debauchery; alcoholism may have been a factor, but debauchery was not recorded in any of the reports. Poe "exhibits scarcely any virtue in either his life or his writings" (qtd. in A. Quinn 673), a statement that was contradicted by his supporters' statements after his death. A few months after these first lies appeared, Griswold stated that he had tried to present Poe in the best light; in fact he had been so considerate that he had not



revealed that Poe had had “illegal relations” with his mother-in-law, Maria Clemm (A. Quinn 680), presumably the most outrageous lie of all. Griswold believed that his version was true “while the views of Poe’s defenders were sanitized” (Meyers 262).

There could be several motives for Griswold’s actions. He created this picture of Poe perhaps out of jealousy: both men were attracted to the same woman, Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood, who seemed to favor Poe (“Griswold and Poe”). Griswold was jealous of Poe’s talent. He hated Poe because Poe had criticized Griswold’s anthologies for containing works by unworthy writers: Poe called Griswold’s first anthology of American poets “humbug” (*Letters* I: 202). Poe knew he could write a better American literary history than Griswold, the “literary quack,” poor writer, and worthless critic (Meyers 127). Prescient in wording, an unsigned letter<sup>21</sup> in the Philadelphia *Saturday Museum* in 1843 predicted that Griswold would be “Forgotten, save only by those whom he has injured and insulted . . . he will sink into oblivion, without leaving a landmark to tell that he once existed; or, if he is spoken of hereafter, he will be quoted as the unfaithful servant who abused his trust” (qtd. in A. Quinn 355).

It is obvious that Griswold wrote the obituary and the accompanying “Memoir” for Poe’s collection of works to sensationalize Poe’s life and works and make money from them. If Poe had been alive, he might have appreciated Griswold’s efforts. Poe wanted the world to see his entire body of work, which in his lifetime had been spread among thirty or forty different magazines. As

literary executor, Griswold published the first collection of Poe's works in 1850, less than a year after Poe died. In addition, Poe might even have admired Griswold's tactics—Poe himself had been known to sensationalize, lie, about the details<sup>22</sup> of his life—and Poe wrote both sensational tales and controversial reviews to attract readers to the magazines for which he wrote. Poe loved a good controversy.

Friends and associates wrote defenses of Poe's character, stating there was no proof that Griswold's statements about his behavior and character were accurate. In the first six months after Poe died, Nathaniel Willis, Henry Hirst, George Lippard, George Graham, Lambert Wilmer, and John Neal wrote responses refuting and denouncing Griswold's assassination of Poe's character (Meyers 259-60). Willis, whom Poe had wanted to write his biography,<sup>23</sup> wrote on October 13: "He is a man of genius and a poet of remarkable power" (qtd. in A. Quinn 652). A week later, Willis, to disprove Griswold's fictional account, wrote a further defense of Poe: "There was *goodness* in Edgar Poe. . . . Mr. Poe wrote with fastidious difficulty, and in a style too much above the popular level to be well paid" (qtd. in A. Quinn 653-52). In Poe's defense, Henry B. Hirst<sup>24</sup> "spoke for Philadelphia," saying, "We knew him well, . . . and loved him, despite his infirmities . . . but the sublime *afflatus* which lifted him above his fellows, made him a shining mark for the covert as well as open attacks of literary rivals" (qtd. in A. Quinn 653). Hirst continued with the statement that he never heard Poe "express one single word of personal ill-feeling against any man" (qtd. in A.

Quinn 654). Lambert Wilmer<sup>25</sup> titled his defense of Poe "Edgar A. Poe and His Calumniators" and directed it at "Ludwig": "But we can tell the slanderous and malicious miscreant who composed the aforesaid biography . . . that Edgar A. Poe was infinitely his superior, both in the moral and in the intellectual scale" (qtd. in A. Quinn 654).

In addition, the editor of *Graham's Magazine*, George Graham, came to Poe's defense in his own magazine in March 1850, describing Poe as a caring man, an honest man, a gifted man, an industrious man, a courteous man, an artist with high standards, and a sensitive man who struggled with poverty ("The Late Great"). The first critic to recognize Poe's potential in 1829 (Thomas and Jackson xxxiv), John Neal,<sup>26</sup> in April 1850, wrote that Poe "was by nature, of a just and generous temper, thwarted, baffled, and self-harnessed by his own willfulness to the most unbecoming drudgery" and believed that Griswold was solely "a book-wright and compiler by the cart-load, to whom the dying poet bequeathed his papers, and his character, to be hashed over, and served up, little by little, with a *sauce piquant*, resembling the turbid water, in which very poor eggs have been boiled to death" (qtd. in A. Quinn 667).

Two biographies followed Griswold's to correct the false statements. Helen Whitman wrote *Poe and His Critics* in 1860 defending Poe. Her biography did not refute Griswold's lies one by one; instead, Whitman painted "a portrait of Poe with the brush of spiritual insight drawn in true perspective through her intimate knowledge of the man" (A. Quinn 688). Whitman illuminated Poe's

craftsmanship, his intellect, his imagination, and his steadfast love for his wife. John Ingram published an edition of *Poe's Works* in 1874, which changed Poe's reputation (Meyers 265). Ingram's *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life, Letters, and Opinions*, published in two volumes in 1880, was written to offer an accurate biography of Poe and to erase the memory of the earlier biography written by the hostile biographer Griswold (iii). Ingram had a little trouble with his research. After Griswold's sensational work appeared, Poe's name became well known; Ingram found too many people willing to talk about Poe as if they had known him well: "They misrepresent his idlest words; distort his most trivial remarks—perchance unintentionally; falsify dates; invent anecdotes; fabricate conversations, and indeed, refrain from nothing, in order to prove their acquaintance with a departed genius" (*Edgar* iv). The biography and Poe's notoriety did increase interest in and sales of Poe's books. Between 1880 and 1900, thirty-five editions of his works appeared (Meyers 266).

For far too many decades, however, Griswold's account prevailed: "The views of Griswold—Baptist minister, respected anthologist and official editor—were regarded as authoritative, and those who challenged him were ignored" (Meyers 260). Poe had made many enemies because of his brutally honest reviews, enemies who wanted to believe Griswold's accusations. James Wood Davidson, a South Carolina writer, recognized this in 1857: Poe "secured more and more bitter enemies than any other American author has ever done, because he told more wholesome truths than any other author has dared to tell"

(qtd. in A. Quinn 686). These enemies chose to support and spread Griswold's lies about Poe's unsavory reputation. Critic Killis Campbell notes that many of Poe's contemporaries—Griswold, included—admired Poe's writing, yet "that he did not win a larger following among his contemporaries is traceable to various causes, not the least among which was his own personal conduct,—in particular, his weakness for drink and his harshness as critic,—which, however illogically, many Americans of his time found it impossible to ignore" ("Contemporary" 157-58, 166).

While Americans were simmering over either Griswold's lies or Poe's meanness and inadequacies, a more positive Poe legacy began to build in France. Poe's legacy rests with Charles Baudelaire. Similar in looks,<sup>27</sup> background,<sup>28</sup> and thinking, Baudelaire was instantly attracted to Poe's writing: "In 1846 or 1847 I became acquainted with certain fragments by Edgar Poe. I felt a singular excitement. . . . I saw, to my amazement and delight, not simply certain subjects which I had dreamed of, but sentences which I had thought out, written by him twenty years before" (qtd. in Meyers 267-68). Poe was Baudelaire's "alter ego" (P. Quinn 69). Baudelaire thought that Poe was "America's greatest writer, but ironically, America is poorly suited for such an artist . . . since Americans value only the 'making-money author' (a phrase Baudelaire derisively states in English, as if the French language itself should not be tainted with it)" ("Charles Baudelaire"). Baudelaire took twenty years of his life and five of the twelve volumes he wrote in his lifetime to celebrate Poe in

France (P. Quinn 65). He knew that Poe had many enemies in America, especially those Poe had critiqued. Defending Poe, Baudelaire says, "he waged tireless war on false reason, stupid pastiches, solecisms, barbarisms and all the literary crimes daily committed in books and newspapers" ("Charles Baudelaire"). To Baudelaire, Poe was a "*poete maudit*, an alienated modern artist, destroyed by the crass industrialism of mid-nineteenth century America" (Meyers 268).

The next generation brought another French admirer of Poe, Stéphane Mallarmé, whose famous poem "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe" was written for the dedication of Poe's tomb in 1875. Like Baudelaire, Mallarmé regarded Poe as "a literary deity" (P. Quinn 67). With love and admiration, Mallarmé translated Poe's poems; Baudelaire, Poe's stories (William Bandy). A later French writer, Paul Valery, also found Poe, "the only writer—without any fault" (Meyers 269); and Poe's "Philosophy of Composition" became the inspiration for Valery's significant poetic theory (William Bandy). Traces of Poe can also be seen in Jules Verne; Verne's "best known works are simply elaborations of ideas that he found in Poe" (William Bandy).

French readers have an "exhaustive scrutiny" of Poe's work in Marie Bonaparte's two-volume study published in 1933 (P. Quinn 74). Bonaparte's thesis that Poe's work can only be understood through a psychoanalytic perspective, "an infantile oedipal experience of great intensity," may give a unifying thread to the great variety of Poe's works (P. Quinn 74-75). Gaston Bachelard in the 1940s offered another way of valuing Poe—by looking under the

surface. To understand Poe, he claimed readers need the "technique of the double reading, through which alone, in his opinion, we can become aware of the kind of life that sustains Poe's melodramas" (P. Quinn 77). The French loved Poe and his concept of unity of effect while the Americans attacked him for his differences from other authors of the mid-nineteenth century. American critic T. S. Eliot regarded Poe as a dabbler in poetry and fiction, never "settling down to make a thoroughly good job of any one genre" and made light of Baudelaire's and the other French poets' praise, saying they "transformed what is often a slipshod and a shoddy English prose into admirable French" (336). However, Baudelaire's translation of Poe's life and works, first published in 1852 and revised in 1856, "has been read by more people in more different countries than anything else written on Poe, including the notorious memoir by Griswold, which spread its poison mainly through the English-speaking world but had little effect elsewhere" (William Bandy).

Poe's influence spread throughout the world. There were no Poe worshippers in Germany like Baudelaire in France; but, according to Jeffrey Meyers, Poe influenced three significant authors writing in German: Friedrich Nietzsche, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Franz Kafka. They recognized in Poe "a tortured and tormented soul, who tried to escape bitter reality and sought uneasy refuge in his own imaginative world" (Meyers 270). In Russia, Poe translations may have been published earlier than in France: "The Gold Bug" appeared in 1848, even though it was a badly mangled translation (William

Bandy). In Russia "Poe's fictional methods and narrative methods had a great impact on Fyodor Dostoyevsky" (Meyers 287). Readers in Spain and Latin America became excited about Poe with the 1858 translation of Baudelaire's biography of Poe (William Bandy). Spain adored Poe's tales; Latin American countries took to Poe's poems (William Bandy).

The English were also affected by Poe. According to Jeffrey Meyers, "Poe fed several streams of English writers" (289). Poe was adored by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Aesthetes, such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Walter Pater, who called Poe one of their Immortals. Robert Louis Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling gave credit to Poe for themes and techniques. Although Stevenson thought Poe an imperfect writer, he used Poe's theme of the double. Kipling borrowed more heavily from Poe, using poems within tales and imitating the plotlines of Poe's stories of revenge (Meyers 291). Joseph Conrad imitated the techniques of Poe's mysteries. James Joyce and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle publically gave credit to Poe's influence (Meyers 293-95). Joyce shared with Poe the rational outlook on life and the fascination with physical death. Doyle gave thanks for Poe's model for detective fiction.

Although other countries may have ignored Griswold's sensational lies, unfortunately the false biography achieved something other than increased sales for Poe's writings in America. Griswold's story of Poe's life created a false account of a man who deserved a better legacy, especially in the American literary world. Dawn Sova in *Poe A to Z* states, "Griswold's vitriolic characterization of Poe



became the unofficial biographical record that extended well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and kept Poe from achieving his full literary due" (101). Poe's legacy is not yet set because Griswold's biography has stayed with the public for a century and a half. Edgar Allan Poe "was the first major American writer whose personal reputation influenced the reception of his work" (Meyers 258). Poe became a "literary martyr" (Kennedy, "Elegy" 227) because "he was virtually the first writer of note in America to shock the popular audience; the rumor of his dissolution did nearly as much to make him known as his fifteen years in the magazine world" (Kennedy, "Elegy" 226).

Yet there may be a few contemporary writers, reviewers, biographers, and dissertation writers who agree that Poe's substantial body of work in magazines needs a closer look. When in 1895 Willa Cather spoke at the dedication of Poe's former house in Fordham, New York, she lamented the death of Poe as the loss of one of America's great poets and as the loss of one of the only masters<sup>29</sup> of pure prose. Cather stated that Poe's stories "are simple and direct enough to delight us when we are children, subtle and artistic enough to be our marvel when we are old" ("The Late"). She lamented that Poe was not given any kind of recognition nor paid a steady income in his lifetime for his work. And he died too soon. Cather related that in the weeks before he died at the young age of forty, "He said he had never had time or opportunity to make a serious effort. All his tales were merely experiments, thrown off when his day's work as a journalist

was over, when he should have been asleep”: it makes one wonder what kind of tales Poe would have written had he had more time (“The Late”).

## Chapter One

### A New Genre: The Short Story

Charles E. May argues that “Poe’s critical comments on the form in the 1830s are largely responsible for the birth of the short story as a unique genre” (*The Short Story* 108). However, the often-cited acknowledgment of Poe’s connection with the short story tends to depend—mistakenly—only upon his 1842 review of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales*, published in *Graham’s Magazine*. In this review Poe does set forth his main requirements for short fiction, defining—although he did not know this during his lifetime—a new genre, a story with a single effect that can be read in one sitting. That the short story as a genre did not exist during the 1830s and 1840s is clear from Poe’s efforts in the 1842 review to designate what Hawthorne’s short fiction should be called. Poe writes of Hawthorne’s works as “pieces,” “articles,” “essays,” and “the tale proper,” at different places in the review, perhaps suggesting that none of these terms were appropriate. Instead, Hawthorne’s short fiction displayed “his own particular blend of stories and storylike sketches” (G. R. Thompson, “Literary Politics” 169). Poe also could be indicating that none of Hawthorne’s short fiction fulfilled the qualities he had begun in the 1830s to conceptualize as aesthetically effective.

## History of the Short Story

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the phrase "short story" was first used in the May 1877 *Independent*: "his various books have been eminently readable, in the highest sense of the adjective, and some of his short stories have been almost without a flaw in their glittering beauty" ("Short story"). The next use of the phrase was by Anthony Trollope in his *Autobiography*, published in 1883: "I had written from time to time certain short stories, which had been published in different periodicals" ("Short story"). Yet according to the entry "Short Story: Before 1945" in *Benet's Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature* (1962), the genre was not actually called a "short story" until "Henry James, also an admirer of Hawthorne, titled one of his collections *Daisy Miller: A Study; and Other Stories* (1883). Since that time 'short story' has become the commonly accepted name for the form Poe first sought to define" (West 970). James defined a short story as "the analysis of a situation, the psychological phenomena of a group of men and women at an interesting moment" ("The Short Story" 1). Thus, it may be impossible to determine definitively the first use of the phrase. It would seem very likely that the phrase would have been used—used quite often at least casually—during the nineteenth century in that short fiction was becoming very popular and there would be nothing unusual in putting the word "short" before the word "story" for a story of limited length.

What is definitely clear about the history of the short story, however, is (1) that short narratives had existed for centuries before the 1800s, (2) that Poe was “the first theorist of the short story as a literary form” (Scofield 31), producing “the first important body of criticism published in the United States” (Hough xiii),<sup>30</sup> and (3) that Brander Matthews, writing in 1885,<sup>31</sup> deliberately named the new genre, calling it “Short-story’ with a capital S and a hyphen because I wished to emphasise [sic] the distinction between the Short-story and the story which is merely short” (*Philosophy of the Short-story* 24-25).

May’s 1995 study of the short story, reprinted by Routledge in 2002, suggests that the “wellsprings” of the short story are “as old as the primitive realm of myth” (1). A form of the short story has been told or written since before the alphabet was invented, according to Ann Charters (1742). These stories have been called epics, fairy tales, fables, parables, tales, anecdotes, sketches, *fabliaux*, moral tracts, abortive romances, *novelles*, *contes*, or narrative prose.

Briefly, two of the best known precursors of short stories were the Greek fables, sometimes beast-fables such as Aesop’s (600 b.c.), and Biblical parables. Sometimes forms such as the French *fabliaux* and heroic episodic stories were written in verse. Matthews describes the eleventh and twelfth century *fabliau* as “a brief tale, often little more than an anecdote, with a sharp sting at the end of it; frequently it was in rime; generally satiric in intent, it was full of frank gayety and of playful humor” (“Introduction” 3).

May describes the early narratives as “the sacred in the midst of the profane” (*Edgar* 4). The stories did not change until around the fourteenth century with tales like Giovanni Boccaccio’s *The Decameron*, where nature, not God, determined the events of the tale (*Edgar* 5) and characters “are the roles they play in the story and little else” (*Edgar* 5). These tales are similar to Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, written in fifteenth-century England (Charters 1743). The early seventeenth century brought Miguel Cervantes’ *Exemplary Tales*, offering a realistic setting and psychologically motivated characters (May, *Edgar* 5). The brothers Grimm also wrote their body of German fairy tales in the early 1800s (Charters 1744). The psychological and life-like details of story-telling led to the development of the novel by the seventeenth century, almost eliminating the need for the short tale. Benjamin Boyce states that by the eighteenth century, “authors seem to have no real or clear conception of short fiction as a genre except perhaps as a *Tatler-Spectator*<sup>32</sup> genre whose primary virtue is instruction in social values” (qtd. in May, *Edgar* 5).

More forms evolved by the eighteenth century in Europe, especially in the British magazines: “character sketches, satires, gothic tales, rogue stories, simple adventure stories, and sentimental sketches with predictable moral outcomes in which the hero or heroine is rewarded and the villain is punished” (Charters 1744). In France, several authors emphasized morality and psychology in satires to “convey their views of the debasement of morality in conventional fiction, and the falsification of reality in many traditional tales” (Charters 1744). Spaniards,

who were better at the “grandiloquence” of their drama and longer works, continued the forms of romances of chivalry and picaresque romances begun in the sixteenth century (Matthews, “Introduction” 5).

Some of the most immediate precursors of the short story came from Germany in the eighteenth century. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe published his prose tales in collections, and Ludwig Tieck wrote what he called *novelles*, blending fantasy and reality, with “characters who are already developed and are brought into a conflict that reveals them” (May, *The Short Story* 5). A main influence on the short stories of Poe’s time was the German gothic, with its mysteries, mysticism, specters, ghosts, and “eerie imaginings and the morbid hallucinations” (Matthews, “Introduction” 6). Poe incorporated the gothic into his stories even though the gothic was not “regarded as highly as historical romance among nineteenth-century readers, who considered it derivative of German literature” (Hayes, *Poe* 21).

Another more immediate influence came from the British periodicals toward the end of the eighteenth century, which included various literary styles. American writers would have been familiar with the contents—an abundance of essays and satires—in such British publications as *The Tatler*, *The Spectator* (Matthews, Introduction 6), and *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*. As May states, the British literary field was moving more toward novels and not toward short fiction at all “except perhaps as the sort of narrative-based essay, in which the primary virtue is instruction in social values” (*The Short Story* 4). British

writer Daniel DeFoe also figures in the progression toward the short story. His 1706 short story "A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal" is "an example of both the old moral tale and the new narrative of verisimilitude, [and] has also been called a precursor of the Gothic mode" (May, *The Short Story* 4). The narrative mode of this story offers an eyewitness telling of an actual event to teach a moral. Horace Walpole's 1765 *The Castle of Otranto* contains the "gloomy trappings and decorations of the gothic castle" and "'ordinary' people . . . in extraordinary situations" (May, *Edgar* 7).

Readers had experienced many forms of the tale by the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, these tales were "either controlled by an inherited traditional story or illustrative of an abstract idea. Short fiction prior to the nineteenth century was not determined by the use of specific detail and real-time events to provide a verisimilar version of the everyday world, as was the longer fiction of the eighteenth century" (May, *The Short Story* 21). Real time events—for example, aberrant behavior as reported in the newspapers—began to be reflected in stories appearing in periodicals.

The English romantics in the nineteenth century presented a more subjective way to look at the short tale. Samuel Taylor Coleridge believed the reader needed to have a "willing suspension of disbelief," and William Wordsworth believed the reader needed imagination to awaken "the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom" and toward "the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us" (qtd. in May, *Edgar* 8). German romantics, such



as Friedrich Schlegel in 1801, insisted that the topic, trivial or momentous, did not matter, but the story had to be told in an appealing manner. For the first time in the history of short fiction, the narrator or the story-teller is emphasized (May, *Edgar* 8). Tieck proposed that the story should have a strange quality made to seem commonplace and also advocated that the tale needed a twist or a turning point (May, *Edgar* 9).

Washington Irving is credited by Fred Lewis Pattee with writing the first American short story as early as 1819 (1). Influenced by Sir Walter Scott's "sentimentalism and unrestrained romance," Irving popularized the tale by adding rich atmosphere, specific locales, some originality, and some believability of character and setting (Pattee 20-23). Yet Pattee does not believe Irving's tales are comparable to those of Poe or Hawthorne just two decades later. Irving himself explained that his stories were just the framework "on which to stretch my materials" to allow "the play of thought, and sentiment, and language; the weaving of the characters, lightly, yet expressively delineated; the familiar and faithful exhibition of scenes in common life" (qtd. in Pattee 24). Matthews, writing in 1907, however, does not believe that Irving can be considered the originator of the short story as it is now known for "he did not strive for the implacable unity and the swift compactness which we now demand and which we find frequently in Hawthorne and always in Poe" (Matthews, "Introduction" 7). Instead, according to May, Irving simply took an old German legend, set it in America, and used a "sophisticated localized teller" (*The Short Story* 24, 25).

May does believe that Irving popularized short fiction, but states that "it is Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville who combine the conventions of medieval allegorical romance, eighteenth-century realism, and the nineteenth-century Gothic in a complex way that results in a new narrative form that later becomes known as the short story" (*The Short Story* 25).

#### Defining the Short Story: Poe's Theory, Codified by Matthews

Edgar Allan Poe was clearly the most "dissective and analytic" critic of his day, insisting "that literature be judged according to a body of definite identifiable standards and not according to such impressionistic and meaningless terms as 'Nature'" or "vraisemblance" (Hough xii, xiii). He was also "at odds with his age—and in harmony with ours" (Regan 4) in the critical precept he first states in the "Exordium" of *Graham's Magazine* in January 1842 and repeats over and over again in later reviews and essays: "Following the highest authority, we would wish, in a word, to limit literary criticism to comment upon *Art*" (*Essays* 1032). This was a startling suggestion in a period in which literary criticism tended to emphasize the moral and social responsibilities of literature.

Poe the man and thus Poe the critic is often misunderstood, according to Robert Hough, because an understanding of Poe and his criticism requires a knowledge of the world in which Poe lived: a rejection, for example, of the romantic notion of the isolated "lonely genius," an introduction of the "active

man of letters . . . in a noisy journalistic world," who is formulating his critical theories—largely in reviews of others' work—while making a living as an editor and writer from about 1835 to 1849 (ix).

Poe had very distinct ideas about literature: poetry, short fiction, novels, and criticism. Above all, he believed that any writer should create an original piece. Writers should also continually expand their repertory and, much like the contents of a magazine, create a variety of work. Poe's thinking evolved from the early 1830s through 1849, with theories addressing artistic truth, brevity that assures a totality of experience, unity of effect or of impression, genuine emotional responses, prose style, and plots with a rich underlying suggestiveness that resists didacticism (including allegory).

These theories—at least as outlined in Poe's reviews—appeared erratically and gradually, often much earlier than the review with which they are usually associated, the May 1842 review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*. In *New Short Story Theories*, May gathers passages from Poe's works to demonstrate their evolution: in 1836, in a review of L. H. Sigourney's *Zinzendorff, and Other Poems*, published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, Poe declares the aesthetic necessity of what Frederick Schlegel terms "the *unity or totality of interest*," an emphasis upon the whole, made possible by brevity (65). Six months later in the same magazine, in a review of Charles Dickens' *Watkins Tottle and Other Sketches*, Poe emphasizes "unity of effect, a quality not easily appreciated or indeed comprehended by an ordinary mind" as he lauds short fiction and

suggests that the primary quality necessary to write the "common novel" is perseverance (May, *The New Short Story Theories* 64).

In 1841, in a review of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Night and Morning: a Novel*, published in *Graham's Magazine*, Poe argues that plot does not mean complexity but "that which no part can be displaced without ruin to the whole" (200). Poe uses the example of a building, in which the moving of a single brick would "overthrow the entire fabric," and destroy "the unity or totality of effect" (200). In that same review, Poe emphasizes that characters must be original, presenting qualities known in real life, but never before depicted" (200).

Concerned about Bulwer-Lytton's style, Poe criticizes gross errors in phraseology, awkward expression, and wordiness; advocates concise sentences with "luminous and precise thought"; and decries the overuse of any figure of speech, while granting that metaphor "has indisputable force when sparingly and skillfully employed" (200). For Poe, allegory is an abomination, "appealing only to our faculties of comparison, without even a remote interest for our reason, or for our fancy" (200). Five years later, in "The Philosophy of Composition," also published in *Graham's Magazine*, Poe warns about writing with an "excess" of meaning and calls instead for complexity and "some amount of suggestiveness—some under-current, however indefinite, of meaning" to impart "to a work of art so much of that richness (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term), which we are too fond of confounding with the ideal" (*Essays* 24).

In his May 1842 review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, which also appears in *Graham's Magazine*, Poe discusses qualities of great short fiction that he has mentioned or defined in earlier reviews, finding most of these qualities in the tales of Hawthorne, whose "distinctive trait is invention, creation, imagination, originality—a trait which, in the literature of fiction, is positively worth all the rest" (299). Asserting that "the tale proper . . . affords unquestionably the fairest field for the exercise of the loftiest talent," Poe calls for "unity of effect or impression," a unity that assures the "short prose narrative" can be "completed in one sitting," that is, "a half-hour to one or two hours" for "its perusal." Such brevity and unity assures "the immense force derivable from *totality*" (298): "Without a certain continuity of effort—without a certain duration or repetition of purpose—the soul is never deeply moved" (298). Further, the "skillful literary artist" must consciously invent the material of his tale with a "preconceived effect" in mind: "In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to be the one pre-established design," thus assuring "a sense of the fullest satisfaction" (298-99). Poe often compares the achievement of writing a poem and writing a short tale and argues that "the highest genius" can be found in the creator of the rhymed poem; but in the 1842 Hawthorne review Poe suggests that "the tale has a point of superiority even over the poem." In attaining its "highest idea," that is, Beauty, the poem can obscure Truth: "Truth is often—and in a very great degree, the aim of the tale" (299). Thus, he argues, short fiction may not reach

the heights of Beauty, but its range is a "table-land of a far vaster extent than the domain of the mere poem," with "a vast variety of modes or inflections of thought and expression," such as the ratiocinative, sarcastic, or humorous (299). Despite the rich possibilities of the tale, however, Poe writes in his brief April 1842 review that the United States has "very few American tales of real merit," excepting Irving's *The Tales of a Traveler* and Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* (254).

Charles May has observed that the short story is "the most generically defined of all literary forms," but "the most neglected by serious theoretical critics" . . . since "its genetic birth with Poe's 1842 *Twice-Told Tales* review to Brander Matthews' 'Philosophy of the Short-story' in 1901" (*The Short Story* 108). Matthews may be the first one to insist that the Short-story should be a genre of its own, that (in 1901) there are very few authors who were excellent Short-story writers within its history, that Poe was the first theorist who discussed the genre, and that "no later essay has added much to our knowledge of the essential nature of the Short-story" (*Philosophy of the Short-story* 79-80). Matthews' study "firmly embedded within American literary criticism" the theories of Poe on "the uniqueness of [what would be indentified years later as] the short story" (May, *The Short Story* 109), including the differences between the novel and short fiction, especially what was then called "the tale," described by Matthews as a brief but "carelessly composed" work ("Introduction" 1).

Matthews contended that the American Short-story developed into an art form partially because American magazines did not follow the practice of British magazines in publishing primarily serial novels. Matthews wrote his 1885 essay and 1901 and 1907 full-length studies because he believed the Short-story had been neglected while the novel was praised. Yet, he argued, the Short-story is harder to write because it contains an "essential unity of impression" and maintains "the three false unities of the French classic drama: it shows one action, in one place, on one day" (*Philosophy of the Short-story* 15, 16). Insisting that the Short-story is nothing like a novel, a piece, a chapter, or a shortened novel, Matthews also argues that the Short-story is not a sketch, for the Short-story has action and "limitless possibilities" (*Philosophy of the Short-story* 37). Matthews also describes love as the one topic relevant to all novels, whereas the Short-story must have "originality and ingenuity" (*Philosophy of the Short-story* 23).

Clearly Matthews' work early in the twentieth century "solidified" Poe's theories about the short story (May, *The New Short Story Theories* xvi); but many argue that the men's prescriptive approach, their emphasis upon pattern, formula, "pre-established design," and "definite identifiable standards" (Hough xiii) led to the neglect of the genre for many decades.<sup>33</sup> Poe and Matthews had established the basis for the American Short-story by the 1880s while in England "the short story remained distinguished as a genre largely on the basis of length" (Windholz 156). Neither country offered "much serious analysis of the aesthetics

of the genre by critics" (Windholz 156); thus, Poe's recognition of the "fairly self-conscious fiction form with a technique emphasizing conciseness and unity of effect" was the only critical assessment established by either country. When English reviewers first began to look at American short fiction at all, it was to judge "how American stories imitated or derived from British fiction" (Windholz 156), nothing else. Then British reviewers began to assess American short fiction with what they considered to be solely American writers' traits— "native humor, local color, and dialect" (Windholz 157)—considering how those traits contributed to the whole story. Anne Windholz contends that that is when British reviewers first began to look at American short stories as examples of concise, unified stories: "Poe's originary contribution to this aesthetic goes largely unrecognized by reviewers, though his ideas constantly inform their assessments" (162). In the use of the single effect, British critics admitted that "American short stories definitely surpassed the British" (Windholz 164). This recognition of American thought (from Poe) and talent (from American story writers), according to Windholz, "resulted not only in greater parity of judgment between English and American short stories, but also in a new understanding of the ways in which short fiction might be distinguished as an independent genre" (164).



## Conditions in the 1830s and 1840s That Encouraged the Short Fiction That Became the Short Story

There is no question that a number of developments in the first half of the nineteenth century contributed to the popularity of fiction: a growing interest in reading among the middle class, technological advances, and an increasing demand for magazines. Complicating these developments were economic problems, copyright issues, and a tendency for the publishers and editors of magazines to be businessmen rather than writers.

Although many—with mistaken views of early America—have the impression that there was a hostility toward fiction well into the nineteenth century, Nina Baym points out, in *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers*, that many novels were being written, published, and read in the United States in the early part of the nineteenth century. She even identifies the kind of struggle between “serious” and popular literature that characterized the literary world, explaining that “critics strove to make novels ‘better’ by praising those that were ‘serious,’ while readers apparently continued to buy and read novels that simply told stories and consequently provided more immediate pleasure and entertainment” (24). Significantly, novels encouraged the appearance of periodicals since sometimes long excerpts were published in magazines, occasionally long reviews. At least readers could expect “a few paragraphs of commentary and assessment”

. . . faulting or praising a particular work” (19). (These reviews are the foundation of Baym’s study.)

Technological advances in the early nineteenth century affected the production of both books and magazines. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Richmond were the main publishing and book selling centers before the 1830s, giving book-sellers a wide area to cover, with markets in the West and South poorer than those in the North (Hartmann 5). Railroads and steamboats put “books within the physical and financial reach of a vast segment of an increasingly literate population” (Baym 19). Advances in the bookmaking process as well as the improved quality and appearance of books enticed more readers into purchasing what were still-expensive texts (Zboray, “Antebellum Reading” 67). Better printing methods reduced production costs for magazines: the steam press, for example, could be operated by children who could be paid less, and “electrotyping and stereotyping took impressions of set type, allowing for flexibility in the number and geographical staging of print runs” (Hartmann 8). The availability of public education, better lighting in homes, and increased availability of eyeglasses increased both the number of readers and the opportunities for reading.

Baym suggests that “the periodical press came into its own” in the 1840s (14). “Literary matter” predominated in the 1840s and 1850s, “the period of the greatest development of a native American literature, and American magazines aided greatly in its growth” (Wood 61). With “a patriotic pride,” Americans

valued their magazines not only as “useful and pleasing” but also as “an important sign of America’s dawning cultural as well as political independence” (Wood 25). Frank Luther Mott, who chronicles the history of American magazines, estimates that by 1825 only a hundred periodicals existed, disregarding newspapers, but by 1850, there were about six hundred (I: 341-42). David Paul Nord argues that the nature of the reading public—“the shopkeepers and artisans, as well as the merchants and politicians” (131)—shaped the content of the magazines. They wanted “miscellany” in their magazines, with three subjects dominating--“public virtues,” “suspicion of luxury,” and “the power and democracy of knowledge” (129).

The emerging magazines controlled both Poe’s life and work and the shaping of the genre that came to be called the short story later in the century. Short fiction had to be concise to fit on the pages of magazines. An editor of a Cincinnati magazine in 1845 admonished his contributors in his editorial “Short Articles”: “You may speak, [ . . . ] speak well, speak to the point, but then stop!” (qtd. in Urgo). Joseph Urgo states that short fiction’s “demand for efficiency of form, cohesiveness, and economy of scale parallels in remarkable fashion the demands of managerial capitalism” and names Poe the first “truly managerial-capitalist literary critic.” Streamlining both the fiction and the magazines, Poe wanted one effect in his stories, realizing that when short efficient tales are published, there is more space for advertisement and less production expense: “High quality short stories would thus attract readers and subscribers, leaving

ample space to generate advertising revenue for the magazine” (Urgo). Wanting “to get people to read short stories and buy short story magazines,” then, was both a marketing tactic and a philosophy (Urgo).

Of equal importance was that the only stories to appear in the magazines had to be stories that would be read, that would appeal to the taste of the readership. Poe contributed to the debate between writing for the elite or for the masses, and between literary and commercial fiction that still is raging today.<sup>34</sup> He struggled with the difference as he wrote literary short stories in the commercial magazine market. In many of his letters and essays Poe compared himself to a “slave to the popular magazines, whose different audiences he attempted to please in his notably variegated tales” (Reynolds 230). Editors, paying attention to what the public wanted, asked that the entries for an 1832 Philadelphia writing contest be “what readers wanted most: historical romance” (Hayes, *Poe* 21). Poe wrote the historical romance adding his flair, a gothic setting, and his story came in second because readers considered gothic too German, not American. Although Poe cared about raising the quality of literature of his day, he also cared about making a living and, as a result, read the sensational literature of the day. The sensational is what the public wants, he advised Thomas White, editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, when White complained about Poe’s grotesque “Berenice” (*Letters* I: 57). Poe knew the market and wrote sensational tales, but his writing was never popular because

he had the "inclination to sculpt and depoliticize irrational themes" (Reynolds 230).

Affecting the rise of magazines were a number of economic conditions, for example, "the banking collapse, financial panic, and grinding depression" (Lepore, "The Humbug") of the 1830s and 1840s. Poe wrote, Lepore insists, because he was hungry: "P.S. I am poor" ends one of Poe's letters ("The Humbug"). At other times he describes how he or his Aunt Maria would sometimes beg on the street for money for food; "for a long while, Poe lived on bread and molasses" ("The Humbug"). Writers knew that books would pay them little. At a time when the average worker only made a dollar per day, the \$.75 to \$1.25 for a novel was too much of their weekly budget (Zboray 74). With the bank crash of 1837, publishers would not publish books; and if published, a book would sell for 50 cents, not \$2 as before the Panic of 1837 (Lepore 5). Poe's one and only book was put on hold by the publishers because of the crash.

The economic situation was aggravated by the lack of an international copyright law: European books could be published and distributed with less cost because the publishers did not have to pay royalties to the authors. Of the 124 best sellers in 1837 America, for example, only 55 were written by Americans (Sutherland). Since there was no international copyright law, many publishers of magazines avoided paying American authors by pirating the work of British authors. This left no place for American writers to be published or paid for their writing. If they did get published and paid, a number of their works might be

pirated to be published in British magazines (St. Clair). According to Urgo, many of the short stories appearing in the early magazines were reprinted in England, not only because there was no international copyright law, but also because there was a demand for stories that reflected the character of Americans to the British. As most editors and readers called for American themes and settings, there were many such stories available without cost. An advocate for an international copyright, Poe complained that he was “cheated out of a fair profit because of the copyright situation” (Reynolds 230). This situation may have encouraged Poe’s dream of publishing his own magazine, *Penn*, later *The Stylus* (A. Quinn 369).

Poe generally considered the publishing industry “irredeemably corrupt” and was not shy about expressing his views in print (Reynolds 230). Most owners and editors of the magazines were businessmen, not literary men; and there were many difficulties in the relationship between writers and editors or magazine owners. Mott catalogs the expenses of magazines: contributors’ pay, mailing charges, advertising costs, and illustrations or engravings—sometimes as high as \$1,000 per plate (I: 494-519). When the owner was not the editor, payment to the editor was another cost, which was usually tied to the success of the magazine. Some editors, like Billy Burton of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, tried to get contributions into his magazine as cheaply as possible, perhaps by a contest that brought in quite a bit of material to print but only one payment to the winner.<sup>35</sup> Some editors promised but never paid contributors. An editor and

writer were lucky if employed by a generous owner: working for a generous editor like George Rex Graham (the subject of chapter three) eased Poe's financial worries. Both Frank Luther Mott and Nina Baym label Graham as one of the first editors to offer good pay for good stories. Mott's claim that "George R. Graham performed a real service to America literature" (I: 508) has been proved by the quality of his magazine and the evaluations of all who were associated with it.

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Literary studies often neglect the publishing context in which authors think and write. This dissertation will focus on the magazine business and environment that existed when Edgar Allan Poe was working within the magazine world, with chapter three on George Graham, one of the greatest publishers of magazines, and chapter four on Poe's relationship to magazines, especially as reviewer and editor. Poe wrote for over forty magazines and was involved with editing five of them. In the last chapter, chapter five, two issues of *Graham's Magazine*, published in 1841 and 1842, will illustrate the nature of the magazine during Poe's tenure as one of its editors and also consider how Poe's theories of short fiction affected his contributions to the magazine. *Graham's Magazine* was by far

the most successful of the magazines for which Poe worked and within its pages much of Poe's theory of short fiction appeared.

Reflecting his interests, talents, and the circumstances of his world, Poe chose to write; and "Once he made up his mind to write short stories, he embraced nearly every form of prose fiction and invented original modes of discourse, new narrative approaches, and different ways of telling tales no one had used previously" (Hayes, *Poe* 25). Both Poe's tales and reviews helped shape what is now known as the short story: short story writer Willa Cather states, "Poe found short story writing a bungling makeshift. He left it a perfect art" ("The Late").



## Chapter Two

### Survey of the Criticism

There are probably more books and articles written on Edgar Allan Poe than on any other U.S. American author. Poe is recognized as both a brilliant author of short fiction and, with essays like "The Philosophy of Composition" and "The Poetic Principle," the first serious literary critic in the United States. Students are taught in high school that Poe "created" the short story, that he defined the characteristics and qualities still found in many short stories today. They do not realize that the theory Poe gradually defined over a fifteen-year period emerged partially as a result of the rise of the magazine, with the subsequent demand for short fiction rather than lengthy novels.

Since my purpose in this dissertation is to argue that a greater knowledge of Poe within the context of his time would increase our understanding and appreciation of his mind and work, the survey of criticism will begin by considering a few works that discuss the role of the magazine in American literature, then introduce important studies of the short story, and, finally, consider some of the most significant criticism on Poe as author and critic.

## Works on Early-American Magazines

Any discussion of magazines must begin with Frank Luther Mott's *History of American Magazines* (1938), the magazine being, according to Mott, "the intellectual food of the people" (1). Mott's history "is much more, however, than a collection of valuable information and a standard reference work in its field. It is a spirited and vigorous account of human nature and popular movements as they are reflected in publications that are of necessity close to daily life" (Stearns 937). In addition to distinguishing between magazines, periodicals, journals, or papers, Mott lauds the magazine as the recorder of the history, social culture, and geography of a young country. He examines the effect that magazines had on authors and literature. One book publisher, in testifying before Congress in 1885, declared, "It is impossible to make the books of most American authors pay unless they are first published and acquire recognition through columns of magazines. Were it not for the one saving opportunity of the great American magazines . . . American authorship would be at a still lower ebb than at present" (3). He confirms what other sources have said about the problems caused by the lack of an international copyright law and emphasizes the fact that many American pieces were reprinted in British magazines without proper credit. Mott adds that although some American magazines, like *Godey's* and *Graham's*, were original and of high quality, most magazines imitated English form and content.

Mott's history also includes a discussion of why literary criticism was lacking or poor (with a few exceptions) in the nineteenth century: the complimentary copies of magazines given to critics or friends; "leniency toward colleagues of the same journal" (406); urge for a national literature; fear of offending anyone the author might be connected with; and laziness. Mott observes that the content of many of these magazines was of poor quality unless the editor was fearless and that short stories were regarded as "a kind of mongrel in literature" (419), often not considered worthy of criticism. He blames this appraisal of the short story on the proliferation of sentimental stories and scarcity of stories of value. Mott's three-volume study of magazine history details the assorted contents of early magazines: drama, art, agriculture, health, oratory, fiction, poetry, and phrenology.

William Charvat's 1936 and 1959 works and Matthew Bruccoli's 1968 collection of Charvat's papers are all important sources for an interpretation of how Americans were thinking and literature was being produced and distributed during these early decades. In *The Origins of American Critical Thought (1810-1835)*, Charvat studied the leading American magazines to investigate how American thought was affected by the English romantic movement, German philosophy, and the Scotch Common Sense School. He contends that "American critics have no important contributions to offer, although Irving's and Bryant's early conceptions of the short story are noteworthy" (Fischer 81). In *Literary Publishing in America* (1959), Charvat discusses how publishing centers and

methods affected literature and authors. After Charvat died in 1966, Bruccoli edited a collection of Charvat's papers in *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800-1870*, focusing on "understanding the careers of professional writers in terms of the emergence of modern publishing practices" (Bailey 88). Charvat's work explains how women authors emerged during this time period; "his readings of publishers' cost books, author/publisher correspondence, and the records of literary periodical still shed considerable light on the contours of nineteenth-century middle-class writing careers" (Bailey 88).

James Playsted Wood's 1949 *Magazines in the United States* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1956) describes the beginning of the English magazine with Daniel Defoe in 1704, of the American magazine in the early 1740s, and offers a history of the medium into the 1940s. Wood discusses the first American magazines as national educators and "Literary and Crusading" forces (44). After recognizing the first journalistic figures as emerging in the 1840s, he identifies many directions of the evolving medium: serving as "a weapon against political corruption" (90) and slavery; embracing an emerging "materialistic American world" (147) on the one hand and objecting to the nation's capitalistic ruthlessness on the other (131). He points out that women's magazines—"built on the idea of service to women and to the home" and still popular into the 1940s--were the first magazines, early in the 1800s, "to achieve the vast circulations characteristic of the mass magazine" (122); agricultural magazines--begun in the pre-Civil War period as journals for the farm and garden--became a "powerful social and economic

force" well into the 1940s. Wood devotes whole chapters to *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The Reader's Digest*, and *The New Yorker*, closing with a chapter on the role of magazines during World War I and World War II and a chapter on the rise of "little magazines." He concludes that "The magazine today [that is, in the late 1940s] is not essentially different from the magazine in 1741" in "identity and function," although an "improved vehicle," providing "more efficient communication among more millions of people" (377-78).

In *American Literary Magazines: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (1986), Edward E. Chielens lists, describes, and evaluates early-American magazines in much the same manner as Mott. He closely examines ninety-two magazines published before 1900 and lists others in an attempt to call attention to the importance of the early magazines. In his introduction, Chielens discusses early magazine editors like Daniel Webster, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Dean Howells, Brett Hart, and, of course, Poe, who edited four magazines (x). Chielens' analysis includes discussion of which magazines paid its contributors, which ones promoted a national literature and demanded regional loyalty, and which few were financially successful. William Gilmore Simms, for example, realized after three editing experiences how "'irksome,' 'disagreeable,' and 'fatiguing'" the job could be (xiii), blaming his failures on the inadequate reading ability of Southerners. The introduction closes with a discussion of changes in literary magazines from 1850 to 1900.

Two other histories of early-American magazines, John Tebbel's *The American Magazine: A Compact History* (1969) and Tebbel's and Mary Ellen Zukerman's *The Magazine in America: 1741-1990* (1991), offer more than just a history of the early magazines: the magazines are shown as reflecting the culture. Because Tebbel covers American magazines from the beginning in 1741 to 1990, there is scant information on any one periodical. The book he co-authors with Zuckerman includes information on author bylines, title choices and changes, technological advancements, financial maneuvering, photography and advertising, women's rights and industrialization. The first part of the two hundred and fifty year history relies on Mott's information; the latter half delves into personalities of editors and publishers.

Unlike Mott's, Chielens' or Tebbel's works, David Paul Nord's "A Republican Literature: Magazine Reading and Readers in Late-Eighteenth Century New York," in Cathy Davidson's *Reading in America* (1989), focuses on the readers, not the writers or publishers, of the magazines. Although Nord's study is of the 1790 audience, his results predict the beginning of a trend of readers that would exist in Poe's time. Nord's assessment reveals not an elite audience, but "a more varied readership" that indicates "the importance of reading as a form of participation in the new social order of postrevolutionary America" (115). Nord describes early magazines as often uniting "utility with entertainment. . . instruction with pleasure" (125), from the "arcane to the mundane" (126): for instance, one arcane article in the 1790 *New York Magazine*

was "Observations on the Utility of the Latin and Greek Languages" (127). Nord corroborates Mott's assessment of the content of the early magazine. Much of the material was aimed at women: in addition to romances and sentimental fiction, magazines would include "advice for women" and articles on the importance of "public virtue," "suspicion of luxury," and "the power and democracy of knowledge" (128-29).

Focusing on types of magazines, Isabelle Lehuu's *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (2000) "centers on a historical moment of textual transformation" (3) when an abundant and "eccentric," "off-balanced" variety of reading material became available to readers in antebellum America, the quarter-century before the economic depression of 1857. Lehuu's text explores the "in-betweenness" of the age, contrasting "low and high culture, the feast and the fast, the popular and the legitimate" (4-5). This "golden age of print" (1830-1860s) upset the traditional way of reading with "the emergence of a different, vernacular print culture—cheap, sensational, ephemeral, miscellaneous, illustrated, and serialized—that transgressed the boundaries of conventional media and defied orthodox uses of the printed word" (7). By exploring the new genres of publication--the penny dailies, the mammoth weeklies, the giftbooks, *Godey's Lady's Book*--and discussing the "condemnation of the new media by the learned class," Lehuu gives a picture of the "ephemeral and carnivalesque marketplace festival in pre-Civil War America" (12-13).

## Studies of the Short Story

The earliest and most important discussion of the short story occurs in Brander Matthews' 1887 essay, "The Philosophy of the Short-story," published in book form in 1901, the first full-length work entirely devoted to the short story. Although Matthews seems to announce the new genre—Short-story with a capital S and a hyphen—his description of the new genre is very similar to Poe's. Writing because the Short-story has been neglected, Matthews insists that a Short-story is harder to write than a novel because it contains an "essential unity of impressions" (*Philosophy of the Short-story* 15), the same description that Poe wrote in 1842 in his review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*. Matthews, like Poe, also states that the Short-story must have "originality and ingenuity" (*Philosophy of the Short-story* 23) and adds that the Short-story has action and "limitless possibilities" (*Philosophy of the Short-story* 37).

A contemporary of Poe's, William Gilmore Simms offers a view of the mid-nineteenth-century writing environment in his *Views and Reviews in American Literature History and Fiction First Series* (1845), a collection of Simms' lectures, literary criticism, and biographical sketches published since the 1830s (edited and corrected by C. Hugh Holman in 1962). Included is Simms' "virtual manifesto in the Young America literary wars of the 1840s," calling for a distinctly American literature that was not just an imitation of British publications and also promoted national content.



Fred Lewis Pattee's *Development of the American Short Story: An Historical Survey* (1923) discusses the mid-nineteenth century as the era when the short story distinguished itself from "a novel in miniature" (45) and as an American form. Pattee asserts that the magazine helped to shape the genre of the short story; that Washington Irving's and James Fenimore Cooper's writings spurred on the next generation of writers; and that many magazinists were instrumental in filling the public's craving for the light, sentimental tale.

Pattee does not give Poe all of the credit for the beginning of the short tale through his tales and critical reviews, suggesting that Hawthorne should be declared the father of the American short story because "he was the first to direct it into its modern form" (109). He points out that by 1850 the short story was wavering on the verge of respectability, especially with Rufus Griswold's 1847 short history, *The Prose Writers of America*, but sets the date for the recognition of the qualities that make up the genre as the late 1880s, citing Poe as their source:

The name 'short story' began to be used more and more during the 'sixties and the 'seventies, but never in a generic sense; always the emphasis on the first word. It connoted simply that for general magazine purposes fiction must be severely shortened. That the tale, or the short story, was a distinct genre, necessarily short as lyric is necessarily short, following laws distinct from those ruling the novel and its abbreviated form the novelette, had been realized

in its fullness by no one, save perhaps Poe. (291)

Pattee gives Matthews' "Philosophy of the Short-story" credit for publishing the eight rules for a Short-story: "originality, unity, compression, brilliancy of style, action, form, substance, and if possible, fantasy" (294).

In "Art and Formula in the Short Story" (1943), Warren Beck suggests "A writer can profitably study the history of literary forms to note that, whenever they became rigid in practice and dogmatic in definition, they declined from vitality and freshness" (57). He then describes the mid-century revolt of many authors against commercial magazine writing and the sentimental quality, "vulgarization" (61), of what the magazines published and what the public craved, a revolt that encouraged the short story.

William Peden's *The American Short Story: Front Line in the National Defense of Literature* (1964) notes that from its beginnings the short story has seemed to be an American form, usually associated with magazines, and "until very recently most critics have refused to consider it as important as the more traditional forms of poetry, drama, and the novel" (1), perhaps because the stories have so long been identified with commercial magazines and policies of editors driven to make a profit. Peden then discusses the current state of writers of short stories and of the magazines that print their stories, also identifying university programs that promote the writing of good short stories.

In *The American Short Story: A Study of the Influence of Locality in Its Development* (1970), Elias Lieberman discusses that all "American fiction at its

best is mainly an affair of localities" (vii), East, West, North, and South, giving impetus to the short story form, "a very desirable commodity" (xi). Lieberman likens the author to a "fiction worker . . . who meets this call for his wares" (xi) by looking around him, thus meeting the needs of the audience and the requirements of the short story, especially Poe's unity of impression.

Robert F. Marler's "From Tale to Short Story: The Emergence of a New Genre in the 1850s" (1974) notes the proliferation of quality short fiction in the 1850s, followed by the decay of the magazine tale until the emergence of "a notable tradition of American short fiction" with Henry James in the 1870s and 1880s. Marler begins with the assertion that "short fiction was preeminently periodical material" (154), with the 1850s using the models of earlier great story writers: "Irving's sentimentalism, Poe's sensationalism, and Hawthorne's moralism" (155). Marler contends that it was the sentimental tale that "was making critics ill" (158) in the 1850s although editors had made the same complaint in earlier decades. Herman Melville's cry of "Dollars damn me" (156) was his way of expressing his dilemma: should he write what he wanted to write or what the public wanted to read, thus what the editors wanted to put in the magazines to make a profit.

Allan H. Pasco's article "On Defining Short Stories" (1981) attempts a new definition for the short story but ends up relying on Poe's original definition. Pasco defines "a short story" as "a short, literary prose fiction" (411), the word "literary" meaning "the creation must be artistically fashioned with the apparent

intention of making something beautiful" (414). Pasco discusses the fact that Poe's "one sitting" poses a dilemma for short-story writers: on the one hand, as William Saroyan states, "some people can sit longer than others" (qtd. in Pasco 416); more significantly, "for a short story to succeed, the author must overcome the restraints of limited length and communicate not a segment, a tattered fragment, but a world" (420).

A. Robert Lee's *The Nineteenth-Century American Short Story* (1985)

asserts that the short was *the* form of the nineteenth century. Lee declares the genre uniquely American with international appeal. When exploring the question of why America? and why then? Lee acknowledges that "there were magazines with a subscription readership eager for copy" (7) and with aspiring writers who knew that the magazines were paying them. He adds that the best writing comes from those on the margins of society, and perhaps the influx of women writing during the century propelled the short story further. Recognizing "an essential Americanness to the nineteenth-century story tradition" (11), Lee identifies distinctive characteristics of many authors; for example, myth and dreams in Irving, subtle concealment in Poe, the ambiguous narrator in Hawthorne, and the "story-telling voice" (11) in Melville.

Eugene Current-Garcia's *The American Short Story before 1850* (1985)

emphasizes that "Without the magazine for an outlet, it is doubtful whether the short story would have emerged at all in the United States: lacking this outlet, it certainly could not have prospered" (1). Although Current-Garcia devotes

chapters to Irving, Hawthorne and Simms, he credits Poe with the most influence on the genre, recognizing that in his eighteen years of writing, Poe developed theories that "established the norms for the creation and the evaluation of fiction that, after more than a century, are still being argued about" (59). Current-Garcia also comments on the important role of magazines in the careers of the writers of the short story and describes the "popular neglect and the pinch of penury" suffered by authors attempting to establish "a high standard" in literature (60). He argues that Poe's most significant contribution to the theory of the short story was his emphasis upon a unifying single effect and states that Poe's main "strategy . . . to capture the magazine-reading public's attention" was to use "the wildest and most sensational devices then current in popular magazine fiction both in England and on the Continent" (63). At the same time Current-Garcia declares that Poe demonstrated a mastery of new techniques in the management of point of view and the dramatization of disturbed mental states resulting from both physical violence and spiritual agony" (82).

Any study of the short story must include the work of Charles May, a consulting editor for the magazine *Short Story*, author of countless articles and several books on the short story, and editor of several collections comprising over one hundred essays on the genre, the first in 1976, the most recent being *New Short Story Theories* in 1994. The 1994 collection moves from "general considerations on the nature of 'story' to cognitive considerations on the nature of 'storyness,'" ranging from an "Early Formalist Theory" section (Poe) to a

"Modern Short Story" section (Chekhov) (xii). (May's *Edgar Allan Poe: A Study of the Short Fiction* [1991] will be discussed in the third section of this survey.)

From his lifetime study of the short story emerged a 1995 study also by May, *The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice* (rpt. 2002), a history of the short story and its precursors that describes a number of influences on and changes in the form with chapters on nineteenth-century beginnings, nineteenth century realism, early-twentieth-century formalism, and contemporary renaissance. In each chapter, May discusses the writers and the short stories that influenced the genre. May's last chapter is a bibliographic survey that begins with the impact of Poe's statements on the short tale in the 1830s and 1840s, includes a section on the short story after Poe, and ends with sections on a revival of critical interest (1970s) and on cognitive psychology, computers and the short story. May's book begins with a mention of Poe's "famous delineation of the short story's singleness of effect" (1) and ends with two sections on Poe's importance to the genre, a structure which seems to reinforce the idea that "Poe's critical comments on the form in the 1830s are largely responsible for the birth of the short story as a unique genre" (108).

Andrew Levy's *The Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story* (1993) compares the role of today's writing workshops with that of early magazines; both "kept the short story indirectly or directly profitable, while preserving a partial foothold in the high culture" (3). Levy believes the rhetorical patterns and systems of value that evolved in the nineteenth century to discuss

and judge the short story have remained dominant, with slight variation, throughout the twentieth century—but that this continuity is not recognized in contemporary discussions. Levy's chapter, "Poe's Magazine," gives credit to Poe for helping to shape the short story, not only through his writings and his editorship of several magazines, but through his dream of creating his own magazine, which if he had had the funds, might have changed the direction of the short story entirely. Levy declares that Poe's elevation to "both patron saint and the neighborhood bully of the American short story" (10) stems from his reviews and tales as well as his "ability to generate high-publicity intermagazine feuds" (20). Levy explains that before 1870, short stories were known as "the commercial genre" or as "short stories for spare moments" (31), but by the 1890s, especially after the enactment of the international copyright law, short stories were taught at universities and published prolifically in magazines, with the success or failure of a short story often depending upon the collection in which it appeared (51).

Joseph Urgo's article "Capitalism, Nationalism, and the American Short Story" (1998) begins with Raymond Carver's statement that short stories and houses are alike in that they "should be built to last. They should also be pleasing, if not beautiful, to look at, and everything inside them should work" (qtd. in Urgo 339). Urgo argues that both capitalism and nationalism are to blame (or thank) for the creation and proliferation of short stories in America: the short story—since 1830-- being "a profitmaking literary genre for authors,

publishers, and corporate interests" (339), the need for them stemming in part from the English desire to understand what "American" meant. He calls Poe "America's first truly managerial-capitalist literary critic" (3) for understanding that good stories would attract readers, but if they were short they would consume "less space," reduce "production expense," and allow "more space for advertisements" (3). Urgo also describes the industry of short-story writing today as universities offer creative writing degrees and those who earn the degrees then teach creative writing courses, creating "a thriving industry" (7).

In "The Form Read Round the World" (2010), an entry in *World Literature Today*, Alan Cheuse distinguishes between the tale and the short story, describing tales as "accounts or brief narratives of an earlier event, sometimes delivered with imaginative flair" (25). Earlier tales were entertaining with a moral lesson, Cheuse writes, but "from Poe onward" the short-story writer "seeks to create a work of short fiction that, like a lyric poem, has no immediate tie to the culture in which the writer works or to the history of his or her time" (26). Poe wanted to elevate the reputation of the short tale to "entertainment at the highest level" (26), and to do so he wrote psychological stories and planned his own literary magazine.

Drawing upon his many publications on the short story, Charles May is making a presentation on the short story, entitled "Why Many Authors Love Short Stories and Many Readers Do Not," in Angers, France, in April, 2011, and has begun posting comments on the genre from at least one hundred authors at



<http://may-on-the-short-story.blogspot.com/>. His goal in Angers is to organize all of these comments into categories and “by synthesizing them, make connections between the categories and draw conclusions about the generic characteristics of the short story” (May, blog, March 26, 2011).

### Critical Works on Poe as Author and Critic

The best known early account of Edgar Allan Poe’s life was written by his literary executor, Rufus Griswold, who in an 1849 obituary and 1850 “Memoir” stated that Poe had no friends, that he was often drunk and irresponsible, and that he was a poor critic. After Griswold’s account was published, many of Poe’s contemporaries—including Nathaniel Park Willis, Joseph Snodgrass, George Graham, Sarah Whitman, Mrs. Osgood, and John Ingram (A. Quinn 646-93)—wrote letters, articles, and partial biographies in defense of Poe.

Perhaps the best known of the early biographies was Charles Baudelaire’s *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Works* (1852), “written to introduce his American contemporary to the French public.” “[F]ull of boundless enthusiasm and warm emotion” (11), it describes Poe as living in the United States, “a vast cage” of mediocrity, an “antipathetic atmosphere” that “throughout his life he made grim efforts to escape” (39). According to translators Lois and Francis Hyslop, Baudelaire “defends his fellow poet against all the criticism, personal and literary, which had been made against him” (16), perhaps because Baudelaire himself

sympathized with Poe's tragic life and "was strongly attracted by the rationality and conscious method which were essential features of Poe's literary doctrine" (13). Sometimes Baudelaire's admiration is revealed in his questions, "Does not the character of this remarkable man begin to reveal itself?" (46), or in his statements, "As a poet, Edgar Poe is a man apart" (67); "As a novelist and storyteller, Edgar Poe is unique in his field as were Maturin, Balzac, and Hoffmann in theirs" (68). Baudelaire argues that Poe deserves more accolades for his genius from his own country. In the last few pages of the book, Baudelaire "discusses several representative" (17) short stories, which he describes as having "an admirable style, pure and bizarre,—as closely woven as the mesh of chain mail . . . whose slightest intention serves to lead the reader gently toward the desired effect" (115). Baudelaire, in spending many years translating Poe's works and in writing his biography, wanted "to make Poe 'a great man in France,' greater than he was in America" (33).

William Doyle Hull's graduate work investigated reviews in the magazines for which Poe had written to determine which were Poe's. The result was two graduate unpublished papers: his Master's thesis—"A Canon of the Critical Reviews of Edgar Allan Poe in the *Southern Literary Messenger* and *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* with an Examination of his Relationships with the Proprietors" (1939)—and his Ph. D dissertation—"The Canon of Critical Works of Edgar Allan Poe with a Study of Poe as Editor and Reviewer: with a List of Works Denied Him" (1941). Hull's Master's thesis notes that Poe wrote most of the

reviews for the *Southern Literary Messenger*, but may not have written the ones for *Burton's* because they are too short to be called critiques and Poe himself warned his friends against reading the reviews since most of them were "twaddle of other people" (1). The technique that Hull used to determine if the reviews were Poe's or other editors' included examining and comparing Poe's letters and signed reviews--content, thinking, style, and word choice—with unsigned reviews; for instance, in one of the reviews in *Burton's*, Hull identified Poe as the writer by the phrase "a miserable mental inanity," a phrase used by Poe in a signed review (Master's 149). In reviews for the *Southern Literary Messenger* and *Burton's*, Hull's research "excluded nineteen [reviews thought to be Poe's] and added eleven; four others have been subtracted and twenty-two included with more room for questions" (168). In his dissertation, Hull used the same technique to examine reviews in *Graham's*, the *Broadway Journal*, and the *Mirror*. He also discussed Poe's interaction with George Graham and the many other editors with whom Poe worked—Charles Peterson, Beverly Tucker, Nathaniel Willis, Charles Briggs, Vernon Sparhawk, Lucian Minor, and William Burton—and included anecdotes about and descriptions of Poe as editor. Toward the end of the study, Hull describes Nathaniel Park Willis's account of "cheerful" Poe at work: "We loved the man for the entireness of fidelity with which he served us—himself or any vanity of his own, so utterly put aside" (404).

Arthur Hobson Quinn's *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (1941) is a detailed chronology of Poe's life, "a compendium of documentary sources" that is

“full of casual insights and throw-away moments of considerable wit”

(Rosenheim xiv). Quinn’s announced purpose is “to get the facts of [Poe’s] life right” (xvi): an account of the lives of Poe’s parents; details of Poe’s early life, education, military service, and writing; explanations of Poe’s complicated relationships with the women in his life; descriptions of Poe’s work at the magazines, including the year at *Graham’s* that Quinn suggests was Poe’s most satisfying year creatively and socially; and extensive discussions of Poe’s writings. The biography does not end with Poe’s death, but relates the aftereffects of Griswold’s obituary, including statements of Poe’s defenders.

Shawn Rosenheim’s foreword to the biography praises Quinn’s accomplishment:

“It is Poe’s good fortune, and ours, that in Arthur Hobson Quinn Poe found a biographer who recognized that the deepest interest of Poe’s life is not the way it repeated the themes of his fiction, but the high ambition and persistence Poe showed in pursuing the profession of authorship throughout the course of that life” (xvii).

In “The Conscious Art of Edgar Allan Poe” (1963), Floyd Stovall suggests that Poe critics fall into six categories: critics who simply enjoy reading Poe’s work although they might have an intellect like Poe, “of a highly gifted young person before puberty” (Stovall 172); critics who examine a few individual pieces but do not consider the author or his other works; critics who hate Poe’s writings and refuse to see any worth in any one of them; critics who use psychoanalysis to dissect Poe’s work, who write “clinical studies of a supposed psychopathic

personality" (Stovall 173); critics "who like Poe but feel they should not" (Stovall 174); and critics who think they must like Poe because other critics, like the French, adore Poe. Stovall takes a centrist position. He believes that over half of Poe's work "is trivial, artistically crude, and often in bad taste, [but] the rest is of literary importance and merits detailed study without reference to its possible autobiographical significance" (174). Stovall believes that Poe's writing was the result of intellectual, conscious thought and Poe's theories were concisely and clearly stated in his essays and reviews, most of which appeared in the magazines for which Poe worked.

In an early book on Poe as critic, *Poe's Literary Battles: The Critic in the Context of His Literary Milieu* (1963), Sidney P. Moss begins his Introduction with the statement that "Poe's literary battles had a singleness of purpose: to prepare the ground for writers of genuine talent and in consequence, for a respectable American literature" (ix). Moss sees Poe as fighting an ideological battle, with supporters like George Graham or Edward Gould and opponents like Charles Briggs or Lewis Gaylord Clark. He even uses military terms in the titles of his chapters, for example, "Background for Battle," "Commencement of a Campaign," and "Culmination of a Campaign." Among the principles of this ideological battle noted by Moss, Poe included the importance of originality in American writers, who did not imitate the British; the source of creative work as being conscious effort, not sudden inspiration; the avoidance of all didacticism; and the refusal to practice puffing (ix). Moss's epilogue declares that "Poe

appeared on the literary scene at a crucial point in history” as he fought against “dilettantes who would not or could not master the craft” (245). Poe was perhaps the first “literary crusader” (247).

In *Edgar Allan Poe as Literary Critic* (1964), Edd Winfield Parks notes that before Poe began at the *Southern Literary Messenger*, he had published only one piece of criticism (a prefatory “Letter to Mr.--”), but he published over eighty reviews at the *Southern Literary Messenger* alone (6); thus, he became “the first important critic to develop and to refine his critical theories through the media of book reviews and magazine articles” (1). Parks suggests that Poe’s critical theories arose from his “innate liking for a literature suitable for magazine literature” that led him to “search for an ideal unity” (2), the requirement of the single effect that runs through many of his critical remarks as well as an insistence on imagination and originality, an avoidance of the didactic, an emphasis on the work without considering the writer’s reputation, and the use of supportive examples. Poe made a good critic, Parks contends, because he had “the magazinist’s gift of ready assimilation” (10); his only weakness might be that he had a “psychopathic obsession with plagiarism and imitation” (93). Because Poe “believed an author should be fully aware of the capabilities of the art that he practiced” (4), he held firmly to the idea that writers are conscious artists.

Robert Regan’s *Poe: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1967) opens with Regan’s reflection that Poe is not “the least understood of America’s major

writers"; he is "the most *misunderstood*" (1). Regan declares that Poe was a triple threat—as poet, tale-writer, and critic—to other writers of his time: "The influence of Poe's poetry has been considerable, but the influence of his fiction has been even more widespread and far-reaching" in "leading the whole genre of short fiction away from the episodic and casual" (8). In addition, even with all the "persistently," "pertinaciously," and "perversely" repeated misrepresentations of Poe, "Poe's criticism merits our attention first of all because his judgments were remarkably often both original and right" (2). The essays in Regan's collection include titles and authors that are familiar, for example, "The Philosophy of Composition" by Joseph Wood Krutch; "From 'Vulgarity in Literature'" by Aldous Huxley; "Our Cousin, Mr. Poe" by Allen Tate; "The French Response to Poe" by Patrick Quinn; "The House of Poe" by Richard Wilbur; "The Question of Poe's Narrators" by James W. Gargano; and "The Conscious Art of Edgar Allan Poe" by Floyd Stovall.

Robert Jacobs' *Poe: Journalist and Critic* (1969) argues that Poe "committed himself as a journalist to raising the American literary tone" (93). Jacobs also considers a number of areas that may have affected Poe as a critic. For example, the "temper of the South" may have contributed to his belief "that sorrow for the passing of the beautiful was the most poetic subject in the world" (7); the conflicts of the South may have deepened his awareness of "the tensions" between the classes, the "plantation gentry and the rising mercantile class" (8). His belief that "it was the duty of the critic to educate the public taste

and to refuse to tolerate mediocrity or self-serving" (227) may have affected the strength of his convictions. Jacobs does not distinguish between the labels "journalist" and "critic," stating that when he was "[f]orced to become a journalistic critic, Poe became good at it" (17). Chronicling Poe's apprenticeship—studying the approaches and techniques of successful magazines while at the *Southern Literary Messenger*, suffering through trials at *Burton's*, and enjoying freedom at *Graham's*—Jacobs offers a picture of Poe the critic at work, negotiating the "tension between what his imagination called for and what his situation permitted" (16).

To understand Poe's critical thinking, Michael Allen, in *Poe and the British Magazine Tradition* (1969), considers *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* that Poe first read as a teen and later as an editor (16). Poe noticed the magazine "retained the air of exclusiveness and authority which had characterized" more scholarly reviews like the *London Quarterly Review*. In addition, "it incorporated the curious and esoteric learning which was a feature of the more respectable older miscellanies like the *Gentleman's*," combining "these elements into a more relaxed, personal, and intimate ethos which permitted the inclusion of more blatant sensationalism, literary gossip, and fiction for the less erudite reader" (23). Poe also picked up on the "contentiousness" of the magazine and adopted a similar style in his own writing, hoping to effect the same response (41). Poe especially took note of the character of *Blackwood's* editor, Christopher North, who would often break out into "ha, ha, ha" in poking fun at an issue, sometimes



offending his audience, but always selling magazines. Perhaps with a similar motive, in becoming a harsh "Tomahawk critic," Poe was not being argumentative or difficult: he was creating a persona and style that would sell magazines.

In *Poe at Work: Seven Textual Studies* (1978), Benjamin Fisher, like Parks earlier, emphasizes that Poe was a conscious "craftsman" and a constant reviser. Fisher's introduction to the collection, "Poe and the Art of the Well Wrought Tale," details the historical background authenticating available versions of Poe's tales and acknowledges the ongoing work of researchers, like Arthur Quinn, to find original copies. In order to reveal "textual history and evolving versions of the tales" (5), Fisher chose seven articles that point out the difficulty of ascertaining what Poe intended with his many emendations. Six of the selections focus upon Poe's *Tales of the Folio Club*, "Bon Bon," "Silence," "William Wilson," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and "The Mystery of Marie Roget," with the final section being a bibliography of articles on Poe's specific textual choices. For instance, in the case of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," four variations of the story exist (83), from the 1841 hand-written manuscript to the final version in *Tales* 1845; and Joel Kenneth Asarch points out that Poe's alterations of even one mark of punctuation had significance: thus, the inclusion of quotation marks around the newspaper article announcing the murders (86) mimics how the public learns of such events.

Dwight Thomas and David K. Jackson's *The Poe Log: A Documentary Life of Edgar Allan Poe 1809-1849* (1987) is the definitive source for accurate information on Poe's life. In the one hundred fifty years since Poe died, biographers have differed on the details of his life, and researchers have needed as complete and reliable a source as possible. *The Poe Log* offers letters, newspaper clippings, and legal documents to verify the day-by-day details of Poe's life, with short overviews to begin each chapter. It is especially useful for publication dates, audience reactions to Poe's works, and accounts of the political maneuverings of various people involved in magazine publishing and writing. At the beginning of the book is an informative biography of people involved in Poe's life; at the back, a twenty-page who's who in Poe studies. Robert Regan states that *The Poe Log* has changed Poe research in the last twenty years and hopes future researchers will consult it first for accurate details ("Edgar Allan Poe").

The chapter "Poe and Popular Irrationalism" in David Reynolds's *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (1988) discusses Poe's manipulation of the sensational: "the view of the American public as sensation-hungry is visible in much of his literary criticism" (227). According to Reynolds, Poe was disgusted with both "the turbulence and fluidity of modern American life" and "the cruelty and venality of the literary marketplace" (229). In addition to using his imagination, Poe employed his knowledge of science to appeal to popular audiences, enjoying "hoodwinking the public" (241).

In Charles May's *Edgar Allan Poe: A Study of the Short Fiction* (1991), Poe's stories, "once dismissed as mere gothic thrillers," are re-examined "for their self-conscious manipulation of narrative devices and their darkly existential view of reality" (xi). May discusses how Poe fits into the conversation on the nature and theory of the short story. His first section identifies theorists from whom Poe borrowed: Friedrich Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, Augustus William Schlegel and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In the next chapter, to show "that a literary genre does not really exist so long as it is merely practiced" (11), May presents Poe's critical remarks on the short story: rules, restrictions, comparisons within the genre, and similarities to or differences from other genres. Thus, as May argues, it is not Poe's short stories that help define the genre; it is his literary criticism, the determining of literary theories. Next, May uses Poe's own stories, beginning with "Metzengerstein," Poe's "first published short story" (17), to show the different characteristics of the new genre. The chapters that follow cover areas in which Poe probed the nature of the short story: the relationship between truth and fiction, body and spirit, and obsession and unity of effect; the nature of detective fiction; and portrayal of alternate realms of reality. A second section of the study focuses upon many of Poe's theoretical articles and reviews; a third, upon analyses of Poe's works by Kermit Vanderbilt, Michael Williams, and Ronald Bieganowski, critics whom May describes as representing "the most influential critical approaches to literature in the last 25 years" (139).

Scott Peeples calls Kenneth Silverman's *Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance* (1991) the most definitive biography on Poe since Quinn's 1941 biography even though "some Poe specialists still prefer Quinn, partly because he took fewer interpretive liberties" ("Bibliographic" 214). Based on the idea that Poe's life was a continual search for "never-ending remembrance" as he coped with loss and grief throughout his life, Silverman's biography displays more insight than other biographies into why Poe may have written certain stories or made certain decisions, creating a study part biographical, part critical, part psychoanalytic. The sixteen pages of illustrations in the center of the book are surrounded by a detailed account of Poe's life and writing that reads like a novel. For example after a number of chapters on Poe's childhood, education, military experience, marital hopes, marriage, and employment at the *Southern Literary Messenger*, Silverman writes a chapter on "The Blank Period; *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* and 'Ligeia'" (129), describing a time in Poe's life, February 1837 to May 1839, when researchers are unsure of what Poe was doing. There are many other short periods of Poe's life—like the blank period—that other researchers skip over, but Silverman does not. After a detailed account of Poe's last days (attributing Poe's death to alcohol), Silverman concludes with an account of the life of Poe's mother-in-law, being one of the only biographers to mention her last years.

In *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy* (1992), Jeffrey Meyers explains that his biography is written with Poe's own words in mind: "Biography is not

merely a sketch of the poet's life. . . . It is a gradual development of his heart and mind, of his nature as a poet and a man, that endears him more to us, while it enables us more thoroughly to comprehend him" (qtd. in Meyers xii). Although Meyers offers a number of first-hand accounts of those who knew Poe to create the picture of Poe as a man fully entrenched in the literary world, yet troubled in his personal life, he also lightens Poe's troubled life with anecdotes like a description of Poe and Virginia playing with their pet fawn and cat "Catterina" in their garden, the picture of Poe writing at his desk with the cat wrapped around his neck or the image of Poe rowing out to an Island for "'voyage of discovery and exploration' and an afternoon swim" (193). The final chapter is an invaluable source of information on the influence that Poe exerted over many later authors, from Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry to Dostoyevsky, to Kipling and Conrad, to Joyce, to Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Nabokov, and Wolfe.

A lengthy study on Poe, Eric Carlson's *A Companion to Poe Studies* (1996) has twenty-six chapters divided into five sections: "Poe's Life and Times," "Poe's Writings," "Poe's Thought," "Poe's Art," and "Poe's Influence." The initial two chapters describe Poe's legacy, first defended by those either living in Poe's time or in the years following up to Arthur Quinn's 1941 biography; the biographical chapter considers the value of each of the full-length studies of Poe's life, such as Meyers' and Silverman's (discussed in later paragraphs). The next section offers a relatively complete study of Poe's poems, fiction, and criticism, followed by a short section on Poe's place in recent feminist and postmodern criticism.

The final section describes how Poe is represented in popular culture, art, music, and dance. For example, Poe's poem "Eldorado" was first sung in 1869, and many of his tales are now operas.

Scott Peeples, in *Edgar Allan Poe Revisited* (1998), titles the chapters of his biography with works or theories of Poe: "I Have Dreamed of Joy Departed": 1809-1831; "Neither in Nor out of Blackwood": 1832-1838; "Black and White and Re(a)d All Over: *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*"; "Double Vision and Single Effect": 1839-1844; "Betting Your Head, Getting Ahead"; "At Length I Would Be Avenged": 1845-1849; and "The Universe of Art." His purpose is to show Poe's many voices—"the pedantic critic, the exposé (sic) of humbug, the perpetrator of humbug, the aesthetic theorist, the scientist, the tortured romantic artist, the desperate lover, and an array of buffoons, detectives, and obsessed and self-divided criminals" (x). Peeples also examines the range of Poe's craftsmanship, noting that Poe "combined narrative modes and stretched generic boundaries, creating texts that leave readers wondering whether they have just read a satire, an allegory, or a Gothic potboiler" (x). Peeples notes the way in which themes of Poe's writing occasionally reflect the events of his life. For example in "The Universe of Art," Peeples states that "Eldorado" is appropriate as one of Poe's last poems because "poetry and other forms of art hold out the promise of Eldorado, where earthly chaos is replaced by unity and order, and where estrangement—from one's own psyche as well as others'—is transformed into self-knowledge and a corresponding union of souls" (173).

Terence Whalen's *Edgar Allan Poe and the Masses: The Political Economy of Literature in Antebellum America* (1999) examines the relationship between the world of business and the world of literature; thus, Whalen writes about Poe, not because of Poe's power as a writer, but because Poe "exemplifies, as much as anyone, the predicament of a 'poor-devil author' in an age of social and economic turmoil" (ix). Whalen explains that most of Poe's biographers, like Silverman or Quinn, offer an explanation such as childhood trauma or his emotional life for why Poe seems disconnected from his time. Whalen believes that Poe is so connected with his time that he was "an exceedingly perceptive witness to the new conditions of literary production" and "understood the difference between information, which is destined to re-enter the process of production, and literature, which is designed to teach or delight an individual reader" (7). Poe was aware of his readers: the ideal readers, the anonymous collective readers (mob), and the third readers, those who are responsible for publishing or not publishing (9-10). He is remembered today, Whalen contends, because he chose to adopt "an aggressive, commercial view of American mass culture" (14). It is probably this stance that created Poe the critic and his dream, "to develop a single style that could satisfy both the popular and the critical taste" (86).

Complementing the premise of Whalen's work, Kevin J. Hayes' *Poe and the Printed Word* (2000) explores Poe's relationship to the word on the page: "Sensitive to the impact of print on interpretation, Poe developed as a writer, in

part, by allowing changes in print culture to shape his work" (xii). Hayes chronicles events in Poe's writing career, from reading aloud to his classmates, to meeting a book publisher at his mother-in-law's dinner table and going to the bookseller's banquet, to his experience with novel-writing—the novel "was a passing thing" while the short tale could "withstand the ages"—to his owning a small library, to his ambition to create a literary America. In the last chapter Hayes discusses Poe's dream of creating his own canon, using the examples of Poe's "Autography," "A Chapter on Autography," "Literati," and "The Living Writers of America," all of which included lists of Poe's fellow writers and his descriptions of them. The two autography series included each writer's signature with a supposed reading of the signature, that was actually Poe's opinion of the writer.

Dawn B. Sova's *Edgar Allan Poe A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Life and Work* (2001) is an easy-to-use reference book offering summaries of Poe's works, identification of characters in his works, and brief biographies of people in Poe's life. A glossy text with an array of illustrations—such as one of the home of Poe's sister, Rosalie Poe, and one of Virginia Poe's nurse, Marie Louise Shew—Sova's reference book leaves out many of the people who played a part in Poe's life and sometimes is inaccurate. For example, in discussing "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Sova states that Poe changed his original title to name the street—it was the building—where dead bodies were kept. The appendices include a list



of Poe's works (Sova notes he wrote three hundred and fifty poems, tales, reviews) and a valuable bibliography.

J. Gerald Kennedy's *A Historical Guide to Edgar Allan Poe* (2001) is a collection of five chapters: a brief biography followed by discussions of Poe's relationship to publishing, his sensationalism and gender constructions, and the tension between who Poe was and his public persona. In his introduction Kennedy declares that the collection describes Poe as an author concerned with the "alienating consequences of the market revolution" and "the social consequences of urban growth" (9). The book concludes with a bibliographic essay of current works on Poe, followed by an illustrated chronology of Poe's life. Kennedy wants the last four chapters to reflect "crucial intersections in Poe between the literary and the historical" (16).

Kevin Hayes' second book on Poe, an important collection of essays entitled *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe* (2002), was written to reflect "current attitudes toward Poe's work" (3) and to appeal to the three types of Poe readers that Hayes discusses in his introduction: "popular reader, enthusiast, or skeptic" (6). Admitting that at the beginning of the twentieth century, Poe was known mostly as a poet, Hayes, like Kennedy, wants this century to see Poe differently. Thus, Hayes includes only one chapter on Poe's poetry, "Two Verse Masterworks: 'The Raven' and 'Ulalume'" by Richard Kopley and Kevin J. Hayes. Poe's fiction is discussed in eight chapters, including "Poe's Dupin and the Power of Detection" by Peter Thoms, "Poe's Humor by Daniel

Royot, "Extra! Extra! Poe Invents Science Fiction!" by John Tresche, and "Poe's 'Constructiveness' and 'The Fall of the House of Usher'" by Scott Peeples. Three articles are on Poe's criticism—"The Poet as Critic" by Kent Ljungquist, "Poe's Aesthetic Theory" by Rachel Polonsky, and "Poe and His Circle" by Sandra Tomc—and one on "Poe and Popular Culture" by Mark Neimeyer. Hayes' final chapter is his own article, "One-man Modernist," in which Hayes states that "major figures in virtually every artistic movement since the mid-nineteenth century have conveyed their indebtedness to Poe in word and image" (225). Hayes describes the essays in his collection as "professional and provocative interpretations" (6).

James Hutchisson's *Poe* (2005) shows his regard for Poe and Poe's craft in a chronology that Hutchisson says follows Jacobs' *Poe: Journalist and Critic*, Meyers' *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy*, and Kenneth Silverman's *Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance*. Like Jacobs and Meyers, Hutchisson emphasizes the hard-working Poe, trying to eke out a living by writing (xi). Like Silverman, Hutchisson considers the influence of grief in Poe's life and choices (xii). Hutchisson's main purpose in writing his biography is to show two sides of Poe—"although he wrote of the macabre, in his private life Poe usually led quite a prosaic existence, anticipating Flaubert's dictum that one should be bourgeois in one's life so that one could be mad in one's art" (xvi)—and to emphasize Poe as a conscious artist. Among the examples Hutchisson discusses to demonstrate the range of Poe's conscious artistry are the subtle

attack on “democratic capitalism” and “not-so-subconscious attack on John Allan” in “The Business Man” (88-89); the role of setting in “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” with “Each pair of characters” (the narrator and Dupin and Madam and Madamosiselle L’Espanaye) living “on the fourth floor of gloomy, Gothic houses with ‘windows in their bosoms’” (117); and Poe’s efforts to appeal to both “the popular and the critical taste” (126) after he met the popular Charles Dickens in the spring of 1842 and “grappled with the conundrum of . . . [his own] low standing despite great talent” (126). Hutchisson’s final chapters focus upon “Quarrels, Loves, and Losses” as well as Poe’s death and are followed by an epilogue that describes reactions to Poe’s death, with a brief discussion of Poe’s reputation. Hutchisson believes that “Poe’s prominence in the academy has spawned a small industry of scholarship about him” (257), with William Carlos Williams’ statement about Poe reflecting the view of both Hutchisson and much of the academy: Poe “was in no sense the bizarre, isolate writer, the curious literary figure. On the contrary, in him American literature is anchored, in him alone, on solid ground. . . . On him is FOUNDED A LITERATURE” (qtd. in Hutchisson 256).

Peter Ackroyd’s *Poe: A Life Cut Short* (2008), a biography with eight pages of photographs and illustrations at the center, begins with the mystery of Poe’s death, offers a chronological account of his life, and concludes with what are considered some of the facts of his death. Ackroyd is concerned with the details of what caused Poe to die so early and discusses Poe’s drinking and

health issues that might have caused his death, also noting that Poe had believed he would die young. Ackroyd's melancholy biography emphasizes the sad nature of Poe's life: describing Poe, for example, with his wife, and mother-in-law, living in a Philadelphia rooming house in 1838, living "on bread and molasses for weeks together" (76); "lost in a stupor, not living or suffering, but existing merely" at Fordham while his wife Virginia is dying (154); "lost in the world, fantasizing about his identity" after the death of Virginia (158). Ackroyd also describes Poe's negative attitude toward life: assuming he would fail when he moved to Philadelphia, a "booming" town" (77), never feeling "at home anywhere" (76), describing his novel, *Pym*, as "a very silly book" (77).

Jonathan Hartmann's *The Marketing of Edgar Allan Poe* (2008) discusses both magazine history and Poe's self-promotion. Like Michael Allen, Hartmann, in his first chapter, recognizes the important influence of Poe's reading of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* on his style and goals. Hartmann's second chapter, examining Poe's body of writings as "a how-to guide for circulating one's work and building a literary reputation" (14), defines and develops the thesis of Hartmann's study. Hartmann's remaining chapters discuss the influence of Coleridge in Poe's insistence on originality and avoidance of plagiarism; demonstrate that Poe's "light gothic tales" are not really light but "offer social commentary in frivolous form" (59); and stress the importance of ambiguity in Poe's critical remarks: he becomes a trickster in "The Philosophy of Composition" by using "the language of performance to describe the process of concocting his

literary stew" (96-97). In his conclusion, Hartmann notes that "by 1846, Poe was able to refer with pride to the detective tales . . . and to 'The Raven' as examples of the manipulation of journalistic confidence" (102). Poe was a conscious craftsman and promoter.

A recent biography, Kevin Hayes' *Edgar Allan Poe* (2009), reads like a novel, but with many thought-provoking, insightful comments on Poe, his times, his writing. This biography groups Poe's life and writing in stages: "The Contest," "The Birth of a Poet," "The Gothic Woman," "Making a Name," "From Peeping Tom to Detective," "The Tourist's Gaze," "The Narrow House," and "The Most Noble of Professions." The chapter "From Peeping Tom to Detective" details Poe's association with phrenology—Thomas Dunn English believed Poe's large forehead showed that Poe possessed "Ideality, with the power of analysis" (95)—along with Poe's disgust for the business world, specifically for the banker who refused to fund his magazine in late 1840 when Poe turned again to magazine editing. Although the book touches on Poe's disappointments and grief, it also describes Poe's awe, for example, over his first view of the city of New York: as a tourist he wandered the streets, amazed and yet fearful of the crowded city it would become. Kevin Hayes' admiration for Poe pervades the book, especially in statements like "His dedication to his craft, even in the face of debilitating personal poverty, is inspiring" (165).

A recent essay on Poe, Jill Lepore's "The Humbug" (2009), in the *New Yorker*, explains that Poe did not create a "Philosophy of Composition" but a

"Philosophy of the literary marketplace" ("The Humbug"). She suggests that "Berenice," the story Poe admitted to his editor Thomas White was in bad taste and intended as a joke, was written because "he was hungry" ("The Humbug"). His one novel, *Pym*, was intended to appeal to the taste of readers for travel tales despite hints that the story was a hoax: one reviewer recognized it as "an impudent attempt at humbugging the public" (qtd. in "The Humbug"). Poe himself once said that what he wrote was "half-banter, half-satire," to which, Lepore asks, "Just how many ways can a writer insult his readers and get away with it?" ("The Humbug"). Lepore credits Poe with being a keen, but slightly abusive critic and believes Poe had the foresight to recognize "the commercial and stylistic ascendancy of magazine literature, despite the morbid financial times" ("The Humbug"). The overall impression she conveys is that Poe was a clever manipulator and smarter than anyone acknowledged.

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Benjamin Fisher observes that Poe is the "enigma" and the "legend" today that he has always been (1). He also observes that a biography of Poe is written almost every year, even though little new information has been discovered since Quinn's reliable biography in 1941 and the exhaustive documentary material of *The Poe Log* of 1987. No doubt it is Poe the "enigma," Poe the "legend," that has

led many of the biographers and critics included in this survey to attempt new “readings” of the man and his work. The little information available about early-American magazines (despite a number of impressive studies) and the widely varying views of the nature of the short story held by authors, critics, and historians simply increase the difficulty of resolving the “enigma” or understanding the very complex man that was Edgar Poe. (Poe did not like to use the name “Allan,” a name that the literary world insists upon.) Two recent, notable studies—James Hutchisson’s *Poe* (2005) and Kevin J. Hayes’ *Edgar Allan Poe* (2009)—make it clear that there is no sign of declining interest in this “author of many parts” (Fisher, *Cambridge* 123).

## Chapter Three

### George R. Graham's Influence on Magazines and Short Fiction

George Rex Graham may not be mentioned in anthologies of short fiction, yet he played an important role in the development of both magazine and short fiction in the 1840s. Sometimes the name he lent to *Graham's Magazine* is incidentally included, but George Rex Graham's name will not have an entry of its own. In Ann Charters' collection of short fiction, for example, Edgar Allan Poe is identified as important to the theory of short fiction, especially through his "reviews of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* for *Graham's Magazine*" (1108). Poe is given credit as one of the first to write about the genre that was called the "short story" later in the century<sup>36</sup> in these reviews and in his other writings that appeared in *Graham's* when he was employed from 1841 to 1842 as a literary editor. However, the magazine's owner and editor, George Rex Graham, is not named. Poe's theory needed a time and place to form, and *Graham's Magazine* with Graham as editor was the perfect place. Poe joined *Graham's Magazine* and began to work with Graham in February of 1841, anticipating "the intellectual freedom Graham offered" (Hayes, *Poe* 102). As a result, it may be said that Graham himself had a leading role in the development of what became the short story because he published a successful and influential magazine, gave Poe a



salary he could live on, allowed Poe the time and space to publish his tales and theory, and respected Poe's suggestions.

George Graham, who owned *Graham's Magazine* from 1840 to 1848 and 1850 to 1853, "had a profound effect on the magazine business" (Tebbel 71) and thus on the short story as it began to evolve in the pages of his and other magazines of the 1840s. According to Frank Luther Mott, *Graham's Magazine* "not only became one of the three or four most important magazines in the United States, but, in the five years from 1841 to 1845 [under its editor, George R. Graham], displayed a brilliance which has seldom been matched in American magazine history" (I: 344). Its reputation spread across the ocean: "Within a year and a half of its appearance, Charles Dickens was familiar with it" (Robbins 285). It is well documented that from 1840 to 1842, subscribers to *Graham's Magazine* increased from five thousand to twenty-five thousand in the first year, then to fifty thousand by the second year when the country had a total population of only seventeen million (Pratte). Even though his upbringing was not in publishing, Graham succeeded in a volatile magazine market because of his shrewd business sense in running a magazine.

George R. Graham's background was in cabinet making and law ("George R. Graham, Dying"). While his father was alive, it was assumed that Graham would enjoy a liberal education and perhaps go into law or the literary arts ("George R. Graham, Dying"). However, when his father drowned, Graham was fifteen and went to live with his Uncle George Rex,<sup>37</sup> after whom he was named.

George Graham now had to make his own way and after a short stint as a storekeeper (Pratte) began his apprenticeship as a cabinet maker. His reading, however, never abated: "Not only did he cultivate an omnivorous appetite for books written by Henry Bolingbroke, Joseph Addison, Edmund Burke and other classic authors, but he enjoyed reading aloud or having others read with him" (Pratte). He kept up his reading habits while he worked as an apprentice cabinet maker and studied law<sup>38</sup> for three years, rising at dawn and sleeping very little (Robbins 280). Alf Pratte attributes this dedication to Graham's "lifelong traits of curiosity and ambition through a self-improvement program that focused on reading" ("George Rex Graham"). Influenced by Charles J. Peterson, a lifelong friend, author, and editor, Graham wrote a few articles and may have tried his hand at journalism for a while.<sup>39</sup> When Graham received his law degree, he did not practice law full time though he did have a small office (Robbins 281). Instead, he turned toward writing for the Philadelphia magazines. According to Peterson, Graham's writings were full of vigor and freshness with "a racy, nervous style, mingling eloquence and satire by turns, and never, as hackneyed writers often do, drowning the idea with 'excess of words'" (43). Graham later wrote two columns for his magazine—"Editor's Table" and "Graham's Small Talk"—but was not known for short tales, essays or reviews.

Graham began his magazine career in January 1840 when, at twenty-six, he was hired as an editor to the *Evening Post and Philadelphia Saturday News*, owned by Samuel Coate Atkinson. By October, Graham, "an ambitious young

publicist" (Mott I: 343), had bought half interest in the magazine.<sup>40</sup> In the same year, after getting his law degree and marrying, he was offered the *Post's* "cheap reprint-monthly, *The Casket*" (Pratte), sometimes referred to as *Atkinson's Casket*,<sup>41</sup> a magazine that originated in 1826.<sup>42</sup> Graham put out only one issue before buying *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*,<sup>43</sup> a magazine of 3,500 subscribers, published by William Evans Burton, who had employed Edgar Allan Poe as its editor (Robbins 281-82). In the three years that Burton had owned the magazine it "had been a lively and attractive serial far from Puritanical, and filled with the personality of its actor-editor" (Mott I: 344), a description that means it was dominated by articles on sports and the theatre and included only a few articles of art or literature (Mott I: 673). In December 1840, Graham put out a double issue containing both magazines, distributing it to the subscribers of each magazine, totaling 5,000 copies. Fred Lewis Pattee describes the combination of the two magazines as "a curious marriage of the distinctive feminine *Casket* and the avowedly masculine *Gentleman's Magazine*" (75). By January 1841, Graham changed the name to *Graham's Magazine*, the familiar name for the periodical that went by different names throughout its seventeen year history, 1841 to 1858. From 1841 to 1842 and July 1843 to June 1844, it was known as *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine (The Casket and Gentleman's United), Embracing Every Department of Literature Embellished with Engravings, Fashions, and Music, Arranged for the Piano-forte, Harp, and Guitar*. Mott notes that the information after the parentheses varies. From January to June 1844, it

was *Graham's Magazine of Literature and Art*. From July 1848 to June 1856, it was known as *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature and Art*. From July 1856 to December 1858, it was *Graham's Illustrated Magazine of Literature, Romance, Art, and Fashion* (Mott I: 544). However, *Graham's Magazine* is how most people refer to the magazine that had begun as a combination of the *Casket* and *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*.

Graham's amiable personality and ambition may have contributed to his success in running a magazine. Graham's childhood friend Peterson described Graham as kind, warm, frank and friendly: "Generous to a fault, forgetful of injuries, conciliating in his deportment, he is one to be alike popular with the many and loved by the few. His faults, where he has them, are those of a noble nature. His sense of honor is keen" (43). Intellectually curious, determined, and aware of public demands, Graham was able to shape his magazine to attract more subscribers. His high ethical standards, and perhaps his willingness to do what had to be done to succeed, also created loyalty among his contributors. He had "a genial personality which attracted and held people and allowed him to iron out personal differences" (Tebell 84). He was personable and social, often hosting dinners with the movers and shakers of the literary world. In addition to his affability, his ambition<sup>44</sup> pushed him toward success in his business ventures.

*Graham's* achieved success because "Graham had less of real literary appreciation than of shrewd publisher's sense" (Mott I: 548). He was fond of literature but knew well how to run a business to make money. In his own

words, in the "Editor's Table" of the October 1848 issue of *Graham's*, he boasted that he was successful from the beginning: "*Graham's* sprung at once into boundless popularity and circulation. Money, as every subscriber knows, was freely expended upon it, and an energy untiring and sleepless was devoted to his business management" (240). Graham often spoke of himself as a businessman, not a writer or a literary man; he wrote of being on "the stormy sea of publishing" and lamented the task of answering thirty to forty business letters among other jobs (Robbins 286-87).

John Tebbel refers to George Graham as a "prototype of editors to come" (83). Graham wanted to produce a popular literary magazine to appeal to a national market within "the scores of magazines born each year that raised loud voices and drained off subscribers, even though many failed after a brief try" (Robbins 283). In order to succeed as a publisher, he had to hire good editors (Pratte). Graham's most famous editor was Edgar Allan Poe (Pratte), but Poe had not been included in the transfer when Graham bought *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*. Poe had been dismissed from *Burton's* in May 1840, months before Graham purchased the magazine in October 1840. Burton had become aware of Poe's plans to begin his own magazine, the *Penn Magazine*, and Burton thought the news might hurt his sale (Hayes, *Poe* 87). Graham applauded Poe and helped Poe advertise for the *Penn* in June 1840--"The gentleman who issues the prospectus, and proposes to be publisher and editor, is so well known in the literary world, that commendation would be useless" (Thomas and Jackson

299)—and went on to compliment Poe on the name of the magazine and on the fact that Poe had that most important quality of a publisher: he would pay the printer (Thomas and Jackson 299). The fact that Poe planned to begin his own magazine did not deter Graham from offering Poe a job as his editor. Poe resisted accepting the job for months, during which time he solicited subscriptions, contributions, and backers for his own magazine. Then Poe became ill at the same time the country suffered a financial crisis, and he had to delay the first issue. Graham told Poe, "Periodicals are among the principal sufferers by these pecuniary convulsions, . . . and to *commence* one just now would be exceedingly hazardous" (qtd. in Hayes, *Poe* 101). Graham had been printing Poe's stories since Poe's dismissal from *Burton's* and now, "sensitive to Poe's disappointment, Graham asked him to take charge of the book review department of *Graham's Magazine*" (Hayes, *Poe* 102). Graham offered Poe an \$800 a year salary, \$300 more than Burton had paid him. For Poe, who was continually in financial distress, this was a salary he could not refuse. Graham also hinted that he would be willing to join Poe in the new *Penn* magazine if Poe could solicit enough subscribers. It could be inferred that Graham was just being kind, but Graham might have been trying to eliminate the competition.

Like George R. Graham, Edgar Allan Poe figured into the success of *Graham's Magazine* in those first years of the 1840s. Poe worked well with Graham, so much so that he considered the success of the magazine his own success. As Poe wrote to Frederick W. Thomas<sup>45</sup> in September of 1841, "Our

success (Graham's I mean) is astonishing—we shall print 20,000 copies shortly" (*Letters* I: 180). Poe also has been credited with raising the quality of the contents of *Graham's Magazine* in the years he worked with Graham. Rayburn S. Moore asserts that Poe "influenced Graham to apply some of his (Poe's) ideas to *Graham's* and the Philadelphia monthly became one of the most widely circulated literary magazines of the period" (48). Readers looked forward to Poe's criticism and enjoyed his short stories. He is probably one of the writers responsible for "a certain liveliness in the writing not often achieved in these times" (*Mott* I: 344). Arthur Hobson Quinn believes it was Poe who influenced Graham to make the changes to the magazine that assured its success: securing known authors and paying them well (316).

Graham's business instincts pushed him to take several steps to ensure his magazine survived the competitive magazine market in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup> The five steps he took are as follows: one, he made decisions about content based on what readers, who were mostly women, wanted. Two, he promoted American literature. Three, he advertised his regular known writers on his cover. Four, he was one of the first to pay writers for their contributions and to copyright the works appearing in his magazine. Five, he took steps to guarantee quality illustrations and fashion plates.

## Making Decisions on Content and Contributors

In December 1840 George Graham aimed to create a literary magazine for the popular magazine market (Wood). His plan was to embrace the typical fare of other popular magazines of the day: “Illustrations, fashion plates, book reviews, and enough sentimental poetry and fiction to satisfy women readers” (Robbins 283). In this he imitated the form of other magazines, especially the one often compared to *Graham’s—Godey’s Lady’s Magazine*<sup>47</sup>—and “became at least half a women’s magazine” (Mott I: 344). Graham knew who his readers were and “with canny understanding he made *Graham’s* the kind of men’s magazine that appeals most strongly to women” (Genzmer). Nina Baym concurs that *Graham’s* was “a beautifully illustrated magazine of general interest directed toward women, though with a broader scope than *Godey’s*” (16). She ranks *Graham’s*, and its “most important editor” George R. Graham, as seventh in a list of significant periodicals with book reviews in the 1840s when “the periodical press came into its own” (16). Louis Pattee compliments *Graham’s* on its substantial contents by such well known authors as James Fenimore Cooper, James Kirke Paulding,<sup>48</sup> Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Poe and acknowledges that “strong as it was on the more substantial side, it dared not exclude those lighter and more sentimental elements that pleased the larger part of its subscribers” (75).



In the prospectus printed on the title page of the first issue of *Graham's Magazine*, George Graham sets forth his concept of what he wanted within the pages of his new venture: "The character of the articles . . . will be equally removed from a sickly sentimentality, and from an effectation [sic] of morality, but while a true delineation of human nature in every variety of passion is aimed at, nothing shall be found in its pages to cause a blush upon the cheek of the most pure" (qtd. in Robbins 284).

In addition to appealing to women readers through illustrations, fashion plates, and sentimental love stories, Graham published contributions from various women writers (Wood 41). Printed in the December 1842 issue, the prospectus for 1843 contains the following promotion: "Especially is it containing the choicest productions of the finest female writers of the time. Every number contains gems which may be appealed to with pride by the sex as vindicating their intellectual eminence" (Graham and Griswold 4). The long list of women contributors include such authors as Mrs. Emma C. Embury, Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood,<sup>49</sup> Mrs. Seba Smith, Miss Eliza Leslie, Mrs. Mary Clavers, Mrs. Lydia Sigourney,<sup>50</sup> and Mrs. Ann Stephens.

In the beginning issues, Graham avoided political or controversial topics. He also insisted on original works; contributions would not be accepted if they had been published elsewhere. Readers seemed to enjoy Graham's choice in the magazines' contents: the short stories, especially Poe's; Poe and Griswold's

critical articles and reviews; poems by the popular poets of the day; and essays by Bayard Taylor<sup>51</sup> and Nathaniel Parker Willis<sup>52</sup> (Wood 51).

### Promoting an American Literature

Before mid-nineteenth century magazines, even *Graham's* precursor *The Casket* would print stories and poems that were lifted freely from English publications because the copyright law did not extend to international publications (Mott I: 504). Other American editors, unlike Graham, freely copied and reprinted not only British articles but also American articles in spite of a national copyright law in place. The 1787 state and federal copyright law declared that the author had the rights to his own works for fourteen years, possibly twenty-eight, before the public could print them free of charge; however, the price control portion of the law was never enforced. It was only to cover works published by Americans in America and excluded anything published outside the United States (St. Clair 382). Other publications, such as the *Casket*, which was referred to as a reprint monthly, or the *Corsair*, which "pirated" material, both filled their pages with stolen copy, ignoring this rule. From 1845 on, *Graham's Magazine* would not reprint any American author's work published elsewhere and would not allow any other publication to steal its contents, a policy that enraged other magazines because two of their sources were now eliminated (Mott I: 502-03). Stealing articles from rival magazines without paying

the authors was stopped when *Graham's* and *Godey's* magazines enforced the copyright law in 1845 (Tebbel 70; Mott I: 503).

Many early American magazines tended to publish American authors, not British, and therefore made the claim and advertised that their magazines were presenting American literature.<sup>53</sup> However, *Graham's* was one of the first magazines to stop filling its pages with stolen British pieces. According to J. Albert Robbins, Graham's plan was to "add the original work of recognized American authors" (283), and he enticed all of the major nineteenth-century authors to his magazine during his tenure as owner, except for Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was "too aloof and uninterested," and Washington Irving, Walt Whitman, and Herman Melville, all of whom were loyal to other publications (Robbins 284). Graham sought out popular American authors to contribute original works (Robbins 283-84). It took him a year to get a good coterie of recognized American authors, but with his literary editor Poe's help, he was able to obtain a number of the authors his readers would recognize. Some famous authors whose work appeared in the pages of *Graham's* alongside Poe's were Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, William Gilmore Simms, Ann Stephens, Emma Embury, and Frances Sargent Osgood. In addition, Graham and his editorial staff used "every means to gather work from all sections of the country and thus show the nation the scope and variety of its rapidly developing literature" (Pratte).

## Advertising His Writers

Graham advertised his faithful writers. Most periodicals did not print “authors’ names until late in the nineteenth century” (Tebbel 50), but Graham listed his “famous writers on the front cover” (Wood 50). This tactic was meant to raise subscription rates, but it yielded another benefit. Graham fostered loyalty among his regular American contributors by promoting them and their works on his front cover. In Volume XXI, 1842, for example, the following American writers were named on the front cover: “William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, Richard Henry Dana, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Charles Fenno Hoffman,<sup>54</sup> Theodore S. Fay,<sup>55</sup> J. H. Mancur, Mrs. Emma C. Embury, Mrs. Seba Smith, ‘Mary Clavers,’ Mrs E. F. Ellett,<sup>56</sup> Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, Mrs. Frances Osgood” (Mott “Brief” 365). By the next year, one of America’s first “magazinists” Nathaniel Parker Willis (discussed in the next chapter) brought his style to *Graham’s* list of American writers. By the latter part of the decade, Graham added William Gilmore Simms and claimed to have Longfellow, Bryant, Paulding and Cooper writing exclusively for his magazine (Mott “Brief” 365).

The claim of writer exclusivity was another of Graham’s business tactics that made his magazine successful, and he was one of the first to secure writers who contributed only to his magazine. However, he was also ethical and would not advertise an author as a regular contributor if he were not, even though other magazines like *Godey’s* did (Pratte). Some magazine owners and editors

had adversarial relationships with their writers. Most editors felt they could correct, add, or line out passages in the works accepted for publication (Mott I: 503). Graham, however, gave his writers freedom when it came to their contributions.

Other magazine publishers liked the authority of controlling all that went into their publications, and Poe well knew this from his association with two previous owners. However, Graham gave Poe just what was needed to write both stories and reviews. Robert Jacobs describes how Poe felt in his first few months of employment with George Graham:

Relative freedom from restraint by his employer, sufficient space to make the extended analyses he preferred, a large and rapidly increasing audience, and letters of encouragement from certain of his friends gave Poe the reinforcement he needed to pronounce boldly the elements of his critical theory and his ideas of the function of the critic. (273)

Graham had hired Poe for his literary skill and connections. He gave Poe considerable freedom to do his own work and Poe solicited many contributors, filling each issue with at least one new tale, sometimes part of a new series, and several book reviews.

## Paying Contributors

George Graham's reputation as an owner who spent "good money for superior writing" (Bromfield 69) was more than likely what assured his success. Because Graham had struggled as an aspiring writer, near poverty, he swore he would be generous with contributors to his magazine, "an economic magnet for writers" (Pratte).

With magazines using stolen and free British material, the space that was left for American writers was sparse, and editors often could pay very little for contributions. Prior to 1842, writers were warned they would not be paid what they were worth; instead they were typically paid just \$1 or \$2 a page<sup>57</sup> (Mott I: 504-05). Some magazines, such as *Godey's Lady Book*, had, in the preceding decade, indicated to new writers that they should be satisfied simply with getting their names in print.

Graham increased the pay to between \$4 and \$12 a page depending on the popularity of the writer (Bromfield 69), and Graham was acutely aware of the public's recognition of his writers. James Russell Lowell, for example, began writing for *Graham's* at \$10 a poem, but as he gained popularity, his rate increased to \$30 a poem (Mott I: 506). Edgar Allan Poe received only \$4 a page for his contributions while he was editor at *Graham's*. Hawthorne was offered only \$5 a page from Graham with \$20 per contribution as the limit (Moore 47). Some authors were offered more. For instance, James Fenimore Cooper was

offered \$1,000 for a hundred-page biography series, even though Graham grumbled that Cooper never brought him any new subscribers (Mott I: 507). Washington Irving, George Graham's favorite author (Pratte), was promised \$2,000 "for tales and sketches bought by the *Knickerbocker* in 1839-1841" (Moore 47), but the *Knickerbocker* was not run by George Graham, who paid his contributors what he promised to pay them,<sup>58</sup> while other magazines did not.

The pages of *Graham's Magazine* were larger than most magazines' and contained close to 1,000 words, but Graham paid authors well for filling them: "a five-thousand word article was from twenty to sixty dollars, which considered in proportion to the cost of living at the time was liberal—almost a 'living wage'" (Mott I: 506). Nathaniel Parker Willis, one of the first American writers to make a living by writing for magazines, likened Graham to the sun in a dismal land without sufficient pay for its writers (Mott I: 506). Although there was not a uniform rate, Willis got \$11 a page from *Graham's* to Poe's \$4 a page. Writing for many magazines, Willis earned up to \$4,800 a year compared to Poe's \$300 for contributions in 1843 alone (Mott I: 507, 508). By 1852, Graham boasted that "*Graham's* for the last ten years has paid over eighty thousand dollars to *American writers alone*" (Mott I: 509). Graham has been credited with influencing other magazines in the 1840s and later to pay their contributors well (Bromfield 69).

## Securing Full-Time Engraver, Quality Illustrations, and Copy for Illustrations

George Graham's philosophy about the illustrations in his magazine also increased its popularity. *Graham's Magazine* joined the ranks of the popular ladies' magazines of the nineteenth century with its use of illustrations, often called "Embellishments" (Mott I: 319). Although the engravings were an extremely expensive endeavor for magazines, Mott claims that "all the really prosperous magazines printed many plates" (I: 320). Graham was one of the first to scrap the idea of using old plates for illustrations; instead he made new copper and steel engravings for each issue (Mott I: 84). In addition, he was one of the first to hire engravers to design exclusively for his magazine. The one most associated with *Graham's Magazine* was William Sartain (Mott I: 321). Known for his mezzotint<sup>59</sup> engraving ("Sartain"), Sartain later wrote of his astonishment at Graham's boldness in hiring him to be a full time engraver for the magazine and arrogantly claimed the magazine's popularity was solely due to the illustrations (Mott I: 547).

The typical issue of *Graham's* in the early 1840s and later in the mid-1850s contained one colored fashion plate and one other plate, perhaps of a domestic scene (Mott I: 548) of an "American tone and character" (Mott "Brief" 366). These were "inserted at the front of the magazine, and were designed for pull-out and framing" (Patterson 137). Graham had the publishing sense to know that quality embellishments attracted more subscribers, and he paid handsomely



for the original Sartain engravings. After Sartain left to begin his own magazine,<sup>60</sup> Graham tied other artists, such as F. O. C. Darley,<sup>61</sup> H. S. Sadd, A. L. Dick (Patterson 138), and Thomas B. Welch, to his magazine by signing them for six months at a time and by paying handsomely. *Graham's Magazine* sometimes spent "two thousand dollars on the illustration of one number—two hundred for the engraving of a single plate and five hundred for its paper and printing" (Mott I: 521).

Many engravers were overworked during this period of magazine competition, and editors had trouble hiring engravers who were free from obligations to other magazines, yet Graham felt justified in this expense. *Godey's Magazine* was charged up to seven thousand for printing as many as twelve embellishments in one issue (Mott I: 521) even though, unlike *Graham's*, *Godey's* had the reputation of paying late or not at all.

As the magazines noted the popularity of illustrations, owners such as Graham paid writers to explicate the illustrations. The writers were sometimes the editors themselves, amateur writers wanting a start in their careers, women writers, or just authors needing money (Patterson 140). These writers, like Joseph H. Ingraham,<sup>62</sup> knew it was "one of the most difficult parts of authorship to write to a painting . . . and the chances are ten to one for a failure on his part who attempts it" (qtd. in Patterson 136). Poe did not mind writing articles to match the illustration (plate). Because Poe believed every writing should have a single effect, "a plate article essentially imposed an ultimate effect, but it did give

Poe the freedom to imagine incidents leading to it" (Hayes, *Poe* 109). For example, Poe's "The Island of the Fay" was composed to match *Graham's* June 1841 frontispiece,<sup>63</sup> which was a Sartain steel engraving (Thomas and Jackson 327).

Sometimes soliciting the writing close to publishing deadlines, publishers like Graham knew "that the engraving both preceded the textual illustration and took precedence over it" (Patterson 139). Graham often included in his publication a whole section titled "Illustration of a Picture" (Mott I: 591), whereas other magazines made no such connection and let the readers look in the middle of the issue to find the writing that connected to the illustration(s) inserted at the beginning of the issue<sup>64</sup> (Patterson 138). Later both Graham and Peterson noted the success of creating illustrations for their publications' serial tales (Patterson 140). In his 1850 article on George Graham, Peterson states, "Having spared no expense to procure able writers and elegant embellishments, the result was that he produced a periodical of unexampled merit and beauty; and at once, thousands were added to his list [of subscribers]" (43).

George Graham ran *Graham's Magazine* from May 1839 to July 1848 (Mott I: 544), during which time the magazine flourished and Graham became rich. He lived well in those years of success. By 1843 he had moved to a large residence on Philadelphia's Mulberry Street, took extravagant vacations, "drove a fine team of horses," had grown in girth and income, almost \$100,000, and "was

wealthy enough to have his wife sit for a portrait by Thomas Sully” (Robbins 285-86).

### Declining Years of *Graham's*

With his profits, George Graham spread out his investments, buying another magazine, the *North American*, then selling it and its sister newspaper, the *United States Gazette*, for \$50,000. He later confessed that his next move was what lost him everything. He invested all he had in stocks for copper mines, which proved to be fake stocks (“George R. Graham Dying”; Pratte). After losing *Graham's*, Graham worked until he was able to purchase the magazine again in April 1850 and was able to keep it until December 1853 (Mott I: 544). The magazine was never as good in later years as it was in the first years, and it had to compete with other magazines that were now using Graham's own ideas to succeed. In addition, Graham wrote a negative review of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—“It is a BAD BOOK”—that lost him northern subscribers (Pratte). He worked for a while as a harbor master, tried the stock market, lost everything again, lived with his nephew for a while, then remained in hospitals until he died in 1893, almost penniless and nearly blind from cataracts (“George R Graham Dying”; Pratte).

Graham's legacy rested upon his beliefs that an editor should be “endlessly inventive and innovative” (Tebbel 83) and treat his assistant editors and contributors fairly. Charles Peterson glowingly stated in 1850 that Graham

singlehandedly turned magazines from second hand British pieces and poetry (43) to the finest of American material. Graham's managing of *Graham's Magazine* for a dozen years created an example for magazines of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

George Graham's connection to Poe changed the literary scene as well. In addition to allowing Poe the freedom to write and work on his theories of short fiction, Graham defended Poe after Griswold's ugly and false obituary appeared. Unfortunately, Griswold's version remained in most readers' minds longer—even today—but Graham's view is more accurate and balanced. Graham's rebuttal of Griswold's "unfair and untrue" account of Poe's life, published in March 1850, begins with an attack on Griswold as one who "does not feel the worth of the man he has undervalued" (377) and as one who is not competent "to act as his judge" (378). When Griswold describes Poe's "quick cholera," Graham counters with the fact that Poe was quick "to perceive mere quacks in literature" (379). This defense describes Poe's amiability, genius, and kind heart. In Graham's four-year acquaintance with Poe, he says he saw only "the same polished gentleman, the quiet, unobtrusive, thoughtful scholar, the devoted husband, frugal in his personal expenses, punctual and unwearied in his industry, and the soul of honor in all his transactions" (379). Poe kept accounts "with the accuracy of a banker" (379), and Graham provided proof with a document from Poe accounting for every dollar that Graham gave Poe or that Poe paid back. The

document sent to Graham several years after Poe had quit working for him revealed Poe's meticulous memory and honesty.

Poe had a softer side that Graham observed: "how solicitous of the happiness of his wife and mother-in-law he was"; indeed, "his whole efforts seemed to be to procure the comforts of his home" (380-81). Poe's concern about money was only for their welfare. Yet Graham observed that Poe suffered from poverty, feeling "ill-used, misunderstood, and put aside by men of far less ability" (381), and excused some of Poe's actions in his later years as Poe worked toward owning his own magazine. The only flaws that Graham could see in Poe was that "one glass of wine made him a madman," and "the character of Poe's mind was of such an order as not to be very widely in demand" (382). Graham adored Poe's genius, his ability to critique, his devotion to family, and his honor. He believed Griswold had none of those qualities.

Graham and Poe might have continued their working relationship had it not been for Poe's sense of injustice. Poe resented the very sentimentalism that made *Graham's* popular and resented the fact that in the year that he earned \$800 for his job as literary editor, Graham's profit was \$25,000 (Sova, "*Graham's* and Poe").

## Chapter Four

### Poe and the Magazines

The "first magazine in English" (Wood 3) was the weekly *Review* in 1704, with Daniel Defoe as editor. The first magazine published in what became the United States was *The American Magazine, or a Monthly View of the Political State of the British Colonies*, appearing on February 13, 1741, with publisher Andrew Bradford and editor John Webbe. Benjamin Franklin had planned "the pioneer American magazine" (Wood 10) and offered the editorship to Webbe but instead became editor himself of the second American magazine, *The General Magazine, and Historical Chronicle, for All the British Plantations in America*, published three days after Bradford's magazine.<sup>65</sup> The two American magazines hoped to be as profitable as their British counterparts, which they imitated in content, and also aimed to "show America favorably to the world, and especially to England" (Mott I: 22). Bradford's monthly had three issues, Franklin's six, with, according to William Beer in *A Checklist of American Magazines 1741-1800* (1923), about ninety-eight short-lived magazines (fourteen months being the "average life," eight years being the longest) appearing before the end of the eighteenth century (Wood 14, 20). In fact, Noah Webster announced in 1788 that "The expectation of failure is connected with the very name of a Magazine"

(qtd. in Mott I: 13). According to Frank Luther Mott, these early magazines had many reasons for their short existence: "(1) Indifference, (a) of readers, and (b) of writers; (2) lack of adequate means of distribution; (3) losses in the collection of subscription accounts; and (4) manufacturing embarrassments" (I: 13).

Nonetheless, the contributors to these magazines and the subscribers included the most prominent Americans of the period, from George Washington to Charles Brockden Brown.<sup>66</sup> According to Mott, magazines originally began as "monthly collections" (I: 6) or as a "storehouse" (I: 7) of eclectic material, three-quarters of which was stolen from other American and British publications (I: 39). Alexander Pope described in 1843 the early British magazines as "'upstart collections' of dullness, folly, and so on" (qtd. in Mott I: 6). Yet by the early decades of the nineteenth century, American magazines, seldom profitable, had both political and cultural purposes. George Washington declared, "I consider such easy vehicles of knowledge, more happily calculated than any other, to preserve the liberty, stimulate the industry, and meliorate the morals of an enlightened and free people" (qtd. in Wood 27). By the 1830s magazines were a significant force in the nation's life, and Edgar Allan Poe recognized that soon their "importance will be found to have increased in geometrical ratio": "We now demand the light artillery of the intellect; we need the curt, the condensed, the readily diffused—in place of the verbose, the detailed, the voluminous, the inaccessible" of the stilted quarterly reviews<sup>67</sup> or the "popgunnery" of the newspapers<sup>68</sup> (*Essays* 1414-15).

Despite his admiration for many of the magazines of the day—e.g., *The Port Folio*, “the best American magazine of its time” (Wood 35); *The Saturday Evening Post*, “one of the most important weeklies in the United States” for some forty years (Wood 39); *The North American Review*, “one of the longest-lived and most distinguished of American magazines” (Wood 45); *The Knickerbocker* in New York and *Graham’s Magazine* in Philadelphia—Edgar Allan Poe never intended to work as an editor for George Graham or to write for any magazine.

Edgar Allan Poe wanted to be a poet. He declared in an 1829 letter, “I am irrecoverably a poet” (*Letters* I: 19). His first book, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*,<sup>69</sup> was published in 1827 and did not sell well. Poe understood that no American poet or writer could make a living in the early decades of the 1800s: “The truth is that the higher order of poetry is, and always will be, in this country, unsaleable; but, even were it otherwise, the present state of the CopyRight Laws will not warrant any publisher, in *purchasing* an American book” (*Letters* I: 216). Publishers could steal entire British novels and reprint them in America without paying the authors; therefore, American novels or collections of poetry would not be as profitable as the stolen British novels. Benjamin Fisher relates that Poe’s “strong yearning, however, to be a poet” was at odds with his monetary needs: after Poe “had brought out three slim volumes of poems<sup>70</sup> between 1827 and 1831 yet secured no profit, he foresaw that he could not gain sufficient financial recompense from that genre to maintain himself” (“Poe and



the Gothic Tradition" 78). Poe hated the idea of mixing business with literature: he wanted to write, but he also needed money (Hayes, *Poe* 54).<sup>71</sup>

Poe tried several avenues for an income. Asking his foster father for money would be useless because John Allen had remarried in 1831. Poe left Richmond and went to Baltimore to live with his aunt, his brother, his grandmother and his cousin. Baltimore was then the third largest city in the country and was becoming a thriving center of political and cultural activity. In that city alone, "between 1815 and 1833, seventy-two new periodicals were announced for publication" (A. Quinn 187) although many lasted no more than a few months. Poe wanted to help support his family and tried but failed to find work in a school<sup>72</sup> and at a newspaper office.<sup>73</sup> Poe was writing still and may have been submitting work to local newspapers while in Baltimore at "a penny a line" (Ackroyd 56).

The poet Poe turned his energies toward writing in an environment where he would be read and where he could make some money. He realized that without wealth or family support, he would never be one of the gentlemen writers of leisure from the generation before him—"wealthy or professional men who pursued literature as an avocation" and who "scorned the association of literature and commerce and sought to cultivate a 'republic of letters' that would govern a crass, commercial society" (Weiner). Those writers composed in their leisure and could afford to subsidize their own works. Poe could not afford to give money to publishers to guarantee against loss; he could, however, seek "the

fellowship and status of gentlemen authors" (Weiner) within the commercial magazine market.

Jill Lepore insists that "what Poe developed was a philosophy of the literary marketplace" ("The Humbug"). Poe wanted to write for the literary elite, who were the readers of the quarterlies, but he knew the quarterlies had few readers and little profit. According to Terence Whalen, when Poe had worked with Harper's Publishers in 1836, he discovered that there were three kinds of readers: the ideal reader, who is like the author—one with taste and intellect; the feared reader—one who Poe labeled as the "mob," the "masses," the "rabble," or the "demagogue ridden public" (9); and the "Capital reader"—the "reader who wielded absolute power over publications"—in other words, the reader "guided by the anticipation of profit and loss" (10). Poe would shape his writing to reach all three types of readers. Harvey Allen, one of Poe's first biographers, thinks Poe was cognizant of the mass audience but still wrote "to an audience elite enough to be capable of remembering and cherishing what was valuable" (11). Then, after a dozen or more years in the magazine world, the hard work of the magazine business may have made him think of doing more than just writing for magazines. Poe dreamed of creating and running his own magazine: "Poe's discontent with the channels of mass-circulation and the mass-audience kept alive his impractical idea of an elite magazine which could rescue him and the other writers of the country from this servitude" (Allen 188).

Poe's life became intertwined with "the golden age of periodicals" (Mott I: 341). Like others who wanted to write, Poe found an outlet for his writing in the periodicals of the day: there was a "six hundred percent multiplication of American periodicals between 1825 and 1850" (Silverman 99). Although most magazines failed within these twenty-five years, four or five thousand came into existence (Silverman 99). American magazines still had to compete with European magazines costing \$5 yearly, with domestic \$3 journals that stole British material, and with American magazines reprinting British journals that sold five for \$10 per year. According to the *New York Mirror*, American magazines "put forth their young green leaves in the shape of promises and prospectuses—blossom through a few numbers, and then perish because of bills due and debts unpaid" (Mott I: 130).

Poe later (1846) reflected that "the whole tendency of the age is 'Magazine-ward'" (*Essays* 1414), an observation that applied not just to the age but to Poe's career and to literature as well. Between 1832 and his death in 1849, Poe wrote mainly for magazines. According to the Edgar Allan Poe Society, except for a few poems, all of Poe's poetry, tales, and his novel were first published in magazines, newspapers, or annuals. It was in this world of magazines that Poe nurtured his theories of the art of short fiction.

## Poe as Magazinish

Moving into this precarious field, Poe became a magazinist, the word that James Wood (40) and John Lent credit Poe with coining to "identify himself and other literary people" who wrote for the magazines ("Edgar Allan Poe"). The *Oxford English Dictionary* records the word was first used in two British publications, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1821 and the *London Magazine* in 1823; Poe would have been familiar with both magazines, having read their issues since his youth. Edgar Allan Poe, not just a writer but a magazinist, edited five magazines, contributed to thirty different magazines, and designed and promoted his own magazine in a seventeen-year career (Tebbel 68). Peter Ackroyd states that in Poe's time, "he was sometimes condemned as a mere 'Magazinist,' but that perilous and badly rewarded profession would be the cradle of his genius" (63). It was in this environment that Poe developed his writing style and began to define the form of a new genre that would not be called the "short story" until the 1870s.

Poe, however, was not the only magazinist in the 1840s. Nathaniel Parker Willis was considered the first successful magazinist who could make a living by writing for magazines (Tebbel 68). A tall man, with "dainty elegance," he is said to have been the highest paid writer for magazines, earning \$100 an article and an average of \$5,000 per year (Silverman 223). Poe named Willis as "the third best story-teller in America (after Nathaniel Hawthorne and William Gilmore

Simms)" (Benton 322), yet believed Willis achieved popularity in literary circles because of his looks and his associations with famous people, not because of his writing that was a bit too elegant in style. Mott acknowledges the popularity of Willis and states, "though his tasty desserts sometimes frothed at the top and ran over somewhat disgustingly, they were devoured with relish by most readers" (I: 495-96).

Willis wrote prolifically: plays, tales, "celebrity gossip, sentimental poetry, critical logrolling, brief sketches, and anecdotal essays" (Knighton 559), writings he called "idle 'scribblings,' 'trifles,' 'ephemera,' and 'little-or-nothings'" (Knighton 560). Early in his writing career in 1829, boasting of the publication of a "shoddy" poem he had written, Willis stated, "the nonsense of a 5 dollar inspiration . . . the most reckless rhymes in the world—not one of them takes me over 15 minutes. Their success astonishes me. I only did it for money" (qtd. in Knighton 559). Indeed, Willis's direction in life was to make money, and he had found a market that paid him well. Andrew L. Knighton points out that one of the magazines Willis later edited paid tribute to this fact: *The Dollar Magazine* was started in January 1841 as an offshoot of the mammoth *Brother Jonathan*. Mott describes Willis's role only as contributing editor to the monthly *Dollar*, which, like its parent magazine, had four-foot long pages with eleven columns, reprinting the latest novels pirated from England (I: 358). The *Dollar* lasted only two years, yet it equated literature to business (Knighton 568), a fact that both Willis and Poe reacted to differently. Willis embraced and celebrated the

connection (Knighton 568); Poe acknowledged it and struggled with its implication throughout his career. That magazines “debased literary and intellectual taste” (Weiner), Poe fought to change by establishing his own magazine while contributing to the existing magazines.

Poe, in his later “Literati of New York City” series, noted how Willis “has made a good deal of noise in the world” (*Essays* 1123) and may have been the first to label Willis as “a magazinist—for his compositions have invariably the species of effect, with the brevity which the magazine demands” (*Essays* 1125). Poe recognized Willis as a writer, like himself, who pursued a career in magazines and made “enemies among the envious host of dunces whom he has outstripped in the race for fame” (*Essays* 1130). Although Willis was typically paid \$11 a page to Poe’s \$4 (Mott I: 507-08) and made \$5,000 in contrast to Poe’s paltry \$425,<sup>74</sup> both men “illustrate the first significant period of independent professional writing in the country . . . when a rising tide of periodicals and literary reviews first made it possible for writers to survive by the pen alone” (Weber).

Other magazinists of the 1840s were John Neal, Park Benjamin,<sup>75</sup> Charles Fenno Hoffman, Charles F. Briggs, T. S. Arthur, William Gilmore Simms, Samuel Francis Smith, Mrs. Lydia H. Sigourney, Mrs. E. F. Ellet, Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, Mrs. Emma C. Embury, Miss Hannah F. Gould, Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood, and Alice and Phoebe Cary (Mott I: 499). John Neal was nicknamed “Crazy Neal”<sup>76</sup> for his furious production of contributions. Briggs was an editor: Poe

acknowledged that "Occasionally he has written good things" (*Essays* 1133). T. S. Arthur wrote prolifically, enough to fill a hundred volumes. Simms wrote mostly for the Southern periodicals, but was often reprinted in Northern magazines as well. Mott notes that Mrs. Sigourney contributed to over three hundred periodicals in twenty-five years, and by the end of her life, she estimated that she had written "more than two thousand" articles (Mott I: 499). Some magazine readers might have been confused about which magazine they were reading since the table of contents of several magazines contained the same list of contributors (Mott I: 500). Nevertheless, the quality of the contributions varied: according to Michael Allen, "There were relatively so few competent American magazine writers in the 1830's that editors may often enough have had to choose between an over-intellectual article from Poe and a piece of sheer incompetent writing from someone else" (144).

#### Early Reading and Writing Leading to Poe's Career in Magazines

One of the most significant magazines that influenced Poe's thinking and writing style was *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.<sup>77</sup> He had read the magazine in 1819 first "as a boy in a room above his guardian's store, Ellis and Allan's,<sup>78</sup> in Richmond" (Allen 16-17). *Blackwood's*, popular for its appeal to a mass audience even though it "was different than a quiet and sedate miscellany like the *Gentleman's Magazine*" (Allen 19), may have intrigued Poe because of the

personality of its writers: the main writer, John Wilson, took on the persona of "Christopher North" (Allen 34). Poe probably liked the variety of content in the magazine and would later realize that a lack of variety killed magazines.<sup>79</sup> A typical *Blackwood's* issue included horror tales, burlesque, social fables, scholarly articles, and both highbrow and music-hall comedy (Allen 36-37). Poe may have noticed how different the content of *Blackwood's* was from that of other magazines: its combination of "sheer horse-play with highbrow critical essays" (Allen 38). He may have sensed why he, like the majority of readers, preferred *Blackwood's* over the stuffy quarterlies. According to Michael Allen, sales of the British magazines showed that *Blackwood's* was well read because of its appeal to both the elite and the mass audiences, while strictly literary magazines like the *London Magazine* did not survive more than a few months (2). Poe later attributed the quarterlies' poor sales to "the overabundance on the side of quality," a kind of "Intelligent radicalism" (qtd. in Allen 2). Poe remembered the characteristics of *Blackwood's* and incorporated them into his later tales and reviews: "its gaiety and hoaxing spirit the savagery of critical controversy" (Allen 23) as well as a "kind of late Gothic tale of sensation and horror which Poe called the 'Blackwood Article'" (Allen 29).

In the 1830s Poe began to submit his tales and poetry to magazines and to contests, prizes being one of the only ways magazines paid their authors. Such magazine contests were offered "to gain notoriety for their magazines and to increase both subscriptions and advertising revenue," to acquire copy for



future issues, and "to encourage the development of American Literature" (Hayes, *Poe* 18, 19). According to Kevin Hayes, "Poe wanted most to be a poet, but contests made him realize that fiction was more lucrative" (*Poe* 18) because the prizes awarded for fiction paid better. Poe's first contest entry, "Metzengerstein," was printed in the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier* in 1831, but the tale had not won the advertised contest (Thomas and Jackson 125). The prize had gone to Delia S. Bacon's "Love's Martyr," a romantic story, of "the genre of historical romance, the most respected form of fiction among contemporary American readers" (Hayes, *Poe* 21). Poe's tale, instead, used a European setting, gothic details, and a striking, elegant first sentence: "Horror and fatality have been stalking abroad in all ages" (Hayes, *Poe* 21; Levine and Levine 303). Poe's story may have come in second because it did not have an American setting, was not a typical historical romance for the period, and was too German with its Gothicism (Hayes, *Poe* 21). But Stuart and Susan Levine suggest a different reason: Poe's story is "not serious about its gothicism; indeed, A. H. Quinn, Thompson, and others see it as a satire on the gothic mode" (295).

For a second contest in 1833, Poe sent a poem entitled "The Coliseum" and a collection of six stories he called "The Tales of the Folio Club" to the Baltimore *Saturday Visiter* (Silverman 90). His poem did not win, yet the judges—John Pendleton Kennedy, Dr. James Miller, and John H. B. Latrobe—rather liked all of his stories. They had saved one other tale and Poe's book of

tales to be read last. When they began to read the collection, they could not stop. Latrobe later wrote, "It was so far, so very far, superior to anything before us, that we had no difficulty in awarding the first prize to the author. Our only difficulty was in selecting from the rich contents of the volume" (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 132). The committee found Poe's tales to be "novelties for which they were wholly unprepared" (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 132). Out of over a hundred entries, the judges declared that Poe's stories were "distinguished by a wild, vigorous and poetical imagination, a rich style, a fertile invention, and varied and curious learning" (qtd. in Meyers 65) and planned to print all six. The \$50 prize went to "Manuscript Found in a Bottle" (Regan 179). The *Visiter* also offered to accept subscriptions for Poe's *Folio* at \$1 per printed copy, but Poe refused the offer because of a disagreement with the winner of the poetry contest, who turned out to be an editor of the *Visiter*.<sup>80</sup> Instead, Poe gave the collection to John Pendleton Kennedy, head of a Boston literary club; Kennedy gave it to the publisher Henry Carey, who chose not to publish Poe's stories in an annual book of stories that year (Quinn 204-05). Kennedy became a lifelong admirer and promoter of Poe's fiction.

Poe also experimented with drama, and Kennedy bragged that he was the one who turned Poe away from drama; he advised Poe to quit working on a play entitled *Politian* and move toward a career in the magazine field. Noticing Poe's need for an income, Kennedy suggested Poe write to the editor of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, the magazine that would begin Poe's career as a full-fledged

magazinish. Thus, before Poe even began working for magazines, his preparation for that career included studying magazines, entering magazine contests, and writing poetry and drama. In addition, Poe had written and published tales in several periodicals by mid-decade: five in Philadelphia's *Saturday Courier* (Fisher *Work* 29), the contest winning tale in the *Saturday Visiter*, and one in the nationally known monthly magazine *Godey's Lady's Book*,<sup>81</sup> where he had a story accepted in 1834 (Silverman 93).

#### Poe's First Editorial Position

Poe's first magazine job was with the *Southern Literary Messenger*, a periodical that appeared in Richmond in August 1834, as a "bi-weekly periodical 'devoted to every Department of Literature and the Fine Arts'" (*Letters* I: 95); it became a monthly by November 1834 and continued publication until June 1864. Poe's connection with the *Southern Literary Messenger*, often called the *Messenger*, was from March 1835 as a contributor of tales, and then as an editor from December 1835 until he left in January 1837.

At the urging of Kennedy, Poe corresponded with Thomas Willis White,<sup>82</sup> proprietor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and contributed to the *Messenger* for months before he was officially recognized as editor in December 1835 (Mott I: 635). In June 1835, White had asked Poe to move to Richmond to work with him on the *Southern Literary Messenger* at \$60 a month. Poe took the

opportunity, for he needed an income and had found no magazine work in Baltimore (A. Quinn 217). It was welcome work for him and an opportunity both to learn the magazine business and to become acquainted with other literary men. Although Poe had no editing or magazine experience, he had knowledge of magazines, learned quickly, and “seems to have had an instinctive feel for these matters [editing, marketing, advertising]” (Hutchisson 47).

Both Poe and White understood Poe was not starting with the magazine as the editor but as a junior staff member (Silverman 106). With no issues in October and November 1835, White officially introduced Poe with “a publisher’s note” inside the December 1835 issue: “the intellectual department of the paper is now under the conduct of the proprietor assisted by a gentleman of distinguished literary talents” (Thomas and Jackson 177). White, through his sometime editor Lucian Minor,<sup>83</sup> declared the magazine would be successful because White was now “seconded” by Poe (Thomas and Jackson 177). The note praised the quality of its contributors, “singling out the name of EDGAR ALLAN POE,” who brought to the magazine “his uniquely original vein of imagination and of humorous, delicate satire” (Thomas and Jackson 178). Mott lists Poe as an assistant editor although Poe often thought of himself as the editor (I: 634, 638). After White’s effusive praise of Poe in the December 1835 issue, Arthur Hobson Quinn points out, “Poe did practically all the editorial work but he was not given the recognition or even the authority he deserved” (231). Kenneth Silverman states that Poe performed the duties of an editor for the

*Messenger*. he “advised White on articles submitted for publication, edited copy and checked proof, decided typographical matters, solicited manuscripts, kept track of the doings of other magazines, and wrote his own reviews, fillers, fiction, poetry, and editorial comments” (109). Likewise, James Hutchisson claims that Poe “was the editor in chief, advising White on the merit of articles submitted for publication, editing copy and checking proof, and keeping tabs on the competition” (47). By February of 1836, White was calling Poe “his right hand man” (Thomas and Jackson 190). No matter his title at the *Messenger*, Poe experienced his first editor-owner relationship and laborious, often uninteresting editorial work; interacted with other magazinists and writers; and reviewed much of the writing of the period. Poe did not have time to write new tales, but did experience a larger audience reaction to his revised tales, to his brand of reviews, and to a couple of new series that he began in the *Messenger*. The year Poe spent with White informed his own writing and principles for literature as affected by the magazine world.

Poe first contributed to the *Southern Literary Messenger* in March 1835 with his tale “Berenice” (Mott I: 633) and continued to submit tales for each subsequent issue. White objected to “Berenice’s” “macabre conclusion” (Hayes, *Poe* 58), the distraught lover tearing out his lover’s teeth. Poe suggested to White that to be successful, the *Messenger* needed to print fiction of “the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque: the fearful coloured into the horrible: the witty exaggerated into the burlesque: the singular wrought out into the

strange and mystical" (*Letters I*: 57-58). Michael Allen states that White often complained about Poe's use of "too much German horror" and blending of "the shadows of the tomb with the clouds and sunshine of life" (139). Poe responded that "to be appreciated you must be read, and these things are invariably sought after with avidity" (*Letters I*: 58), perhaps remembering the success of the British magazines. For Poe, it was the beginning of the style of many of his most famous tales: as Kevin Hayes writes, "a story of a diseased mind told from an inner perspective, 'Berenice' is Poe's first great psychological tale" (*Poe* 59). Poe had succeeded in two of his own requirements for the tales—grotesqueness and originality. For the *Messenger*, the tale was quite a change from the first few issues, which had included educational addresses, travel pieces and a few poems (Mott I: 632).

In their initial correspondence, Poe made a number of recommendations to White for the *Messenger*. One concerned the look of the magazine—using "a lighter-faced type in the headings of your various articles" (*Letters I*: 64)--and White changed the type in December 1835. White, in return, offered Poe criticism on his erratic punctuation, which John Ostrom records that Poe gradually improved (*Letters I*: 64).

Another Poe recommendation concerned replacing the simple style of writing, which White called "Virginian simplicity" (Silverman 101), with a more sophisticated style. Before Poe worked for the *Messenger*, White had been warned that Poe would "rather injure than benefit" the magazine because of his

"incomprehensible scholarship and obscure style" (Allen 139). In 1836, Harper's would echo this complaint against Poe, when *Tales of the Folio Club* was rejected, saying, "The papers are too learned and mystical. They would be understood and relished only by a very few—not by the multitude" (qtd. in Allen 139). Poe's erudite, complex style was new to the *Messenger* of 1835. Poe complained that "simplicity is the cant of the day" (*Letters* I: 58) and the typical contents of the magazine could not compare to the complexities of his "Berenice."

However, Poe's use of the word "simplicity" changed after he began writing for the magazines. "Simplicity" came to mean "virtually the same thing as unity," opposing "too much ornament" and exhibiting "excellency in writing" (Dameron 233, 234). J. Lasley Dameron argues that both Poe and *Blackwood's* critics made simplicity one of the major criteria in ranking other writers (234). Poe used the word 95 times in his body of reviews; *Blackwood's*, 250 times between 1830 and 1840 (Dameron 234). For example, in complimenting John Pendleton Kennedy's work, Poe notes, "a certain unpretending simplicity, nervous, forcible, and altogether devoid of affectation" (*Essays* 651). In critiquing an author such as Bulwer-Lytton, Poe condemns his "involution whether here in style or elsewhere in plot" (*Essays* 156) and explains, "The beauty of simplicity is not that which can be appreciated by Mr. Bulwer" (*Essays* 156). Dameron notes that Poe changed his mind about simplicity; he used the word to mean two different things. When he used "simplicity" to refer to the

early contributions of the *Messenger*, he meant the typical, the commonplace, the simple tales printed before he joined the staff. When he used the word as a reviewer, "simplicity" meant an understandable style with a clear, unified direction. Poe himself came to glorify that kind of simplicity when late in life he praised himself<sup>84</sup> as "having that rare merit of distinctness and simplicity" (*Essays* 1050).

White and Poe worked admirably together while Poe was sober. Within a few months of employment, however, Poe appeared at work drunk, told off his employer, and disappeared.<sup>85</sup> White announced that Poe was gone, fired. Then within a month Poe asked for his job back and, with a promise to remain sober, was reinstated. White remained wary of Poe's promise but needed Poe's assistance in running his magazine. The issue of Poe's drinking would continue throughout his employment.

White and Poe shared a love of the South and a dislike of the power that writers in New York and New England held when it came to dictating literary taste. Michael Allen describes Poe's attitude as the typical Southern attitude "strongly influenced by the British gentlemanly style of Steele, Sheridan, and Fox," thus, exhibiting a distrust for "the mass-audience and the 'trade' of writing," and displaying, "at least initially, elitist attitudes to literature" (134). This attitude contributed to a tone of erudition in a number of Poe's tales and a stance in many of his reviews against simplistic writing. Yet Michael Allen believes that by the time Poe left the *Messenger*, he "must have at least partially



recognized that such elitism was inapplicable to the situation of the American journalist, forced into a practical dependence on the mass-audience. Certainly his success in raising that journal's circulation gives this impression" (140). Poe adjusted his erudite simplicity during this first magazine employment.

Poe displayed his Southern attitude in criticizing the elitism of the New England writers, calling their attitude "Frogpondium" (Allen 52). Poe used the term "Frogpondium" as a "derogatory name for the New England and Boston literati" (Sova, *Poe A to Z* 91). He felt their egos made them think they were equal to British writers on the other side of the great pond—the Atlantic Ocean—while they were actually "small talents living in the limited boundaries of a frog pond (Boston)" Sova, *Poe A to Z* 91). Poe thought writers like James Fenimore Cooper, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Washington Irving were favored in the publishing world simply because they were New Englanders. He believed they were narrow minded, with no world view, and "he opposed their native Puritanism, their jingoistic chauvinism, their (to him) shallow optimism, and their abidingly democratic view of society" (Hutchisson 60). Poe naturally took every opportunity to criticize them.

Poe was able to experiment with form and ideas in the columns of the *Messenger*. In the February 1836 issue, Poe initiated the "Autography" series, which he would continue later in his career. Borrowed from the English magazines, the idea of autography was to print "a group of fictional letters by contemporary literary figures, and [append] to them facsimiles of the writers'

actual signatures, one expression of a rage in the period for collecting autographs of the famous" (Silverman 116). Poe used thirty-eight American signatures and made up the brief letters. Under the pseudonym of Joseph Miller, Poe analyzed the handwriting to reveal the personality of the writer. Since Joe Miller was a comic actor and "slang for a trite jest" (Jacobs, *Journalist* 99n), the audience should have recognized the fabrication of the articles. Robert Jacobs states, "The hoax was a clever piece of journalism that immediately became a hit, but Poe's analyses sometimes contained a sting, and White was wary" (*Journalist* 99). In September of 1835, White advised Poe that the Cooper entry in Poe's "Autography" series would have to be eliminated or a libel suit might be filed against the magazine (Thomas and Jackson 172). In a letter to a friend, White states, "I should not like to shoot so sarcastic an arrow at poor Cooper— however much he deserves it" (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 174).

Poe also initiated a series of 175 tidbits of information that could be used as fillers, which he called "Pinakidia" (Jacobs, *Journalist* 92). Robert Jacobs believes that this series was actually Poe's recognition of the use of "stolen" information from encyclopedias and earlier works when reviewers did not have the knowledge needed to support statements about books they were forced to review. Professional or hack reviewers were expected to read every book that crossed their desks. Jacobs states that "Poe's intent in the 'Pinakidia' was to point out to the gullible public that the information and ideas so readily available in the journals and handbooks did not represent true scholarship on the part of

the authors but only assiduity in the use of encyclopedias" (*Journalist* 92). Poe had been trying to raise the level of the magazine with his "learned" reviews perhaps as a response to the charge that American magazines did not meet the sophisticated, pedantic standards of the British periodicals. Poe's "display of erudition, then, was not merely self-advertising but was related to the attempt of American journalism to educate a public that still manifested a colonial sensitivity to European charges of ignorance and vulgarity" (Jacobs, *Journalist* 93).

James Hutchisson states that Poe began to write not for a highly educated audience, but for traveling Americans, who "wanted short tales or brief articles that could be digested, for example, on a train trip or while waiting for the ferry" (46). Michael Allen also indicates that Poe's writing was definitely affected by his first magazine experiences: "From about 1839 on, Poe's work shows an intermittent but increasing effort to simplify style and manner, and choose his subjects with the mass audience in mind" (Allen 141). Both these critics may be suggesting that this first magazine association changed Poe's direction, especially in his writing style and form, and stimulated his thinking about the shape of short fiction.

### Poe's Beginnings as a Critic

Because White retained the control of the content of the *Messenger*, Poe's major contribution, besides his tales, was his criticism. Kenneth Silverman notes

that Poe “devoted about fifteen double-columned pages each issue to reviews, most of which he likely wrote himself” (117). Poe used the style he had gleaned from *Blackwood’s*—critical and derisive—developing a reputation for harshness. Very few critics commented on grammatical correctness, but Poe fearlessly ripped into sloppy writing in anything he read: one editor observed of Poe “he was a minute detector of slips of the pen, and probably, was unequalled as a proof reader” (qtd. in Silverman 119). Poe very much objected to a *Richmond Courier and Daily Compiler* comment that the *Southern Literary Messenger’s* editors used more “cutting and slashing” than “laudation.” In a September 1836 letter, Poe let it be known that he was the only editor of the *Messenger*. He defended his methods, cataloging his ninety-four reviews, eighty-four of which were laudatory or mostly laudatory, and the few which might be labeled as “cut and slashed” as truly deserving (*Letters* I: 101).

Poe may have put considerable pressure on himself as he strove to be “a critic instead of a journalistic book-reviewer” (Jacobs, *Journalist* 181). Jacobs expresses his amazement that given his demanding working conditions, Poe produced an excellent review of a book titled *Peter Snook . . . and Other Strange Tales* by J. F. Dalton. In this October 1836 review, Poe zeroed in on “Peter Snook” and praised it as “absolutely flawless” (*Essays* 199), its author “one of the best of the English Magaziners” (*Essays* 189). He compared the story to a painting, with “that blending of light and shadow where nothing is too distinct, yet where the idea is fully conveyed—in the absence of all rigid outlines and all

miniature painting—in the not undue warmth of the coloring—and in the slight tone of exaggeration prevalent, yet not amounting to caricature” (*Essays* 200). Comparing the story to a painting, to art, this review anticipates Poe’s later review of Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales*. It is the beginning of Poe’s unity-of-effect stricture for the short tale. In this review, Poe describes “the short tale as a design or a composition rather than a narrative characterized by action and drama. The pleasure to be derived from it was similar to the response to a painting” (Jacobs, *Journalist* 184).

Poe also attacked his pet peeves in the reviews—“commercial institutions, literary politics, and ideological demands that shaped the production of literature in America” (Silverman 120)—but especially the practice of puffing, “overpraising poor and mediocre works” (Silverman 120). Poe made it his mission to work against the magazines promoting works that were lauded only because they were of American subjects or by American authors. He did not believe in coddling American writers. Poe’s definitive objection to “puffing” came out in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in April 1836: “We get up a hue and cry about the necessity of encouraging native writers of merit—we blindly fancy we can accomplish this by indiscriminate puffing of good, bad and indifferent” (qtd. in Mott I: 405). Poe’s attitude is similar to Edward S. Gould’s as revealed in Gould’s 1835 lecture, reprinted in *The New York Mirror* in 1836, where he states in all capital letters: “THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE RANGE OF THE CURRENT REVIEWS OF AMERICAN BOOKS [ . . . ] NINE OUT OF TEN ARE HIGHLY COMMENDATORY” (qtd. in Mott

I: 405). Gould lists the reasons why puffing, not honest criticism, characterized the age:

(1) the gift of complimentary copies of works to critics—surely an abuse only when the presentation was made by the author by way of friendship rather than by the publisher by way of business, (2) indulgence for personal friends, (3) leniency toward colleagues on the same journal, (4) fear of offending the author’s admirers among readers of criticism, (5) desire to encourage American literature, and (6) indolence. (qtd. in Mott I: 406)

Both the editors and readers of magazines were aware of and resigned to the practice. The *Mirror* in 1833 stated that the published criticism could only be compared to “weak tea and bread and butter” (qtd. in Mott I: 406), but that it pervaded all magazines: “puff—puff—puff; morning, noon and night, summer and winter—octavos, quartos, folios, blue covers, yellow covers, white, green and brown. Nothing but puff . . . . It is a lamentable fact that any man may get his work puffed” (qtd. in Mott I: 407). Mott admits that there was some serious criticism in this era, such as essays from Poe, James Russell Lowell, William Gilmore Simms, Edwin Percy Whipple,<sup>86</sup> and Margaret Fuller, but there were many more puffs that were politically or financially motivated (Mott I: 407-08).

Poe purposely aimed to set himself apart from the majority of reviewers by critiquing honestly. Poe generated interest, both positive<sup>87</sup> and negative,<sup>88</sup> in himself and in the *Southern Literary Messenger* by his “over one hundred

reviews and editorials" (Lent). The relative success of the *Messenger* led White to give Poe free reign with his reviews. Kevin Hayes concurs with most critics in stating that Poe's "uncompromising standards prompted the nickname 'Tomahawk Man,' but he praised literature that deserved it" (*Poe* 44). Poe might have been using this style of reviewing in imitation of the successful British periodicals, yet Jacobs believes that Poe brought to his work "a professionalism that some Southerners, amateurs in spirit, found difficult to understand" (*Journalism* 17-18). Poe's motive was to raise literary standards, to teach readers the difference between the common and the extraordinary, but, even more likely, to sell magazines.

Arthur Quinn praises Poe's critical method as excelling in destructive, analytic, and constructive literary criticism, in an era when descriptive criticism was most common. For example, Theodore S. Fay's *Norman Leslie* had been puffed four times by October 1835 in the *New York Mirror* (Thomas and Jackson 175), a practice that Poe disliked. Thus, in the December 1835 *Messenger*, Poe took four-thousand words to viciously and cleverly attack all of Fay's work on grounds of poor grammar. Because Fay was a popular author, this brought Poe considerable notoriety and new enemies (A. Quinn 243-44). When Poe could separate himself from this type of destructive criticism, Quinn believes Poe excelled at analytic and constructive criticism. The Washington *National Intelligencer* in January 1836 gave the following testimonial about the quality of the reviews that Poe wrote for the *Southern Literary Messenger*: "The tone of

the criticisms differs widely from puffery, and is perfectly independent” (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 186).

Both White and Poe were struggling with the demanding work involved in putting out monthly issues of the *Messenger*. In an August 1836 letter White asks a reviewer of the *Messenger* to note “the mass of reading there is in the *Messenger*—and to speak also of the untiring industry and the immense expense it must cost the Publisher to collect together such a quantity of good matter monthly” (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 220). White relied on Poe for many of the duties of his magazine, a schedule that gave Poe a thirty-hour work week that did not include the time he had to spend reading books to be reviewed, writing the reviews, and writing creatively, usually late into the night. Between August and December 1836, Poe was having trouble keeping up with his responsibilities, especially when White left the office for a week in October (Jacobs, *Journalist* 179). This was the beginning of the end of Poe’s association with White. Poe began to drink again to relieve the pressure of too much work. White acknowledged that the magazine’s increased subscriptions from 1000 to 5000 were largely due to Poe’s editing skill and admitted that Poe was the one mostly responsible for the magazine’s success. Nevertheless, White was nervous about a printers’ strike, continued profits, and Poe’s reliability and controversial reviews. A tension between owner and editor began to build: Poe felt he worked extremely hard for a paltry sum and White felt he was losing control of his own magazine in addition to having personal problems with finances, his health, and



his wife's illness (Hutchisson 68). In January 1837, White made it official that Poe was "retired" as editor. Alternately guilty and angry, White gave some money to Poe in exchange for part of Poe's novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, but eventually just wanted Poe to leave the city and boasted that the magazine would be better without the criticism and judgment of his deposed editor (Silverman 129).

Poe stated in an August 1840 letter that he had left the *Southern Literary Messenger* for a number of reasons, some of which recur in his later editorial positions as well:

The drudgery was excessive, the salary was contemptible. In fact, I soon found that whatever reputation I might personally gain, this reputation would be all. I stood no chance of bettering my pecuniary condition, while my best energies were wasted in the service of an illiterate and vulgar, although well meaning man, who had neither the capacity to appreciate my labors, nor the will to reward them. (*Letters* I: 141)

Yet in this first magazine employment, Poe had begun a trend that would persist for the remainder of his writing career. During his association with the *Messenger*, he strove to please the audience and his editor and to increase subscriptions, all while maintaining high standards. Even though his writing of tales had been on hold, he assessed what his colleagues were writing and absorbed the work of magazines while he polished his critical insight. Perhaps

the most important concept that Poe absorbed was the “artistic possibilities” of magazine writing (Hutchisson 47).

### Poe’s Second Editorial Position

Although little is known<sup>89</sup> of Poe’s life during the eighteen months after he left the *Messenger*, by the summer of 1839, he was in Philadelphia<sup>90</sup> and about to become editor of another magazine. Poe was hired by William E. (Billy) Burton as editor of *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine* in June or July 1839 and remained as editor until June 1840. *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine* was begun by British-born William E. Burton in July 1837 as a monthly containing “something of art, something of literature, and much of sports and the theater” (Mott I: 673), thus reflecting its owner’s first profession, acting. Originally just *The Gentleman’s Magazine* and for a few months in the 1840s known as *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine and Monthly American Review*, its last issue was December 1840, when it was combined with *The Casket*, also run by the new owner of *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine*, George R. Graham (Mott I: 673).

*Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine* was perhaps the only magazine that had given Poe’s recently published *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, of Nantucket*<sup>91</sup> a negative review in September 1838, yet Poe wrote to the owner, William Evans Burton, asking for employment in May 1839.<sup>92</sup> Mott notes Poe’s hiring as editor was in July 1839 (674), while Kevin Hayes and Arthur Quinn set

the date as June 1839. Quinn affirms that "On the back wrappers of the magazine for June 1839, Burton states that he has made arrangements with Edgar A. Poe, Esq., late Editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, to devote his abilities and experience to a portion of the editorial duties of the *Gentleman's Magazine*" (278). This was the beginning of an odd association between the actor Burton and the writer Poe. Burton produced a magazine with "the standard menu of poems, fiction, and essays, [ . . . with] special attention to sporting life, offering articles on sailing, cricket, or hunting to appeal to men-about-town" (Silverman 143). Burton should have been looking for ways to cut costs, as he lamented spending an excessive amount of money on high-priced illustrations and expensive paper (Silverman 143). Nevertheless, Burton reluctantly hired Poe at ten dollars per week, stating the following conditions:

Two hours a day, except occasionally, will, I believe, be sufficient for all required, except in the production of any article of your own. At all events you could easily find time for any other light avocation—supposing that you did not exercise your talents in behalf of any publication interfering with the prospects of the *G. M.* (Woodberry I: 203)

Working for this magazine and this editor, Poe honed his editing skills—"proofreading, copyediting, compiling short fillers, and supervising the printing" (Hutchisson 82)—and perhaps because Burton was absent frequently, felt a little of the hard work and frustration that he would feel when he could run his own

magazine. Dwight Thomas and David K. Jackson in *The Poe Log* reveal why Poe may have felt frustrated in this position: "Poe performs most of the tiresome chores connected with the monthly's publication; Burton refuses to let him establish the tone of its book reviews" (247). Poe also experienced an editor who did not trust his employees, a situation that may have pushed Poe to put more of his energies into his own creative writing.

Burton and Poe felt antagonistic toward each other from the beginning. This antagonism may have resulted from their goals: Poe's lifelong pursuit of literary excellence was in direct conflict with Burton's pursuit of entertainment, primarily in the theatre, but also in his own magazine. Robert Jacobs states that "It would have been easy to predict that Poe, who was ambitious to found a superior literary journal, would be contemptuous of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and its editor" (*Journalist* 215). In addition, their personalities clashed: Mott acknowledges, "both were sufficiently sensitive, hot-headed and vain" (I: 674-75). Putting his goals aside in order to earn money, Poe had already shown his ability to conform to the audience with an earlier submission to *Burton's*, an article titled "A Chapter on Field Sports and Manly Pastimes" (Jacobs, *Journalist* 215). Yet Burton restricted Poe's writing. In Poe's June 1840 letter, he states to Burton, "At first I wrote long articles which you deemed inadmissible, & never did I suggest any to <you> which you had not some immediate and decided objection. Of course I grew discouraged & could feel no interest in the Journal"

(*Letters I*: 131-32). Burton represented to Poe the example of an editor who liked control, but not quality.

Poe began to write his reviews in the satirical *Blackwood's* style he had perfected at the *Southern Literary Messenger*. However, Poe's first review was rejected by Burton, who warned Poe to "get rid of your avowed ill-feelings towards your brother authors" (qtd. in A. Quinn 281). Silverman says Burton sensed that Poe's declaration that he only spoke the truth in his reviews masked his jealousy of the popularity of certain authors' mediocre work while Poe's own genius was left unrewarded (145). Poe made negative remarks about some of the "beloved" genius authors in America: Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Silverman 145). However, in Poe's review of Longfellow's *Hyperion*, which he called a *farrago*, Poe objected to the work, saying he thought Longfellow was getting lazy in his art, knowing that whatever he wrote would be published, regardless of its worth. According to Jacobs, Poe was becoming a "more responsible" literary critic, finding "it was the duty of the critic to educate the public taste and to refuse to tolerate mediocrity or self-serving. Therefore he claimed that works like *Hyperion* were the 'grief of all true criticism,' for they undermined the popular 'faith in Art,' which needed the support of all men of letters" (*Journalist* 227). This review also revealed Poe's theory of genius. Burton's reviews would indiscriminately praise a work when written by a genius because "the faults of genius must be forgiven," an attitude

that irritated Poe. Poe believed that true originality did not come from impulse but from hard work.

While working for Burton, Poe put his efforts into his tales and tempered his reviews. Meanwhile he was continuing his typical editorial duties: Poe "chose submissions, contributed verse, prepared manuscripts, proofread copy, supervised production at the printers" (Hayes, *Poe* 79). Since Burton would not allow Poe to put "too much thought to criticism," Poe could "channel his energy into his fiction" (Hayes, *Poe* 79).

Poe was extremely productive during the year he was associated with *Burton's*. In Burton's frequent absences, Poe filled in with extra copy

. . . on a hodgepodge of topics: an article on the use of parallel bars and other gymnastic equipment; another on the ruins of Stonehenge, printed on the front page but taken nearly verbatim from one of his favorite mines, *Rees's Encyclopedia*; some eighty-nine book reviews and cursory notices surveying not only novels and poems but also works on ornithology, housekeeping, advice to youth, flower painting, Paraguay. (Silverman 144)

Increasing his income by submitting fiction and poetry to Burton, Poe published a variety of his works while editor: "The Philosophy of Furniture," "The Man that Was Used Up," "Rodman" (a reworked Pym plot), "Peter Pendulum," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "William Wilson." However, "for his ninety-five pages of reviews and articles in *Burton's* Poe received only his salary of ten dollars a

week, while earning three dollars a page extra for his tales, including 'Usher,' and five dollars for each of his seven reprinted poems" (Silverman 152).

During his time working for Burton, Poe produced quite a body of work. For extra money, Poe wrote for a family newspaper, *Alexander's Weekly Messenger*,<sup>93</sup> contributing articles on beet sugar, bloodhounds, and swimming the Thames,<sup>94</sup> as well as a series on cryptography. In one of his first contributions, "Enigmatical and Conundrum-ical," Poe requested readers of *Alexander's* to send in cryptograms. Intrigued by coded messages, Poe solved them all until too many requests were received (Hayes, *Poe* 84-85).

Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, a collection of twenty-five tales, was published in December 1839 by Lea and Blanchard, bringing Poe no money, but free copies and a rather large amount of recognition. Hayes indicates that the process of publishing this collection<sup>95</sup> disappointed Poe and "embittered him toward the literary marketplace" (*Poe* 85). Poe was harshly critiqued for writing "German" imitations in his collection. Yet his preface declares that indeed his tales were original and the terror in them "is not of Germany, but of the soul" (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 278). Silverman praises the collection, stating that, except for Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, it is "the most powerfully imagined and technically adroit collection of short fiction ever published by an American author" (154). The December 1839 *New York Mirror* review lauded Poe and *The Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*: Poe should have "a high place among imaginative writers"; the collection has "fine poetic feeling, much brightness of

fancy, an excellent taste, a ready eye for the picturesque, much quickness of observation, and great truth of sentiment and character in all these works" (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 284). The publication of his collection and his writings in *Burton's* and *Alexander's* enhanced his reputation as a literary man, and Poe reveled in the praise.

Poe remained with Burton for a year. By 1840 the inevitable break occurred. Poe was tired of working for an editor he did not respect and could not accept having his own superior reviews next to the "twaddle" written by Burton. In a letter Poe wrote in September 1840, Poe warned fellow writer Philip P. Cooke<sup>96</sup> not to bother to read the criticisms in the magazine: "It is not pleasant to be taxed with the twaddle of other people. . . . Therefore for the present I remain upon my oars—merely penning a paragraph, without care" (*Letters I*: 118-19). In addition, there was a disagreement over Poe's salary<sup>97</sup> and over a contest that Burton had advertised in November 1839. Poe's objection to the contest came with Butler's February 1840 announcement that there were not enough manuscripts to judge in order to pay the prize money<sup>98</sup> (Thomas and Jackson 277, 292). Butler had also promised to return the manuscripts but failed to do so (Thomas and Jackson 321). Accusations flew from both men: Burton charged that Poe was going to leave anyway to begin his own magazine while Poe accused Burton of advertising the sale of the magazine without informing him. Poe brought up his resentment about Burton's harsh review of *Pym*; Burton reminded Poe about an unpaid loan, deducting it from his pay. Burton spread



the statement that Poe's drinking interfered with his editorial duties; Poe called Burton a "buffoon and a felon" (*Letters I*: 155).

Both of Poe's employers thus far had been business men, not sharing Poe's concern about the literary quality of their magazines. After Burton's exploitation of contributors, Poe was disillusioned once again and began thinking in terms of his own publication. He assured Burton he had not advertised his own magazine before Burton let him go, but he had been thinking about it. Poe wanted an artistic, literary magazine over which he would have complete control: Poe "was serious about literature in a world that often treated it as little more than clubbish amateurism. His high-strung earnestness, his contempt for cant, shallowness, and willful stupidity probably amused his fellow journalists, laboring in the vineyards of cheap verbal plonk" (Hutchisson 107). Burton was spending more and more time building his own theatre, using profits from *Burton's Gentlemen's Magazine*, and when Poe found out Burton was spending so much time and money on the theatre and had put the magazine up for sale in May 1840, Poe hastened to put in writing the prospectus for a new magazine called the *Penn Magazine*. This angered Burton who quickly wrote a letter of dismissal to Poe, stating Poe's breaking of the original conditions of his employment: "Poe's forthcoming announcement of the *Penn Magazine* would lessen the market value of the *Gentleman's Magazine*" (Thomas and Jackson 297). Poe was dismissed at the end of May 1840. By June 1840, it was well known that *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* was up for sale, that Edgar Allan Poe was no longer

employed by Burton, and that Poe was planning a new magazine to be published in January 1841 (Thomas and Jackson 296-99).

His magazine work at *Burton's* had given Poe an opportunity to experiment with his own short fiction, to experience the hard work of filling the columns of an entire magazine, and to dream of his ideal magazine, one that would improve the literary tastes of its readers.

#### Poe with *Graham's Magazine*

George Rex Graham purchased *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* in November 1840 for \$3,500, a dollar for each subscriber. Graham already owned a small magazine called *The Casket*, in existence since 1826 although Graham had just purchased it in May 1839 (Mott I: 545). Graham began publishing his new magazine in January 1841 as the combined *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine (The Casket and Gentleman's United)*, retaining much the same look as his *Casket*. Unknown to Poe, Burton may have requested that Graham "take care of my young editor" (Quinn 310n).<sup>99</sup> Graham offered Poe the job as editor with limited duties, which would give Poe more time to write new tales. Poe accepted the job in February 1841. For the first time, Poe began working for a man he liked and who admired Poe in return: Graham showed interest in Poe's prospectus for a new magazine and gave Poe the impression that he might be willing to put money into the new venture.

*Graham's Magazine* probably was not the kind that Poe wanted to publish. However, Graham's sharp intuition guided him in the content of his magazine so that it would excel in the inflated market of magazines in that decade. Avoiding controversial subjects, *Graham's* early issues included the following:

three or four short stories, a light essay on manners, a biographical sketch, a literary article, a considerable amount of poetry— narrative, lyrical and didactic—an out-door sketch by 'Frank Forester,' a travel article, fine arts and book-review departments, and a chat with the editor; besides the colored fashion plate, and one or two art plates by well-known engravers. (Mott I: 547)

The content was all Graham's choice. However, Graham was generous because he knew Poe's reputation and offered the impoverished Poe \$800 a year, more than Poe had ever made in his life. Poe took the job (Hayes, *Poe* 102).

Graham announced Poe as editor first in the Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post* in February 1841: "As a stern, just and impartial critic Mr. Poe holds a pen second to none in the country, and we have the confident assurance, that with such editorial strength as the Magazine now possesses, the literary department of the work will be of the very highest character" (Thomas and Jackson 319). Since Poe had been hired in February 1841, and the March issue had already gone to the printers, the first issue Poe edited in April 1841 printed the following notice on the inside front cover: "Mr. POE is too well known in the literary world to require a word of commendation. As a critic he is surpassed by

no man in the country; and as in this Magazine his critical abilities shall have free scope, the rod will be very generously, and at the same time, justly administered" (Thomas and Jackson 320).

Graham chose the articles to be published, aware that he and Poe had different opinions about the quality of the contributions. Graham was wary of Poe's judgments in this regard. One of Poe's duties was to write letters to possible contributors because Graham knew Poe's magazine experience and associations with other magazinists. According to Arthur Hobson Quinn, it was Poe who urged Graham to advertise the names of well known authors associated with *Graham's* and, more importantly, to pay the authors well (316). For example, in May 1841, Poe wrote to Longfellow to ask for a contribution for a future issue. Longfellow replied that he was too busy at the moment, but that he recognized Poe and his talent: "all that I have read from your pen has inspired me with a high idea of your power" (qtd. in A. Quinn 317). The astute Graham knew that it would take a talented literary man to attract other talented literary men. According to Poe biographer Arthur Quinn, "Poe must have had his share in establishing the policy of paying good prices to those authors who had interesting stories, essays, or poems to contribute. Graham depended on him even more for his ability to discover new talent" (324).

Besides paying Poe more than Burton had, Graham "relieved [Poe] of the routine drudgery that was now handled by an assistant editor" (Meyers 121). Poe "wrote the book reviews, contributed a story each month and read the final

proofs" (Meyers 122). The advantage of this arrangement was that Poe had time to write. His contributions were diverse, but he was able to contribute a new story almost every month: "Murders in the Rue Morgue," April 1841; "A Descent into the Maelstrom," May 1841; "The Island of the Fay," June 1841; "A Few Words on Secret Writing," a continuation of the series he began in *Alexander's Weekly Messenger*, July 1841; "The Colloquy of Monos and Una," August 1841; "To Helen," a revised poem, September 1841; "Israfel," a revised poem, October 1841; "A Chapter on Autography," a continuation of an earlier series," November, December 1841; "An Appendix of Autographs," January 1842; "Harper's Ferry," an essay with N.P. Willis, February 1842; "To One Departed," a reprinted poem, March 1842; "Life in Death," April 1842; and "The Mask of the Red Death," May 1842 ("Edgar Allan Poe's Writings"). The list exemplifies the variety of Poe's contributions in the year of his association with Graham. ("Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "Life in Death" will be discussed in a later chapter.)

For every contribution of his that Graham published, Poe earned more money, about \$4 a page for each. Poe boasted that Graham was the most liberal of all the American publishers in paying contributors. While some editors changed copy at will and the usual pay was \$1 a page, Graham paid anywhere from \$4 to \$12 a page for prose, \$10 and \$50 for each poem (Tebbel 70). With his pages larger than other periodicals' pages—typically 1000 words a page—the term "Graham page" became the standard of payment for magazine work.

Among the four hundred weeklies, monthlies, bi-monthlies, and quarterlies with which Graham competed, *Graham's* had the reputation of paying contributors well and on time. In fact, Graham established his own formula for determining authors' pay by looking at which authors brought in more subscribers and which authors were stolen more often than others (Tebbel 70-71). It is interesting to note that Poe was rather low on Graham's pay scale (Allen 158).

Poe's plan to publish the *Penn*, now on hold, was never an issue between him and his publisher while Poe was employed by Graham. When he hired Poe, Graham was well aware of Poe's plan to publish his own magazine. Graham was flexible enough to acknowledge that his own magazine was written for a larger audience and was aware of Poe's plan to appeal to a limited audience for a higher price. He led Poe to believe that if Poe could get a promise of a certain number of subscribers, Graham would be willing to join him. Both men were involved in the magazine industry and could see its possibilities and risks.

Looking back, Poe might describe his time at Graham's as enjoyable. He had time to write, and though he did not have the control he was seeking in starting his own magazine, Graham did give him the freedom to write scathing reviews. Both his previous employers, White and Burton, had tried to curtail Poe's "bloodletting," but Graham knew the value of good literary controversy. Poe had many nicknames in his time: "Tomahawk man," "Bulldog the critic" (Allen 168). He was accused of being "magnificently snobbish and dirty" and of "blackguard warfare" (Allen 169). Although Poe could be overly critical, his

reviews increased subscribers (Allen 169). The reputation that Poe was simply attacking his fellow authors was not deserved. Most of Poe's reviews were of authors who did not write as well as Poe himself, and a few of his reviews were complimentary: "for every ten writers Poe cut up, it should be said in his favor, he fostered the reputation of two or three others" (Silverman 164).

*Graham's*, like most periodicals of the time, included several reviews in each issue, providing the novel reading public with information, not necessarily evaluative commentary. Before Poe, most reviews were written by staff members, probably Graham himself, and they were included in the magazine as a service to readers. In fact, Nina Baym observes in *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers*, "In general the state of the art of reviewing was precisely that it was not an art but a service, performed because readers wanted to know about current books" (21). The earlier reviews in the nineteenth century re-produced large chunks of the novel, a service for readers who would then not have to procure the novel itself. When typical reviews began to enter into evaluative commentary, most often it was more about content than style. The more serious and moral the book's contents were, the higher the praise (Baym 24-25).

In contrast, included in Poe's reviews was instructive commentary that aimed at improving the quality of both literature and criticism. Commonly, most nineteenth-century periodicals included an article of instruction in fashion or sports or decoration, and Poe joined the trend by becoming "the arbiter of American literary standards" (Silverman 165). To counter the charge of

"excessive generalization" by common reviewers, Poe offered concrete examples of whatever he critiqued, enhancing his "refined and well-articulated aesthetic principles to his readers, so that they could form meaningful judgments of their own" (Silverman 165). Four well known critical and instructive reviews appeared in *Graham's*: "Review of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Night and Morning*," in which Poe defined plot; "Review of Longfellow's *Ballads and Other Poems*," in which Poe continued his attack on Longfellow's imitative tendency; "Review of Charles Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge*," in which Poe discussed the difference between popularity and critical merit; and "Review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*," in which Poe described two main requirements of short tales: to be read in one sitting and to create a single effect upon the reader.

Poe himself realized the importance of criticism in its own right, and in the beginning of his second six months of association with *Graham's*, he published those thoughts in his "Exordium to Critical Notices" in January 1842. The periodicals, Poe recognized, were beginning to treat criticism as a science. Rejecting the British style of criticism, American critics first began to praise native works because they were about this country or written by Americans, so much so, according to Poe, that they liked "a stupid book the better because (sure enough) its stupidity was of our own growth, and discussed our own affairs" (*Essays* 1027-28). To combat this type of review, Poe believed the country needed to see, and was beginning to see, more independent editors who were not tied to book sellers or publishers.



Poe continued his campaign against the practice of "puffing" not only in the field of literature, but also in politics and business (Mott I: 478). Evert A. Duyckinck wrote in *The American Review* in the February 1845 issue that "puffing" "is a besetting sin of our literature" (qtd. in Mott I: 478). Mott declares that even the popular *Graham's Magazine*, though Poe wrote some criticism that could be labeled "epochal," would sometimes "break out in a rash of puffery" (I: 547). Poe himself was against all forms of "puffery" but was still known to promote a work now and then or have a friend promote his own (Mott I: 116).

Poe's distaste for "puffing" led him to continue pointing it out in his reviews. In Poe's review of Lambert A. Wilmer, for example, appearing in *Graham's* in August 1841, Poe agrees with Wilmer's assertion "that, as a literary people, we are one vast perambulating humbug" (*Essays* 1006). Further, he states that criticism is no longer honest: "To so great an extent of methodical assurance has the system of puffery arrived, that publishers, of late, have made no scruple of keeping on hand an assortment of commendatory notices, prepared by their men of all work, and of sending these notices around to the multitudinous papers within their influence, done up within the fly-leaves of the book" (*Essays* 1007).

As with most of Poe's relationships, according to Michael Allen, Poe attracted and then attacked the reading audience: "He explained the reputation achieved by popular works as being the result of the chicanery of the small writer who knows how to exploit the influence of the reviewers, and of the

puffery whereby members of a clique advance each others' work into the public eye, as well as of the vulgarity of the mass audience" (137). William Charvat discusses the origins of book promotion—"puffing"—as a matter of too many books, not enough reviewers: "Publishers' accountings to authors in the forties [1840s] show how that from 150 to 250 copies of a promising new work were sent to editors, constituting as much as 10 per cent of a first printing" (Brucoli 172). These copies went to reviewers who were paid little, were overworked, and were often hack writers or not even writers themselves. Poe and Ann Stephens may have been the exceptions; Rufus Griswold, the hack writer (Brucoli 173-74).

Poe continued instructing, this time in how to review books. Reviews originally summarized contents or commented on one pet peeve of the reviewer. Disliking the idea that reviews were only an opinion of the reviewer, Poe complained profusely when the editor of the journal *Arcturus* stated that criticism "dismisses errors of grammar," "unravels the web of the author's mystery to interpret his meaning to others," and "promulgates his beauties with liberal, generous praise" (*Essays* 1030). Poe emphatically rejected this definition of criticism, especially the idea that grammatical errors do not matter or that each critique would differ depending on the opinion of the reviewer. He countered with the fact that critiques should always be based on "man's heart and intellect" and those qualities do not change. Criticism, according to Poe, "is *not*, we think, an essay, nor a sermon, nor an oration, nor a chapter in history, nor a

philosophical speculation, nor a prose-poem, nor an art novel, nor a dialogue” (*Essays* 1031). It is simply a critique. Stronger still, Poe emphasized the job of the critic, agreeing with Bulwer, “he must have courage to blame boldly, magnanimity to eschew envy, genius to appreciate, learning to compare, an eye for beauty, an ear for music, and a heart for feeling.’ . . . a talent for analysis and a solemn indifference to abuse” (*Essays* 1032). Concerned more with the aesthetic quality of the work, Poe insisted on evaluating the entire work, not just the content, regardless of popular opinion.

Continually in his reviews, Poe sought to educate his readers in the art of writing. Poe biographer Silverman states that Poe “did not talk down to readers of *Graham’s*, but instead offered them real training in aesthetic judgment. His most thoughtful notices set a level of popular book reviewing that has remained unequalled in America” (168). George Bernard Shaw agreed, calling Poe “the greatest journalistic critic of his time” (98). Motivated by the idea that he needed to promote the best American writers, perhaps even to create an American canon, Poe set out to eliminate the puffing of undeserving writers. In a series called “Autography,” that he started with the *Messenger* and continued in *Graham’s* in 1842, Poe published the signatures of well known authors with his own commentary about each one: for example, Poe’s opinion placed under the woodcut of Washington Irving’s signature read, “Mr. Irving’s hand writing is common-place. There is nothing indicative of genius<sup>100</sup> about it” (qtd. in Hayes, *Word* 101). He followed that with a “Chapter on Autography” authenticating the

idea of "how handwriting reflects individual personality" (Hayes, *Poe* 92). In his later series, Poe dropped fiction and concentrated on biography and the writing style and accomplishments of each author, often filling three pages or more. This anticipated Poe's idea of writing a complete critical history of American literature (Hayes, *Word* 102). Criticized for setting himself up as arbiter of literature, Poe nevertheless offered his own value judgments of his fellow writers.

Arthur Quinn calls Poe's time at *Graham's* "the summit" (305) of Poe's life. Admittedly, Poe wrote a number of his best pieces while at *Graham's*. It might be because he and Graham got along well; Poe could often be found in Graham's office, a rather chaotic place since Graham conducted business for both *Graham's* and the *Saturday Evening Post* there. It might be because, for once, Poe was not worrying about money. According to John Ostrom, "Poe's total income from Graham and other sources during these thirteen and one-half months was \$1177 ("Edgar" 3). Silverman estimates Poe earned more a month than he had in his life before or after *Graham's* (Silverman 174). John Ostrom agrees that *Graham's* was Poe's most financially successful employment as the following estimates prove: Poe earned \$1325 for the eighteen months he was employed at the *Messenger* (Longfellow had earned \$3000 for the same period of time); after the *Messenger*, Poe did freelance work, earning only \$143.50 for two and a half years; for the year Poe was employed by Burton, Poe only brought in \$821.00. After Poe left *Graham's*, he never earned close to \$1000.00 a year; in 1843, for example, his income was \$252; in 1845, \$699.00; in 1847,

\$287.75; in 1848, \$166.50; in 1849, \$274.75. It is no wonder that Poe was continually asking for loans or advances on salary (Ostrom, "Edgar," 4, 5, 6).

Graham, too, profited from the association. Within six months of Poe's time with *Graham's*, the subscription list went from 5,000—when Graham had bought the magazine—to 25,000. The editorial staff had grown too, with "two lady editors, Mrs. Ann S. Stephens and Mrs. E. C. Embury, while George R. Graham, Charles J. Peterson and Edgar A. Poe also remained" (A. Quinn 330). Within the year of Poe's employment with the magazine, the subscriptions rose from 5,000 to a projected 50,000, "a sevenfold increase" (Silverman 174), and Graham became a rich man. In addition, the magazine's quality had improved under Poe's editorial guidance. It was longer, from fifty-three to seventy-two pages (A. Quinn 330). It could now boast of new, well-known contributors, probably due to associations with Poe: Longfellow (for the first time), James Russell Lowell, and Frances Osgood.

And yet, as was the nature of his work history, Poe's employment with Graham did not last long, only thirteen months. He resigned in April 1842, citing "dis-gust with the namby-pamby character of the Magazine—a character which it was impossible to eradicate—I allude to the contemptible pictures, fashion-plates, music and love tales. The salary, moreover, did not pay me for the labor which I was forced to bestow" (*Letters* I: 197). Later Poe would add to his charges against Graham the fact that Graham had not even announced his resignation, letting readers assume subsequent poorly written reviews<sup>101</sup> were

Poe's. Other personal matters, particularly his young wife's illness,<sup>102</sup> may also have precipitated his departure. In July 1842 Graham formally made the announcement that Rufus Griswold, not Poe, was the editor. Graham may have regretted that decision because a few years later, he invited Poe to return. The readers did not seem to like Griswold either. Jessie Dow of the *Index*<sup>103</sup> stated in June 1842, "We would give more for Edgar A. Poe's toe nail, than we would for Rueful Grizzle's soul, unless we wanted a milk-strainer" (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 370).

Nevertheless, Poe and Graham remained cordial toward each other. At Poe's request, Graham returned Poe's story "The Gold-Bug," for which Graham had paid Poe \$52 and Poe promised to repay. Poe would make more money with the story as an entry in the contest run by the Philadelphia *Dollar Newspaper*, offering \$100 first prize. Graham returned the story, and Poe won. "The Gold-Bug," one of Poe's detective tales—containing a gold beetle, treasure, and a cryptogram—was printed in June 1843 (Hayes, *Poe* 121).

Poe's experience at *Graham's* gave him the best example of how an editor should work with his writers. After six years in Philadelphia,<sup>104</sup> one year working on "the foremost journal in the United States" (A. Quinn 404), and with thirty-one tales already published, Poe departed in 1844 for a bigger market in New York City.<sup>105</sup>

Poe in New York and with *The Weekly Mirror*

From April until October 1844, before Poe found work with a New York magazine, he wrote tales and enjoyed New York City.<sup>106</sup> He sold "The Balloon Hoax" to *The Sun*, and the paper chose to sensationalize the story by announcing that a later "extra" would give details of a balloon landing on Sullivan's Island. The extra was published, "unsigned, as a one-page broadside" (Hutchisson 153), and people stood in line to buy the paper, paying as much as a half-dollar an issue. Readers believed the story; yet when Poe proudly revealed himself as the author, they labeled Poe a "devious manipulator, or, at best, a spurious showman" (qtd. in Hutchisson 155).

By May 1844, Poe began writing for the Pennsylvania newspaper *The Columbia Spy*, contributing his observations of New York City in a column titled "Doings of Gotham." Hayes observes that Poe made insightful and prescient observations: "I could not look on the magnificent cliffs, and stately trees, which at every moment met my view, without a sigh for their inevitable doom—inevitable and swift. In twenty years, or thirty at the farthest, we shall see here nothing more romantic than shipping, warehouses, and wharves" (qtd. in Poe 126). Published in the form of letters, Poe's seven contributions "describe his wanderings 'far and wide over this island of Manhattan'" (qtd. in Hutchisson 51).

Poe's first magazine job in New York was at *The Weekly Mirror* from October 1844 until early 1845. *The New York Mirror*, begun in 1823 by George

Pope Morris, had a reputation for its good overall look, its literary selections, and its social commentary (Mott I: 321, 324). By 1843, it had a precarious existence, but after a three-month break in publication, it was revived as *The New Mirror* with Nathaniel Parker Willis' editorial help. It became a daily newspaper<sup>107</sup> in 1844 called *The Evening Mirror*, along with a weekly magazine edition called *The Weekly Mirror*, managed by owner-editors George Pope Morris and Nathaniel Parker Willis (Mott I: 329). Willis,<sup>108</sup> whom Poe had long called a magazinist and friend, "was a gritty practical journalist" and had "no qualms about the puffing system, and looked on his career unsentimentally" (Silverman 224). Willis, who knew and liked Poe, accepted his tales gladly although unable to pay Poe as much as he requested. Publishing a daily newspaper proved to be demanding work for the magazinist Willis; and at the request of Poe's Aunt Maria Clemm,<sup>109</sup> Willis hired Poe to assist him as a "mechanical paragraphist" for the *Weekly Mirror* (Hayes, *Poe* 135), paying him \$15 a week (Thomas and Jackson 473).

Poe's magazine work consisted of "announcing news, condensing statements, answering correspondents, noticing amusements" (Hutchisson 162) although Willis later called Poe his "critic and sub-editor" (qtd. in A. Quinn 434). Willis marveled that, given Poe's past editorial positions, Poe never complained; Willis noted "how good-humoredly ready he [Poe] was for any suggestion, how punctually and industriously reliable, in the following out of the wish once expressed, how cheerful and present-minded in his work when he might excusably have been so listless and abstracted" (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson



473). Willis would later state that both he and his partner Morris “loved him [Poe]” (qtd. in Silverman 225).

Despite the drudgery of Poe’s work as a “mechanical paragraphist” with the *Mirror* from late 1844 to early 1845 (Hayes, *Poe* 135), Poe had considerable time to write. He was revising “The Raven,” working on the “Marginalia” series, writing articles on issues he had with magazine writing—including pieces on the copyright law—and continuing his verbal war with Longfellow.

Critics speculate about how long Poe worked on “The Raven,” from ten years (Susan Archer Weiss) to one day (F. W. Thomas); and in 1843 Poe read a version of the poem in Saratoga and offered Graham a version (Kopley and Hayes 192). He was, however, still working on “The Raven” in 1844 and even made changes in the several versions published in 1845. He announced to his friend William Wallace that it was “the greatest poem that ever was written” (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 495). Even though “The Raven” was turned down by both Graham and Willis, Poe sold the poem for \$9 to the *American Review*. In addition, he enjoyed a period of fame when “The Raven” was published—in advance by the *Mirror* in January 1845, as scheduled by the *American Review* in February 1845, and by the *Broadway Journal* in February 1845 with an acknowledgment that the source was the *American Review*—at first under the pseudonym Quarles<sup>110</sup> although the introduction identified Poe as the author (Thomas and Jackson 496). An indication of Poe’s newfound popularity was the number of published parodies of “The Raven” and even of Poe himself: “The

Owl," February 1845; "The Veto" (about council members), February 1845; "The Craven: BY POH!" (a parody of one of Poe's lectures), March 1845; "A Vision" (a satire on the city's press), April 1845; and "The Black Cat" (a parody with Poe talking to a black cat), April 1845 (Thomas and Jackson 504, 505, 521, 523, 527).

Poe was also working on the "Marginalia" series he had been writing for *The Democratic Review*. Begun in 1844, "Marginalia" was "a gossipy mélange of commentary on recent reading and speculations about literary goings-on in the city" (Hutchisson 163). The first two installments, 116 items, were to imitate Poe's own "jottings in the volumes of his library. . . . on everything from synaesthesia and speed-reading to the calculus of probabilities and utilitarianism" (qtd. in Silverman 223). Fifteen more installments were later published—in *Godey's*, in *Graham's*, and, as late as 1849, in the *Southern Literary Messenger*.

Poe's concern about writing and publishing issues, especially related to magazines, was well known, and during late 1844 and early 1845, he published several essays on his views in a number of journals. "The Literary Life of Thingum Bob" appeared in the *Mirror* in December 1844 as a satiric account of magazine reviewing in which Bob cuts up the work to be reviewed, shakes the pieces in a castor, and then scatters the fragments randomly (Hayes, *Poe* 136-37). In the February 1845 issue of the *Broadway Journal*, Poe published "Some Secrets of the Magazine Prison-House," a sketch about starving authors waiting for publishers to pay them; in the March 1845 issue of the same journal, he

published "Imitation—Plagiarism," an essay in which he labels plagiarism "a 'sin' which 'involves the quintessence of meanness,' especially if committed by an established author" (qtd. in Thomas and Jackson 504). In May 1845 Poe published "Magazine Literature," ridiculing Thomas Dunn English's short-lived journal, the *Aristidean*, in the *Mirror* (Thomas and Jackson 401). Poe also published several articles in the *Weekly Mirror* urging an international copyright law.<sup>111</sup> One reader wrote the *Mirror* in enthusiastic support of Poe:

I am glad to see that Edgar Poe is in your clearings. He is a man of the finest ideal intellect in the land—carries a nasty tomahawk as a critic—bitter as gall to the literary flies who have been buzzing around his windows. Do give Poe a corner (or a column, or ten o' 'em) in your 'Strong-ly Mirror, and let him fire away at the humbugs of our literature. (Thomas and Jackson 474)

During this period Poe continued his verbal "war" with Longfellow that began with his 1840 review of one of Longfellow's poems. His 1845 reviews of Longfellow's *Waif* appeared in issues of the *Evening Mirror* on January 13, 14, and 20. Poe felt Longfellow was overrated: "a creative genius who neglected to achieve his potential." He criticized Longfellow's "didacticism," "lack of constructive ability," and "imitativeness bordering on plagiarism" (Thomas and Jackson xxxii). Poe admitted to Willis that he was writing the 1845 attack because "Longfellow is asleep on velvet; it will do him good to rouse him. His friends will come out and fight his battle" (qtd. in Hutchisson 172). However,

Willis tried to get Poe to soften his criticism and “modify his irony” (Sova, *Poe A to Z* 83); and all letters to the *Mirror* defended Longfellow against Poe’s attacks, except one from Outis (Greek for one man), whom many critics now assume to be Poe. Longfellow himself never retaliated with any comments about Poe; and after Poe’s death, Hutchisson suggests that Longfellow magnanimously helped Poe’s aunt, understanding that Poe’s charges had come from Poe’s own sensitive nature and heightened sense of injustice (174).

#### Poe with *The Broadway Journal*

Early in 1845, Poe left the *Mirror*<sup>112</sup> to work with Charles Frederick Briggs, editor, and John Bisco, publisher, of *The Broadway Journal*, to which he had been contributing for several months. Briggs<sup>113</sup> announced in December 1844 that he would finally publish his own paper with Bisco’s<sup>114</sup> help. The *Broadway Journal*’s first issue was January 1845; its final issue, January 1846. The magazine contained literary reviews, art criticism, music and theater commentary, political articles, and poetry (Mott I: 757).

Poe had a letter of introduction to Briggs and Bisco from James Russell Lowell, who was aiding them with contributions and contributors. Poe started by writing articles for \$1 a column and, in January 1845, “published a brief piece in the *Mirror* entitled ‘WHY HAVE THE NEW YORKERS NO REVIEW?’” (Silverman 244). By February 1845, he signed on as assistant editor of the *Broadway*

*Journal*, entitled to a third of the profits “for one page of original matter each week, and . . . ‘his faithful superintendence to the general conduct’ of the *Journal*” (*Letters I*: 287n). By its tenth issue, Poe was ecstatic to see his name as the third owner-editor on the masthead (Silverman 244). He had borrowed \$50 for his share (Sova, *Poe A to Z* 34). Briggs, however, did not consider Poe an equal, having hired him for his fame and his expertise at reviewing. Briggs recognized Poe’s artistic goals as being “entirely free from didacticism and sentiment” (qtd. in Silverman 244). For his contributions, Poe revised and republished “Ligeia,” “William Wilson,” and “The Tell-Tale Heart” (Sova, *Poe A to Z* 34). Poe worked hard because of the feeling of ownership—sometimes “working 14 or 15 hours a day . . . hard at it all the time . . . . I never knew what it was to be a slave before” (qtd. in Silverman 245)—and revised and reprinted many of his earlier pieces.

Poe “reviewed books and also published art, theatre, and music criticism, poetry, and political articles” for the *Broadway Journal*, a “more serious and intellectually oriented” magazine than he had previously worked for (Hutchisson 176). Contributing reviews, short articles, and commentaries to each issue, Poe found himself “more than ever aware of literature as a business” (Silverman 246)—and in a competitive market like New York, what Willis called, “the most over-stocked market in the country, for writers” (qtd. in Silverman 246). In the *Broadway Journal* Poe made the statement that “The whole tendency of the age is Magazine-ward” (qtd. in Silverman 246) in response to the complaint that

magazines were lowering literary taste. Of the six-hundred magazines published nationwide by 1850, New York alone had fifty-four monthlies. Given his experience, Poe wrote of the possibilities of magazines, praising the “true magazine spirit” (qtd. in Silverman 247). He also continued to harp on the lack of an international copyright law, a situation that prevented magazinists from making a decent living. Poe was still concerned with technical skill and originality, this time applying the criteria to drama. He thought it only logical to write theatre reviews since he was the son of actors (Silverman 250). He urged playwrights to “stop lavishly depending on past conventions” (Hutchisson 177).

Poe could have been highly respected in the literary field after his lifetime of experience; instead he may have lost respect by his actions in the last few years of his life. Poe’s behavior became increasingly erratic as his wife’s tuberculosis worsened. At the same time, those in literary circles noticed Poe’s new women friends,<sup>115</sup> who thought they could help the grief-stricken, starving, sensitive artist, and whom he thought he could mentor (Hutchisson 180-82). Creating even more controversy, hence more sales, Poe continued his attacks on Longfellow. After another defense of plagiarism from Outis appeared in the *Mirror*, Poe followed with five articles in the *Broadway Journal*, approximately fifty pages of print attacking Outis’s stance (Silverman 252). Briggs did not like the attacks but acknowledged the increase in sales. Finally Poe went too far in his attacks, calling Longfellow’s work “worthless” or “commonplace” and labeling

the man “a pampered pedantic” (qtd. in Silverman 254) while also praising Longfellow’s talent.

At the same time Poe was revising his earlier tales to fill the pages of the *Broadway Journal*. Hayes believes that Poe used his own tales because he did not want “to compromise his standards by accepting amateurish contributions” (Poe 141). But Poe was also planning to collect his tales in one volume to show his “versatility” (Hayes, Poe 141) and thought he could display his tales in the issues of the *Broadway Journal*. Hayes marvels, “It is heartbreaking to consider how much of his energy went into altering these already excellent tales and cobbling together this mediocre hodgepodge of a magazine when he was near the peak of his creative powers, when he could have been writing new short stories” (Poe 141).

As Poe worked long hours, “as poor now as ever I was in my life” (*Letters* I: 286), stress at work and at home may have made him miss deadlines. Some issues of the *Broadway Journal* went to press with empty spaces in them, and some reviews were filled with lengthy excerpts of the books being reviewed (Hutchisson 186). By one account, Poe had “puffed” a southern journal in the *Broadway Journal*, but Briggs had no problem with that, for he had begun “to initiate ideological clashes between North and South” (Hutchisson 187). What bothered Briggs was the change in Poe’s work; it was no longer independent nor literary: “He was put off by Poe’s drinking, and had come to think his critical

writing grudging and mechanical, a hunt for grammatical and prosodic errors little different from mere proofreading" (Silverman 272).

Briggs had wanted to fire Poe for some time, but instead, through maneuverings of Poe and Bisco, pulled out of the magazine as did Bisco by October (Silverman 274). Excited at first, Poe placed his name on the masthead October 25, 1845, as sole proprietor and editor, but he was broke, had an ill wife and had never been manager of a business. By the first of December, Poe sold half interest to Thomas Lane, but neither man was able to pull the magazine out of debt. By the end of December Poe sold the magazine to Lane, who ended the *Broadway Journal* the next month (A. Quinn 492-94).

Poe was gracious in the closing of the magazine. In his "Valedictory," he states, "Unexpected engagements demanding my whole attention, and the objects being unfulfilled so far as regards myself personally, for which the *Broadway Journal* was established, I now, as its editor, bid farewell—as cordially to foes as to friends" (qtd. in Allen 190). Arthur Quinn notes that "lack of capital" was more than likely the main reason for the end of the magazine, yet is amazed that Poe could not have known that "a magazine must lose money at first, if it is to win eventually" (495). Poe had tried to raise money by writing letters, giving lectures,<sup>116</sup> and associating with other literary people,<sup>117</sup> but he was not a good businessman. Poe, in a January 1846 letter (postscript) to Mrs. Hale, reflected that the *Broadway Journal* "had fulfilled its destiny—which was a matter of no great moment. I have never regarded it as more than a temporary adjunct to



other designs. I am now busy making arrangements for the establishment of a Magazine which offers a wide field for literary ambition" (*Letters* II: 312).

Still in need of an income, Poe continued to write. He was, for example, resurrecting the "Marginalia" series by May 1846, now published in *Graham's*, "on topics that varied from credulity and penance, to Longfellow and Carlyle" (A. Quinn 500). Poe also published one of his best critical pieces, "The Philosophy of Composition,"<sup>118</sup> detailing the steps he used to compose "The Raven."

From May through October 1846, Poe contributed a series to *Godey's Lady's Magazine* entitled the "Literati of New York City. Some Honest Opinions at Random Respecting their Autorial [sic] Merits, with Occasional Words of Personality." This series of thirty-eight sketches, "from five hundred to five thousand words" each, gave Poe's opinion on some obscure, some moderately known, and some famous authors, all of whom were "people whom Poe had worked with, written for, or competed against" (Hutchisson 196-97). Hutchisson laments that the series only created more controversy, more animosity toward Poe, and "siphoned off whatever creative energy Poe might have been able to direct toward quality fiction and poetry writing" (197). Poe quit the series in December, stating in a letter to a friend, "You will see that I have discontinued the 'Literati' in Godey's Mag. I was forced to do so, because I found that people insisted on considering them elaborate criticisms when I had no other design than critical *gossip*" (*Letters* II: 332). After his wife Virginia died in January 1847

and after he recovered from a six-month illness, Poe focused on his dream since 1839 of publishing his own magazine.

### Poe's Plans for *Penn Magazine* and *The Stylus*

During all the years that Poe wrote fiction, poetry, essays, reviews, and features for magazines and held various editorial positions, he "was never forgetful of his project for a magazine of his own" (A. Quinn 369). As early as September 1839, he had written, "As soon as fate allows I will have a Magazine of my own—and will endeavor to kick up a dust" (*Letters I*: 119). In June 1840, he printed an advertisement for his new endeavor in the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*, expecting to get enough financial backing to publish the first issue the following January: "Prospectus of the *Penn*<sup>119</sup> *Magazine*, a monthly literary journal, to be edited and published in the city of Philadelphia, by Edgar A. Poe"<sup>120</sup> (A. Quinn 306).

Two fellow writers agreed that Poe's own magazine was a good idea. James Russell Lowell thought that Poe's magazine would easily equal *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*: "Had Mr. Poe the control of a magazine of his own, in which to display his critical abilities, he would have been as autocratic, ere this, in America, as Professor Wilson<sup>121</sup> has been in England; and his criticisms, we are sure, would have been far more profound and philosophical than those of the Scotsman" (Allen 172-73). Nathaniel Parker Willis

acknowledged that if only someone would give Poe the money to write, the world would be a better place (Brucoli).

Although Poe worked to obtain subscriptions and contributors, illness prevented him from publishing his inaugural issue of *Penn* in January 1841; a bank panic and national financial crisis interfered with his plans to publish in March 1841 (Hayes, *Poe* 97, 101). During this period George Graham expressed an interest in Poe's venture if Poe could secure sufficient subscribers. Poe became Graham's literary editor at *Graham's Magazine* and wrote many letters<sup>122</sup> soliciting subscribers: "Mr. George R. Graham, of this City, and myself, design to establish a Monthly Magazine, upon certain conditions—one of which is the procuring your assistance in the enterprise" (*Letters* I: 161, 163, 168).

In June 1841 Poe also approached his friend John Pendleton Kennedy about his plans and asked him to contribute to the magazine. Writing in June, Poe noted that he hardly need call Kennedy's "attention to the signs of the times in respect to magazine literature. You will admit that the tendency of the age lies in this way—so far at least as regards the lighter letters." He also suggested that the "brief, the terse, the condensed, and the readily circulated will take the place of the diffuse, the ponderous, and the inaccessible" (*Letters* I: 164). In the same letter, Poe laid out his plan for his magazine, commenting that Graham will be assisting. *Penn* will be "an octavo of 96 pages," with paper "of excellent quality"; "always new" type, "clear, and bold, with distinct face"; "one column," "broad margins"; "no engravings, except occasionally wood cuts (by Adams) when

demanded in obvious illustration of the text"; and "stitching . . . in the French style" (*Letters* I: 164). Contributions—including Kennedy's he trusts—will be only "from the most distinguished pens (of America) exclusively" (*Letters* I: 164-65) and the most original: "a vigorous independence shall be my watchword still—truth, not so much for truth's sake, as for the sake of the novelty of the thing" (*Letters* I: 164). Poe hoped to "engage the permanent service of yourself, Mr. Irving, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Paulding, Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Bryant, Mr. Halleck, Mr. Willis, and one or two others" (*Letters* I: 164). Poe asked Kennedy for his contributions for a one-year term as he would ask the other contributors. He concluded the letter with the guarantee that Graham would be supplying materials, Poe the editorial know-how and list of subscribers, and the two would split the profits.

Poe wanted to attract readers who had known him as editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, but considered the reading audience to be "the world at large" (A. Quinn 307). The criticism in his magazine would have the same independent spirit, no puffing, as in the *Messenger*, but would perhaps be less harsh. Poe would strictly adhere to "the rules of art" (A. Quinn 307) while the magazine "would take for its domain literature alone" (Silverman 160). Promising "versatility, originality, and pungency," Poe would enable his contributors to "develop their own unique voices" (Hayes, *Poe* 88). He also would give his magazine an elite look, not simply of fine paper and embellishments, but

of size: "a half-volume of about five hundred pages at a cost of five dollars a year" (Silverman 160).

By July 1841, a discouraged Poe, still without adequate funding, seemed determined to quit the laborious and frustrating grind of magazine work: "To coin one's brain into silver, at the nod of a master, is to my thinking, the hardest task in the world" (*Letters I*: 172). Just two months later, he seemed to have doubts about Graham's backing when he wrote to Joseph Snodgrass, asking if there were any publisher in Baltimore who might want to back his project (*Letters I*: 183).

After Poe resigned from *Graham's*, he watched over his ill young wife and endeavored to make money<sup>123</sup> at the same time, soliciting contributors for his own not-yet-published magazine. He had almost found partners several times,<sup>124</sup> and by early 1843 he signed an agreement with Thomas C. Clarke to publish his magazine, now titled *The Stylus*.<sup>125</sup> Poe and Clarke signed with O. C. Darley for illustrations at \$7 apiece (A. Quinn 370). Poe was thinking, not in terms of a commercial venture, but of a literary one, with the initial issue including "a series of *Critical and Biographical Sketches of American Writers*" to be "accompanied with full length and characteristic portraits" (A. Quinn 376). These sketches would continue Poe's original autography series and reflect Poe's interest in creating his own American literary history.

Despite his efforts to obtain subscribers in Washington,<sup>126</sup> even to obtain a government appointment for an income, and despite his attempt to buy the

subscription list from the heirs of the late editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, Poe was unable to obtain adequate funding. Poe and Clarke hoped to attract subscribers when Clarke's mammoth weekly, the Philadelphia *Saturday Museum*, ran some advance publicity for the *The Stylus* in February 1843, including a full biography and portrait of Poe (Hayes, *Poe* 119). Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had been convinced to contribute a piece at a discounted \$5 a page for the first issue scheduled for July 1843, had an unproductive summer and withdrew. Finally, Clarke himself dissolved the partnership and withdrew his financial backing. As Poe informed Lowell, the plans were again put on hold "through the imbecility, or rather through the idiocy of my partner" (A. Quinn 384). In March 1844, Poe asked Lowell to form a coalition of "the elite of our men of letters" to back *The Stylus*, "a well-founded Monthly Journal, of sufficient ability, circulation, and character, to control, and so give tone to, our Letters" (*Letters* I: 247). Poe's plan was to have each member "take a share of the stock at \$100 a share" (*Letters* I: 265). Each member would contribute an article a month; there would be no cost for contributions. The group would form a constitution and elect an editor. Contributions would be guaranteed to be of the highest quality, and "Plates, of course, would be disdained" (*Letters* I: 265). Poe was committed to his original purpose: "to elevate without stupefying our literature" (*Letters* I: 265).

In November 1844, Poe wrote a letter introducing himself and asking for help with starting up *The Stylus* to Charles Anthon, whom he considered one of

the country's most distinguished classical scholars. Poe sent one of his tales and offered his experience as proof the new magazine would be of the highest quality. Poe pointed to the fact that he had "written no books," but had been an editor, "essentially a 'Magazinish,'" suffering "willingly but cheerfully" the "sad poverty & the thousand consequent ills" that "the condition of the mere Magazinish entails upon him in America" (*Letters* I: 270). Because a magazinist's articles appeared in many magazines, a collection did not exist of the totality of a magazinist's writings and he might be misjudged. Poe estimated that in addition to his criticisms and poetry, he had written sixty-six tales<sup>127</sup> that would fill five "ordinary novel volumes" (*Letters* I: 271).

In January 1849, Poe once again found financial support for his magazine. A Poe admirer and an editor from Oquawka, Illinois, Edward H. N. Patterson "offered to publish a national magazine with Poe as sole editor" (Hayes, *Poe* 160). Patterson tried to persuade Poe to lower the price of his magazine to \$3, but Poe refused, explaining that "no *cheap* Magazine can ever again prosper in America. We must aim high—address the intellect—the higher classes—of the country (with reference, also, to a certain amount of foreign circulation) and put the work at \$5" (*Letters* II: 440). Patterson and Poe agreed to work together and Poe planned a journey to Illinois, lecturing and securing more subscribers on the trip. The two never met. By early October Poe was dead.

For most of his adult life, Poe was a magazinist who vowed to create his own magazine or die trying: "'The Stylus':—this is the one great purpose of my

literary life. Undoubtedly (unless I die) I will accomplish it" (*Letters II: 330*). In the year he died, Poe had written to his friend Frederick Thomas that he did not regret his choice of professions: "Literature is the most noble of professions. In fact, it is about the only one fit for a man. For my own part, there is no seducing me from the path. I shall be *a litterateur*, at least, all my life" (*Letters II: 427*). He was, too. Writing for magazines was never his plan. Nevertheless, the magazines enabled Poe to develop as a writer and theorist of short fiction.



## Chapter Five

### A Comparison of *Graham's Magazine* of April 1841 and *Graham's Magazine* of April 1842

Frank Luther Mott calls the period between 1825 and 1850 the beginning of the magazine era, given the “variety, exuberance, and abundance of the magazines and papers” (Mott I: 525). Yet the *Democratic Review* declared in 1845, “We have not yet caught the true magazine spirit” (qtd. in Mott I: 500), that is, “the ability to present important content in an attractive form” (Mott I: 500). Instead, Mott suggests, in most magazines “articles on important subjects were stilted and heavy, and the lighter writing was too frequently inclined to be sentimental and jejune” (Mott I: 500).

With the advent of the magazines also came the rise of magazinists (Mott I: 524), both those catering to popular taste for the sentimental and didactic and those suffering “popular neglect” and poverty because they sought to define a different, “a high standard” in literature (Current-Garcia 60). Poe was clearly among the latter group—as his plans for *The Stylus* attest.

## The Public's Taste for the Sentimental and Didactic

Mott lists *Graham's Magazine* under the category of general monthly magazines, or "monthly magazines of general literature" (I: 343, 348). He notes that the monthly magazines were related to the women's magazines that "led all their competition a merry chase, forcing some of the merely masculine periodicals to print fashion plates and household hints" (I: 348). Perhaps that is why at one time Graham chose to name his magazine *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine*. The women's magazines—including perhaps the period's "most prominent" (I: 351), *Godey's Lady's Book*, begun in 1840 with the merging of Louis A. Godey's *The Lady's Book*, founded in 1830, and Sarah Josepha Hale's<sup>128</sup> *Ladies' Magazine*, founded in 1828—had as their purpose to promote and educate women and were "thick with sentimentality, pathos, and banality" (Mott I: 351). Although many of the major authors of the period wrote for *Godey's* at one time or another, "Sentimentality, which infected the literature of the time pretty generally anyway, was fulsome in the *Lady's Book*" (Mott I: 587). Mott states that in imitating *Godey's* at one time, *Graham's* became "half a women's magazine." *Peterson's Ladies' National Magazine*, started by Charles J. Peterson and Mrs. Ann S. Stephens (former *Graham's* editors) in 1842, and the *Columbian Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine*, started in 1844, were both so similar, according to Poe, that "if the covers were changed it would not be easy to distinguish one from the other" (Mott I: 352). Indeed all four magazines

mentioned—*Graham's*, *Godey's*, *Peterson's*, and the *Columbian Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine*—were similar in content and readership, an 1840 *Graham's* issue, for example, publishing “tales which were a bit sensational, dealing with love, American adventure, the Orient, and so on, along with poetry, a little travel, and entertaining book reviews.” However, by the following year *Graham's* “forged far ahead . . . in respect of literary value and illustration” (Mott I: 346).

Readers of the hundreds of magazines available in the 1840s looked forward each month to new issues and new tales, commonly of the “standard sentimental tale of the Godey-Peterson type” (Mott I: 420), even though as early as 1832, an author like Oliver Wendell Holmes had protested “against the rambling, sentimentalized, moralizing fiction of the ‘twenties and the ‘thirties . . . to plead for the pointed, shortened, compact form of story-telling” (qtd. In Pattee 77). One of the authors of “homeborn and honest tales,” Caroline Kirkland, still observed in 1845 that “9/10 of the magazine stories, so popular among us, have nothing to do with this life, and no references to that which is beyond it,” calling the tales “vapid and valueless” (qtd. in Mott I: 420). The tales were sometimes called “forlorn orphans” because they were not typically reviewed as were the more popular novels or thin volumes of poetry. Mott notes that Edgar Allan Poe may have been the one reviewer who did evaluate the short tale. Despite the fact that the sentimental and didactic tales were appreciated and anticipated by the readers of the popular magazines, for all but Poe and a

few other serious writers, they were “considered a kind of mongrel in literature, of no particular breed or lineage” (Mott I: 419).

By 1841, exceptions to the vapid sentimental tale which Kirkland observed were seen, however, in one of the most popular and respected magazines of the day, *Graham’s Magazine*, a magazine that Frank Luther Mott describes as brilliant, in fact more brilliant than most magazines in that era and in the history of American magazines (Mott I: 344). Poe’s seventeen-year career in the magazine field helped to shape his writing and thinking about short fiction; and beginning as literary editor in 1841, he had clear goals for what a magazine should be: varied, original, and independent in “literary opinions and conduct” (*Letters I*: 154). In addition, now in his early thirties, working for George R. Graham and *Graham’s Magazine* enabled Poe for the first time to experiment with his fiction because he had the luxury of more time and freedom from financial worry.

Poe’s evaluation of the literature of the day was complex. He did not take issue with the sentimental as such, unless it was formulaic, excessive, effusive, or frivolous. Perhaps, like Jane Tompkins, he realized that a sentimental text could examine “the nature of power” (160) in an attempt to “redefine the social order” (xi). Perhaps he recalled the eighteenth-century literature of sensibility with “both manly virtue” and “benevolent motherhood” and found a “locus of feeling” within “the domestic realm” (Chapman 3). He was, however, disgusted by imitation, the commonplace, the “cant of the day” (*Letters I*: 58). As Hayes

writes, when Poe was against sentimentalism, it was because sentimentalism's "conventions had become clichés" (Poe 55). The expression most often associated with Poe's judgment of much of the literature of his day is "namby-pamby," a phrase that he used in several of his letters and reviews. Often attributing namby-pambyism to the blue-stockings, in his April 1841 review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* in *Graham's*, Poe describes namby-pambyism as arising from imitation, frivolity, effusion, a lack of polish, ineptitude of detail, "blue-blazing melodramaticisms; a nauseating surfeit of low miniature copying of low life" (254). Poe was also opposed to didacticism, overt moralizing, and self-righteousness; his emphasis upon the subtle and suggestive even led him to criticize the allegorical.

This chapter will examine two issues of *Graham's Magazine*, one year apart, to observe the kinds of content usually included in the magazines of the day: first, in the issue published two months after Poe joined the staff and second, in the issue published twelve months later, after Poe had been on the staff for fourteen months. Two works of short fiction will be examined in each issue, a sentimental tale by Emma Catherine Embury, a successful writer and acquaintance of Poe, and a story by Poe as, less than a decade before his death, he continues his attempt to define a new genre, characterized by brevity, tight structure, unity or totality of effect, and verisimilitude, but, above all, by imagination, originality, complexity, suggestiveness, and precise thought with an air of simplicity.

### *Graham's Magazine* April 1841

*Graham's Magazine*--formed by Graham's 1840 merging of the *Casket* and *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*--was published in two volumes a year, six issues a volume, from January to June, and July to December. April 1841 was the fourth issue of Volume XVIII, the fifth issue published by George Graham and perhaps the first issue on which Poe, who had been hired in February, served as literary editor. The April issue of *Graham's Magazine*, Volume XVIII, number 4, is fifty-nine pages long (pages 146 to 205), with small print, two columns per page, one thousand words per page. Unfortunately the cover and first illustration are gone from the only available microfilm copy and also from the online Harvard University-owned volume accessible through Google, a situation that often occurred since contemporaneous readers would remove the front cover to get to the illustration that could be framed.

The April 1841 issue, following the format of previous issues, alternated prose and poetry, closing with sheet music, a few reviews, and an illustration. According to the *Graham's* January to June 1841 index, the April issue opened with an illustration entitled "He Comes," now missing. The fifty-nine pages include chapters of two serials and seven tales: two love stories covering nine pages, one tale and four chapters of a serial; four didactic stories covering eleven pages, three tales and Part III of a four-part serial; a thirteen-page detective tale by Poe in the middle of the issue; one nostalgic tale of six pages;

and one travel tale of four pages. Other genres include ten poems—all inserted between tales, appearing on nine different pages, covering four and one-half pages; a one-page sports essay; three pages of sheet music for “Oh Gentle Love”; six book reviews—five-page and two-page reviews by Poe and four brief (two or fewer paragraphs) reviews, probably by reviewers or editors of the former *Casket* (Hull 10); and a full-page fashion illustration by Sartain. Of the ten prose pieces—chapters of two serials, seven tales, and a sports essay—there are seven male authors, two female authors, and one author not identified, with the nostalgic and the didactic tales being by the female authors. Of the nine works of fiction, the two love tales, a didactic tale, and a nostalgic tale all end with marriage. Of the three didactic tales and one didactic serial, two end with death, one with a warning about the retribution that falls upon the avaricious. Six of the works of fiction have third-person narrators; three have first-person, one being Poe’s detective tale. Poe’s is the only tale in which the first-person narrator is also a character in the story.

Of the ten poems placed between the prose pieces, six are about love or a yearning for love or home, four on nature: two on the beauty of winter, one on spring rain, and one in which the speaker sees himself as a leaf, feather, flower, or tree. Five poems are rhyming couplets, from fourteen to forty lines long. Four use an abab rhyme scheme, ranging from four to twelve quatrains. “A Winter Scene,” the last poem before the sheet music, is fifty-four lines long, with no rhyme scheme. There are six male poets and four female, with four love poems

by males, two by females, two poems about nature by males, two by females. The poems appear to be placed in the magazine randomly as filler between the prose pieces, chosen then by length rather than subject or theme.

It is predictable that an 1841 magazine would open with the chapters of a serial like "The Lady Isabel," complete with unrequited love and war heroes and reflecting the sentimental style of the time: "And mournful were Lorraine's thoughts as he gazed. What was honor, or rank, or wealth to him, since they brought him not Isabel?" (148). The now-missing illustration that began the issue might be the reason this serial began the issue; Graham was extraordinarily proud of his illustrations, especially ones that connected to tales. *Graham's* magazine was known as a fine illustrated general magazine, and sometimes Graham advertised *Graham's* as a magazine of literature and art (never the fine literary magazine that Poe craved). Following "The Lady Isabel," the first poem in the issue is John Kearsley Mitchell's<sup>129</sup> "The Brilliant Nor-West," glorifying the Northwestern wind, mountains, heath, and streams in rhyming couplets and apparently bearing no relationship to the illustration or the serial.

What is not predictable is the appearance in the center of the issue of Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," at thirteen pages<sup>130</sup> the longest story in the issue, almost double that of other tales, and considered by many the precursor to the detective tale, a new genre. "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (discussed in detail later in the chapter) opens with a discussion of the art of phrenology. There are neither fair damsels or wretched souls nor an intrusive



narrator in the first paragraphs to begin a sentimental tale. Although the murder that occurred before the story opens was sensational and gruesome, the first-person narrator, a confidante to the most excellent detective, C. August Dupin, calmly describes the brilliant and "godlike" investigative powers of Dupin to "dull-witted" readers (Asarch 88).

However, before the reader has turned to Poe's piece at the center of the issue, five tales on the subjects and in the style popular during the 1840s have appeared, interspersed with poems also appealing to readers' tastes: all exhibit what Mott calls "sentimentality, pathos, and banality." The first tale, following the four chapters of the serial, is "Our Bill," by Mrs. Lambert, a pleasing, nostalgic anecdote about an industrious man seeking to earn enough money to deserve his girl. The intrusive narrator closes the tale with the reflection "For my own part, I love to think over the past, for many a pleasing idea is connected with the reminiscences of 'Huckleberry' wood, and 'Our Bill.'" The next piece of short fiction is Reverend J. Kennaday's "Unequally Yoked," opening with the narrator's observation of a woman, babe in arms, climbing a mountain, badgered by her hard-hearted husband. The didactic piece ends with the narrator's admonition to young girls: "in some of the scenes of poverty and suffering, there are those often who spend years of pain in weeping over the inadvertence of the hour in which their affections were misplaced" (158). The third tale, Mrs. Emma C. Embury's "Self Devotion" (discussed in detail later in chapter), begins with a discussion of the differences between men and women and about whether

chivalry exists in the nineteenth century before relating the story of a woman of extraordinary selflessness. The final didactic tale before Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" is John T. Maull's "The Defaulter," a story that begins with "the beautiful season of youth"; within a page and a half George Morris marries, has children, works and cheats his way to riches, is dismissed from his bank position, flees the country, suffers terrible guilt, hears of his wife's death, and dies of a fever.

Between the tales are poems of pain and grief, such as "A Slighted Woman," by Poe's friend Frederick William Thomas, with the lines "How soon a slighted woman learns/To hide that pang, however deep" (156), and Mrs. M. S. Dana's "A Picture," describing the yearning of a woman wandering ghostlike to find those she loves (158), or poems focused upon painful memories, such as Mrs. C. H. W. Esling's "Old Memories." Nature poems, like E. Clementine Stedman's "A Winter Scene" or Alex A. Irvine's "An April Day" emphasize the loveliness of nature: countless snowflake "jewels" hanging "on numberless stems" (163), "a thousand rain-drops" glistening "bright" (179). Only the final poem has no rhyme scheme, Lydia Jane Pierson's glorification of a winter scene, entitled, like Stedman's poem thirty pages earlier, "A Winter Scene."

After Poe's story, that stands apart in subject, theme, and style from the other tales and poems—many of which Poe might have described as commonplace or imitative—the content continues with genres typical of early-nineteenth century magazines: stories of travel, love, and morality, followed by a

sports essay and illustration. The travel tale<sup>131</sup>—typical of all magazines of the period, according to Mott (I: 422)—is “The Reefer of ’76,” “by the author of ‘Cruising in the Last War’” (180), that is, Charles Jacobs Peterson<sup>132</sup>: a story of the sea, complete with a harsh purser, lovelorn sailor, mutiny, fog, storm at sea, and happy ending. “The Outlaw Lover,” a love tale by J. H. Dana that follows, describes the young, innocent, and sheltered Margaret, who falls in love with an unknown hunter who saves her in the woods, turns out to be an earl, and becomes Margaret’s “titled husband, the unknown OUTLAW LOVER” (188). The last story in the section is Part III of J. Ross Browne’s didactic serial “The Confessions of a Miser,” in which a wretched elderly man, suffering the “effects of avarice” (191), describes a life in which he has gained and lost money through gambling, offered his daughter to a rich man for money, murdered his daughter’s husband, and loses his daughter through childbirth. A sports article on how to shoot partridge and sheet music for a sentimental song—two typical genres—close the section.

As is usual in the magazines of the day, the last section of the issue includes reviews. The first is a five-page review of Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s *Night and Morning*, in which Poe acknowledges the novel’s complexity but states that it lacks unity of plot and originality. His emphasis consistently in his criticism is on plot as “that in which no part can be displaced without ruin to the whole” (198). The second is a one-page review of a collection of sketches of living authors by R. M. Walsh, that both puffs the writer and critiques the grammar and word

choice. The final four reviews, attributed by Hull to *Casket* reviewers, are short and usually positive.

The final page, the only illustration intact in the microfilm copy of the magazine, is an engraving of four ladies in high fashion by Graham's exclusive engraver, John Sartain. None of the ladies are looking at the reader, but the lady in the center shows the entire front of her dress; the other ladies on both sides of her are looking away and displaying only a portion of their dresses. The Index indicates that from January to June 1841, twelve hand-colored steel engravings were in the six issues, a predictable Graham pattern, with one of the engravings probably at the beginning of each issue. The issues all end with a fashion engraving of a varying number of ladies: January, three; February, four; March, three; April, four; May, seven; June, three.

#### Genres of Short Fiction 1841

Embury, "Self Devotion"

Robert Marler explains, in "From Tale to Short Story: The Emergence of a New Genre in the 1850s," that "despite the absence of conscious classification"—the phrase "short story" was not established until late in the nineteenth century—a "critical separation" of "two genres was in process" by the 1850s" (156). However, that change had begun much earlier, in Poe's reviews and short fiction; and it is not surprising that when Poe became a literary editor at

*Graham's Magazine* in 1841, *Graham's* began to illustrate the differences emerging in short fiction. Its April issue includes Emma Catherine Embury's sentimental tale, "Self Devotion: A Sketch from Real Life," and Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue." Embury's "Self Devotion" was the kind of tale 1841 readers of *Graham's* would have anticipated; Poe's story would have puzzled many of them. As George Eveleth<sup>133</sup> wrote, in a December 1845 letter to Evert Duyckinck, published in 1922, at first Poe's tales were "very perplexities, very enigmas which I could not unravel" (qtd. in Mabbott 4).

Embury<sup>134</sup> was a successful sentimental author whose intention, in her own words, was "to illustrate in a simple and pleasing manner, some of the most important lessons of early education." She declared that she "employed no polish of style" and "sought no literary distinction" ("Emma Catherine Embury"); but she became a popular, successful writer, welcomed as a contributor by magazines, serving on magazine boards, and even becoming one of *Graham's* literary editors (Mott I: 544) as she published several novels, books of instruction, a collection of poetry, and many tales.<sup>135</sup> The fact that she was well known and moved in the same literary circles as Poe led to their friendship and Poe praised Embury's work in his "Autography" series,<sup>136</sup> begun in 1836 for the *Southern Literary Messenger* to satisfy the public's desire for autographs from their favorite authors, and continued in December 1841 and January 1842 for *Graham's Magazine*.

Self Devotion: A Sketch from Real Life" is a sentimental tale, framed by a conversation between cousins, Frank and Grace, in which Grace makes subtle distinctions between the nature of men and women, refusing to accept Frank's idea of the "passive nature" of woman, his belief that "Men *make* sacrifices—women *suffer* them" (159). Grace argues that women too make sacrifices, with the difference being the theory of separate spheres—men operate in the public world, women in the private—that was being defined early in the nineteenth century. The two also disagree about the role of chivalry in the nineteenth century: Frank argues that "selfishness existed, but was not so widely diffused" in the period of Richard the Lion Hearted as it is in the "dull and prosaic" world of the nineteenth century; Grace maintains that "there is no lack of the true chivalric spirit" in their own period. Grace tries to persuade Frank that "Disinterestedness, self-devotion, purity of intention, integrity of principle, delicacy of sentiment, a high-toned sense of honor, and indomitable courage"—all qualities of the chivalric—can be exercised in many areas of life in the nineteenth century; and Frank agrees to let Grace tell him the story of a woman in their own time who has both displayed chivalric qualities and actively made sacrifices in her life, subduing the "strongest passions of her nature" out of selflessness (160).

Grace then tells the story of Fanny Milbank, a beautiful, delicate, gentle young woman who "never seemed to think of herself," but "managed for every body, ministered to the comfort of every body, and took her share of enjoyment

in beholding the gratification of others" (160). Although Fanny falls deeply in love with William Grey as a young woman and the two plan several times to marry, each time she, as the eldest child, sacrifices her happiness for the needs of her family: her "good-hearted, thoughtless" father unable to adequately support or care for his family well into old age (159), her sickly mother who dies, her growing brothers, and her invalid sister, Mary. She ministers to each as needed; she labors as a seamstress to support the family. Fanny had "to make her own heart the victim rather than heap heavier burdens" upon William, "with whom the world had already dealt hardly" (162). Not until she is in her forties does Fanny's life change—medical care improves Mary's health and "Constant employment" relieves Fanny's financial worries—but, Grace emphasizes, "no human hand could bring back health to the one, or restore the blighted blossoms of hope in the bosom of the other" (162).

Embury's sentimental tale ends—like so many—with marriage, a happy Fanny married to William, his wife having died and left him with "motherless children." Frank observes, as many a reader or critic of sentimental tales might, that Fanny "was at last rewarded" (163). But Embury's sentimental tales are complex and carefully structured. Poe may have written under her Autograph in 1841, "She is one of the most nervous of our female writers"; he hopes she will "no longer hesitate to discard the absurdities of mere fashion" in her writing; he may have found her detailed descriptions of domestic life and the ideal Fanny excessive. But he also states, Embury "is not destitute of originality—the rarest

of all qualities in a woman, especially in an American woman" ("A Chapter of Autography"). Thus, the careful reader notes Embury's education as she writes about the age of chivalry and mentions Edmund Burke; the complex, sophisticated syntax and diction of her prose; the tale's thematic success in refuting Frank's arguments by illustrating chivalry in the nineteenth century as well as selflessness and active sacrifice on the part of a woman. Most significantly, Embury brilliantly clarifies the nature of Fanny's happy marriage, so often the conclusion of a commonplace sentimental tale. Grace responds to Frank's unthinking statement that Fanny is "at last rewarded," by reminding Frank that nothing could "restore the blighted blossoms of hope" in Fanny's bosom for more than twenty years: "The bloom of youth, the freshness of feeling, the glow of hope, the buoyancy of health,—all things that give a charm to life" had "faded one by one" from her life for more than two decades. The woman who in her youth would have run in delight to her loved one now marries at forty-five not out of youthful love—because she has long ago lost a kind of selfhood that would enable her to act for herself—but because once again she is needed, this time by a "lonely" William and "desolate" children. She now has the task of "educating the children of her predecessor" (163). Thus, at the end Embury places her heroine in a loving home, but refuses to ignore Fanny's losses or to romanticize the reality of Fanny's difficult, selfless life. Further, the significance of the frame structure of Embury's tale is realized as the tale closes, and Grace reveals to Frank that he is one of the grandchildren whom Fanny has



raised; Fanny is his step-mother, and the names of the story have been pseudonyms. No doubt the complexity and subtleties of Embury's tales contributed to Poe's reflection on her originality.

Poe, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"

For years, Poe had been conceptualizing and writing a different kind of tale. Like Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1832, he objected to "the rambling, sentimentalized, moralizing fiction of the 'twenties and the 'thirties"—what he called the "namby-pamby" contents of the magazines—and was moving toward the "pointed, shortened, compact form of story-telling" Holmes called for (qtd. in Pattee 77). Poe's contribution to *Graham's Magazine* in the April 1841 issue was "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," a tale of ratiocination, often called the very first detective<sup>137</sup> tale with the very first detective, C. Auguste<sup>138</sup> Dupin.<sup>139</sup>

Centered on the page in the center of the magazine, the very title of Poe's story stands out among surrounding titles, like "My Gentle Love," "The Outlaw Lover," and "Self Devotion." There is no actual street in Paris named Rue Morgue, yet Poe wants the reader to connect the words "murder" and "morgue,"<sup>140</sup> to set the location of the actual murder and to interest the reader in finding the murderer from the first word of the story (Meyers 123).

With the opening section on the powers of analysis, the art of phrenology, and Poe's emphasis upon close observation and analysis of facts, Poe has been

given credit for defining the story of ratiocination. He himself expresses some ambiguity about his achievement. He notes, on the one hand, that "These tales of ratiocination owe most of their popularity to being something in a new key" (*Letters* II: 328). But earlier Poe had written that people think the tales "more ingenious than they are—on account of their method and air of method. . . . Where is the ingenuity of unraveling a web which you yourself (the author) have woven for the express purpose of unraveling?" (*Letters* I: 328). The significance of the tales to Poe-the-theorist is clear, however; as Silverman points out, the tale of ratiocination was a natural progression in Poe's writing. Because Poe created the circumstances of the murder in advance, he wrote the story backwards, a perfect example of the strategy he discussed as assuring unity of effect. "No other kind of fiction," Silverman explains, "illustrated so clearly the writer's need to choose from the beginning some one outcome or effect, and to adapt every element of the narrative to it. In a larger sense all of Poe's stories are tales of ratiocination" (172).

By setting the story in Paris, Poe creates an "urban note" at a time when crime is on the rise in America (Silverman 172) and establishes a "pattern of the genre for all successive mystery writers" (Hutchisson 114). Poe announces the crime in "Murders" in the same way that most citizens became aware of crime: in the newspaper (A. Quinn 311). The narrator and Dupin are reading a newspaper when the article "Extraordinary Murders" catches their attention. Poe also shows his full awareness of the interest readers had in the sensational even as he

creates a new genre. American citizens had no police forces yet to protect them, no detectives to solve crimes, but they had many “penny dreadfuls” detailing horrid yet realistic brawls, burglaries, and murders. Poe’s contemporaries, sensationalists like George Lippard<sup>141</sup> and George Thompson, “enjoyed immense popularity because their fiction openly projected the common reader’s most savage impulses and fantasies”; Poe attacked these very qualities in his critical reviews. However, using “the tools of the rabble” without “soiling his hands with them” (Reynolds 230), Poe lays out the specifics of the murder of two women, Madame L’Espanaye and her daughter Camille L’Espanaye, who had resided in a fourth-floor apartment.

With the sensational, Poe also appeals to the taste among *Graham’s* readers for the domestic and sentimental. “Sallying forth at night into Paris, the narrator and Dupin seek matter for observation” in the dangerous streets of Paris (Silverman 172); thus, they consider an urban, grotesque murder. But at the same time the two first met in an obscure library, while searching for the same rare book; became friends and then roommates for the summer; and live in “cozy and exclusive seclusion”—much as Poe does in his own life. In fact, Silverman notes, that much of Poe’s fiction—even the gothic and bizarre—mirrors a kind of domesticity, the “culturally-feminine values endorsed in the sickliest sentimental fiction of his day, upholding them much as he did in his own life” (173).

Poe's personal distaste for the sensational is also clear in the story. The murder of the two women, Madame de L'Esplanade<sup>142</sup> and Mistress L'Esplanade,<sup>143</sup> has already occurred; the story is not a chronological one beginning with a tranquil scene broken by the dastardly actions of a newly arrived evil protagonist. It is sensational only because of the circumstances of the murder, not because of a graphic description of the act of murder itself. In addition, no one is described crying over the murders; no one is crying for mercy for the murdered victims.<sup>144</sup> True, the innocent victims are found in gruesome positions, one pushed up a chimney with a cut throat, the other sprawled in the outside courtyard, with bones broken from being hurled from the second-story window. But these images are not the focus. Instead, Dupin and the narrator calmly read the account in a newspaper and then view the scene later. Because the detective calmly and logically follows his instincts and inferences to uncover the murderer, the reader also--calmly and logically—uses his intelligence not his emotions in following the line of thinking of August Dupin throughout the story. Poe does, however, include police interviews of twelve witnesses as an enticement to readers who like to read about sensational crimes or who may have an interest in police tactics.

Three columns of the 1841 version of "Murders" consider the human power of analysis and its importance and rarity in the development of an individual, with the introduction of the superanalytic Dupin, the actual story of the murder and its investigation not beginning until the second page, fourth

column of the story. Poe's narrator argues that analysis employs not just "calculating and discriminating" powers but imaginative powers, even intuition. A comparison of the game of chess to the game of draughts<sup>145</sup> would appeal to readers with gambling tendencies, interested in looking for clues on how to win, but also enables Poe to make the distinction between the pure knowledge and skill needed to be successful at chess and the power of observation and inferences needed to be successful at draughts. The reader has no alternative but to accept the fact that the true skill of analysis is not typical and to be excited with "wonder at the mental alertness" of Poe's detective (A. Quinn 310). This detective has two qualities that Poe prized: the ability to solve puzzles and the imagination of a poet. Like Poe, who had studied math at West Point and had proved to the reading public he could solve cryptograms, Dupin "is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, hieroglyphics" (166). Like the poet Poe, Dupin "must take an imaginative leap" because "in the detective process, reason can take the detective only so far" (Hayes, *Poe* 105).

Dupin's method of observing and linking details together, even finding unconscious connections, is the key to solving the crime. Dupin uses the fact that the police cannot find a motive as a clue and goes over the scene step by step, looking for the unusual, such as the fact that no witness can positively identify the language spoken by the last visitor of the L'Esplanayes. The police, in the meantime, erroneously look only at facts and cannot conceptualize the unusual or see the whole picture. As Charles May indicates, policemen and readers must

learn to "look at [Poe] mysteries in a 'side-long way,' that is, indirectly, the way one must often look at a literary text" (*Edgar* 88). "Poe wishes to illustrate," according to May, "one of the key factors of the detective story: that to try to solve the mystery by postulating the usual is futile" (*Edgar* 89). However, this looking for the unusual is not just a tactic of detective fiction; it is also critical to Poe's theories of great art, with his emphasis upon the original, the novel, and the suggestive. That the police cannot solve the crime and that the murderer turns out to be an animal, an Ourang-Outang,<sup>146</sup> not a usual suspect, confirm that readers of fine fiction, detective or not, cannot expect the usual or ordinary (*May, Edgar* 89). In Poe the actual or real must always be limitless in possibilities. May defines what some might find the apparent contradictions of the fictional form Poe advocates: "although the form requires careful control and method, it results in a work with a shadow of the 'mystic' or the seeming preternatural about it" (*Edgar* 87). Ironically, however, what would appear to be an outrageous element, the ourang-outang wielding a razor, would not be a surprise to Poe's audience, familiar with the popular cartoon of "an ourgangutan-barber brandishing a razor . . . a popular caricature deployed by the defenders of the American slave system to frighten Americans away from abortion and inter-racial community" (Hartmann 27).

According to E. F. Bleiler, detective fiction had been written before Poe, but it was "bumbling and inconsequential" and Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" is the single most important story in the history of the genre" ("Edgar").

Early detective fiction used many motifs that have often been erroneously attributed to Poe and his first tale of ratiocination, motifs such as the red herring,<sup>147</sup> the sealed room, the impossible crime, the fictionalization of historical crimes, bizarre subject matter, and the contrast between official and private investigators. However there were new elements of the detective tale that Poe did originate: “the stooge narrator, the eccentric detective, the complete outsider as detective, the armchair detective, reader participation in a puzzle, ratiocination or precise analytical reasoning, and a calculus of probabilities as a tool for cutting through conflicting evidence” (Bleiler).

Other significant differences in the nature of the detective genre as it evolved in “Murders” include the detective’s motives for participating in the investigation and his limited method. Dupin is not a professional and is not being altruistic; he investigates for amusement and to repay a favor that he says he owed the accused. He does not use evidence from experts or newspapers; his “method is exclusively cerebral” (Hutchisson 115). Dupin’s procedure is to emphasize unusual details—the unknown language of the voice heard at the murder scene, the placement of the body upside-down in the chimney, the brutality of the murder with no logical motive, the agility needed to escape a locked fourth-floor apartment—in his search for a suspect, in this case an unusual suspect, an orang-outang (A. Quinn 312). Further, the nature of the unusual suspect underscores Poe’s suggestion that most crimes are committed by characters with inhuman traits, in this instance an animal declares “crime as

the outbreak of the animal in man" (May, *Edgar* 89). Poe's tendency to use doubles to illustrate the two sides of man's soul may also be significant in "Murders." The word "dupin" sounds like the beginning of duping or duplicity; it could also indicate duplicate or double (Church). In fact, Hutchisson notes that both "couples"—Dupin and the narrator and the two women—live on the fourth floor of old Gothic-type houses with windows that look like eyes in an otherwise empty house or body, "suggesting that the couples live only in the mind" (117). Both couples also live alone, and neither has many visitors.

In his 1843 and 1845 revisions of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Poe tightened the text considerably and created a tale that would still have startled the readers of *Graham's* but offered them more guidance in adjusting to a new genre. The original 1841 version of "Murders" began with a discussion of the powers of analysis and the art of phrenology. Once believed to be a science, now dismissed as quackery, phrenology pointed to the quality of a person's mind in relation to the shape of the skull. Poe was very interested in the science of phrenology, as were many readers of the 1840s, although they would not have expected a discussion of the science at the opening of a tale. All across the country, phrenologists measured skulls to determine personality, searching especially for skulls that would corroborate their theories. They found that in Poe's skull. Phrenologist Nelson Sizer said of Poe's skull, "How massive in the upper part of the forehead, in the region of Reasoning! How broad in the region of the temples, where Ideality, Constructiveness and Sublimity are located!" (qtd.



in Hayes, *Poe* 95). Hayes believes that the term "ideality" entered Poe's vocabulary through phrenology and became one of the qualities he most admired. Phrenologist George Combe describes how "ideality delights in perfection from the pure pleasure of contemplating it" (qtd. in Hayes, *Poe* 93). Like Poe, Dupin has a highly developed "specific organ in the brain devoted to analysis, a power linked with ideality"; he is "constitutionally equipped to respond coolly to a horrible crime that has been sensationalized in the press and misinterpreted by more poorly endowed observers" (Reynolds 246). David Reynolds credits Poe with inventing the detective story "by taking a common popular premise—crime and its popular misinterpreters—and combining it with another powerful element from popular culture: the brain's analytical power, as defined by phrenology" (246). This technique, Reynolds argues, enabled Poe "to capitalize on popular sensational themes but at the same time to gain firm control over them and to redirect their energy in taut, economical fiction" (231).

Poe did not mean for the tale to be a discussion of the science of the skull, but did use the discussion as a springboard to the important skill of analysis that belonged to his main character, C. Auguste Dupin. When Poe revised the story for the 1843 printing of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" in a pamphlet<sup>148</sup> put out by Graham entitled *The Prose Romances* and in *Tales*, published in 1845, he cut out the entire first paragraph on the art of phrenology and some redundancies, eliminating about 359 words (Asarch 84). He wanted to prove "the existence of, rather than discussing, such an organ of analysis.

Furthermore, by removing the opening paragraph, a passive didactic beginning is transformed into an active, more energetic and forceful opening" (Asarch 85). In the revision of his tale, Poe continues toward his goals to "please" by creating lasting fiction through complex structure with a single effect and suggestiveness as well as "versatility, originality, and pungency" (*Essays* 1025).

### *Graham's Magazine* April 1842

Edgar Allan Poe had been employed by George Graham for just over a year by the spring of 1842. Their association had proved to be a successful one for *Graham's Magazine*. When he had been hired by Graham as literary editor in February 1841, Poe had looked forward to freedom from the "drudgery" of magazine layout and time to write tales and reviews at his leisure; his only other task was to solicit contributors for the magazine. The "drudgery" of "revising MSS for press and attending to the general *arrangement* of the *matter*" went to an associate editor, Charles Peterson (*Letters* I: 181). A thank-you letter to Lydia Sigourney<sup>149</sup> in November 1841 revealed Poe's success in attracting contributors: "We shall have papers from Longfellow, Benjamin,<sup>150</sup> Willis, Fay,<sup>151</sup> Herbert,<sup>152</sup> Mrs. Stephens, Mrs. Embury, Dr. Reynell Coates" and "others of nearly equal celebrity" (*Letters* I: 187). A February 1842 letter revealed Poe's pride that *Graham's* was now printing 40,000 copies, up from the 4,500 of its first issue, and more than the 30,000 of its rival *Godey's* (*Letters* I: 192). Jeffrey Meyers

declares that it was Poe who made *Graham's* a successful magazine: "Poe's innovative tales, rigorous reviews, original ideas, good taste and literary contacts soon made *Graham's* the most important and astonishingly successful magazine in America" (122).

A close look at the April 1842 issue, Poe's penultimate one with *Graham's*, shows how much the content of the magazine had changed in the year Poe had worked with Graham. Although a complete and detailed comparison can be made between the literary genres of the April 1841 and 1842 issues, the missing (destroyed) illustrations of the microfilm copy and the online 1841 issue owned by Harvard University and accessed through Google make it impossible to compare the illustrations of the issues of 1841 and 1842. The April 1842 issue, however, has an intact cover page, with *Graham's* full title, *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine*, on top, the word "magazine" in the largest and boldest type. After the title, spaced down the page are the words "embellished with" (on a single line), "The Finest Mezzotinto and Steel Engravings, Elegant Embossed Work" (in two lines), "Fashions and Music. Volume XX. Philadelphia: George R. Graham. 1842" (at the bottom of the page). The April issue (Number 4 of Volume XX) begins on page 193 and runs through page 255, a sixty-two page issue.

According to the index for the six months from January to June of 1842, there were nineteen engravings in the six issues, an average of three per issue. The microfilm version of the April 1842 issue has only the final fashion

engraving. However, the online version, a Harvard University-owned volume accessed through *Google*, includes six illustrations, three at the beginning of the issue, three at the end: the first is a black and white scene of a man with a dog meeting a woman in the woods (after hawking); the second is a small square illustration entitled "Highland Beauty," with some color, framed in yellow, of two ladies in high fashion; the third is a rectangle of embroidered lace over green background with two birds in the center. At the end of the issue, the first illustration has three figures elegantly attired, with one man in the center and a lady on either side of him; the second is a small light sketch of a beautiful lady; the third is a black and white sketch of "Centre Harbour," complete with a few men and cows, buildings on the water's edge, some trees to the side, hills in the distance and a sunlit sky; and the fourth illustration is of a grouping of men and women in high style. Graham was very proud of the embellishments, and John Sartain bragged that his engravings alone assured the magazine's success. Nevertheless, the number and nature of these fashion plates and engravings were part of the reason that Poe left *Graham's* in May 1842: "My reason for resigning was disgust with the namby-pamby character of the Magazine—a character which it was impossible to eradicate—I allude to the contemptible pictures, fashion-plates, music and love tales" (*Letters* I: 197).

*Graham's* content in April 1842 does not mirror that of the April 1841 issue. Graham may have insisted on the increased number of embellishments for the April 1842 issue, but the changes in literary content may be attributed to

both Poe and Graham, who had a comfortable working relationship. There is greater variety, one of Poe's main requirements for a quality magazine: a variety in genres and length of the prose pieces, a variety in the types and placement of poetry, and six reviews, two in the first half of the magazine despite the usual practice of placing all reviews at the end of an issue. There is also less "sentimentality, banality, and pathos" (Mott I: 351) in this rather Poesque issue and more original, innovative contributions.

The 1842 issue establishes a new literary order: a tale, a review, two tales, a poem, one section of a serial, a poem, a tale, a five-page poem, a poem, a review, a satire, two poems, a tale, a poem, a tale, a poem, a tale, three poems, one section of a serial, a poem, sheet music, four book reviews. The sixty-two pages (plus six embellishments) include sections of two serials, a satire of four pages, and seven tales: the two sentimental and didactic tales covering five pages; one love tale and the continuation of a love serial covering seven pages; one two-page gothic tale by Poe; and two travel tales and the first section of a travel serial covering twelve pages. Other genres include twelve poems that cover nine pages and appear on twelve different pages; two pages of sheet music; six book reviews—two appearing early in the issue—one five-page review, one four-page review, and two brief reviews, all by Poe, as well as one three-page review by Jeremy Short.

Of the ten prose pieces—seven tales, sections of two serials, and a satire—there are five male authors, four female authors, and one author named

"a rambling artist." The didactic tales are by one male, one female; the two gothic tales by males. The love tales are by a male, a female, and "a rambling artist"; the continuation of a serial on love is by a female. The two travel tales are by males; the beginning of a travel serial is by a female. The satire is by a male. The reviews are all Poe's except for one also by a male author. Six of the works of fiction have third-person narrators; four have first-person, one being Poe's gothic tale. Poe's and the travel-adventure story by Peterson are the only tales in which the first-person narrator is the main character in the story; the other two first-person narrators are observers in the travel tales.

Compared to the April 1841 issue, the April 1842 issue also has more variety in poetic forms. Poetry takes up parts of twelve pages. Of the twelve poems, ten are written by men, one by a woman, and one is unsigned. Six have a sentimental flavor: one is an elegy; two have no rhyme scheme; and three use an abab rhyme scheme. One nature poem uses an abab rhyme scheme. The four sonnets are on love: one on love of home, one on love of country, and two on love of art. The most sophisticated poem is five-pages, "Agathe.—A Necromant in Three Chimeras," a poem about love and loss, with stanzas of rhyming couplets.

Although the 1842 issue opens with the usual sentimental fiction, the unpredictable elements of the issue are the second entry, a review by Poe, and the third entry, a gothic tale by Poe, thus offering the reader two Poe pieces in a row—one in an unexpected position since reviews normally appear at the end of

issues, the other of an unexpected genre—and making the issue radically different from the April 1841 issue. Poe’s review is written in the first person, the plural “We,” and praises the tenderness and beauty readers appreciate in the poetry of James Russell Lowell.<sup>153</sup> The subtitle gives Poe’s view of Lowell’s poems: “A New School of Poetry at Hand” (195). Poe begins with “There is a freshness about Lowell’s Poems which bewitches our fancy. They display a genius that has startled us” (195). Using the collective we, he emphasizes two qualities he treasures in literature—freshness and genius—and adds a third—ideality. Lowell, Poe argues, “is certainly equal to any cotemporary [sic]” in the “highest” faculty “a poet can possess—we mean IDEALITY. The imagination of Lowell is of the loftiest character” (196). Poe also praises Lowell for breaking with the past, that is, the school of Byron, and being “partially” original. At the same time Poe urges Lowell to be “wholly” original (196), to avoid metaphors that border on allegory, and to improve his diction. Poe’s tale, “Life in Death,” is a short, two-page gothic story (discussed in detail later in the chapter) told in the first person from the perspective of a male character who may not be in his right mind as he views a painting in an old castle in which he has taken refuge.

The predictable part of the magazine is the inclusion of sentimental and didactic tales, usually about love, one opening the issue, another appearing as the fourth entry. What is not predictable, however, is that the two didactic tales do not end with death, the love stories and sections of serials do not end with marriage for the main characters. The first tale of the issue, Agnes Piersol’s

didactic "The Wife," begins with Emily Severn Walpole sitting at the bedside of her feverish husband, Edward Walpole, who has been a gambling man, keeping bad company. After nine days of Emily's care and prayers, Edward does not die—as would occur in a more commonplace tale. He repents, and husband and wife live a long happy life together. The second sentimental tale, the fourth prose entry ten pages into the issue, is also a story of a couple's love. A short two-page tale, "The Miner's Fate," "from the portfolio of a rambling artist" (202), is told from the perspective of a painter who happens to see a young wife lovingly send her husband off to the salt mines before overhearing her conversation with the elderly Ursula, whose betrothed, Albert Wessenberg, had died in the mines decades before. The tale ends with the recovery of the long-dead miner's perfectly preserved body. The aged Ursula kisses her betrothed, dies seven days later, and is buried with her loved one.

The issue includes only three additional sentimental stories. E. S. Gould's didactic tale, "The Duel," opens with Harry Bradford being told that the plans are final for his duel to take place the week before his wedding. In a dream that night, he meets an old man named Common Sense, who persuades him of the "good sense" and "manliness" of refusing to fight (236). Emma Embury's "The Bachelor's Experiment" (discussed in detail later in the chapter) offers the portrait of a sentimental man who enjoys domestic life but is incapable of emotional commitment. Part of a serial, "The Two Dukes," by Ann S. Stephens,<sup>154</sup> a prolific magazinist, is the last sentimental tale of the issue, a story



of intrigue, conflicts of power and love, and the lovers, Lord Dudley and Jane Seymour, separated because of family. The issue closes by Edward J. Loder's sheet music, "There's No Land Like Scotland. Ballad.," and reviews. Thus, the issue ends typically, with a sentimental story, sheet music, and reviews.

Predictably the magazine includes a travel tale, but unpredictably this issue has three travel tales. The first, the serialized "Recollections of West Point: Part I" by Miss Leslie,<sup>155</sup> reads like a journal entry written in the first person, with descriptions of the beauty of the countryside around West Point—the mountains, the streams, the flowers, and the rainbow after a rain—followed by an account of a military funeral and a reflection upon the "horrors" of warfare (209). The work is to be concluded in a later issue of *Graham's*. Dr. Reynell Coates' travel tale describes the moods of the sea in "Dreams of Land and Sea: A Night Scene at Sea," using the first person plural to speak for a group of male companions, the narrator (using the second-person pronoun) to call the reader's attention to specific details. The piece concludes with the men taking shelter in the cabin from the "angry roar" of a tropical squall (212). The final travel tale, by the author of "Reefer of '76" in the April 1841 issue, Charles Jacobs Peterson, is "Harry Cavendish: The Pirate," a traditional adventure story in which Cavendish and his men rescue a young woman, her deceased father, and slaves from pirates.

A surprising inclusion in this issue is the satire, "The Affair at Tattletown," by Epes Sargeant,<sup>156</sup> a tongue-in-cheek account of newspaper coverage in a

small town, with satiric jabs at many of the –isms and reform groups of the nineteenth-century. The first person narrator laments how the town has changed from a quiet place with beautiful belles and people content to live as their ancestors had to a place in which the citizens now know about “Grahamism,” “Fourierism,” “transcendentalism,” the “Society for the protection of everything” (221) and especially “Novelty” as “the first of charms” (222). The awakening resulted from a verbal war—“And what was the war about? To this day nobody can tell” (221)—between the two newspapers, Snobb’s conservative and Fobb’s innovative independent. Eventually rumors, reports, charges spread throughout the town—of drunkenness, highway robbery, the death of the beautiful Amanda, a duel—only to have the town discover the war of words was only a ruse, “Vive la humbug” (224). The two newspapermen leave town and are rumored to be studying animal magnetism.

Poetry in the 1842 issue of *Graham’s* is irregularly spaced and varied. The first poem, appearing ten pages into the issue, is William Wallace’s<sup>157</sup> “Birth of Freedom,” a patriotic sonnet in two columns that ends with the thought that a person’s birthplace is not on earth but in the “heart of God” (204). Other sonnets occur late in the magazine. W. W. Story has two sonnets offering testaments to art, “Michael Angelo” and “Raffaello” (241). The final sonnet, “Return from Hawking: On a Picture by Landseer,” offers a domestic scene on the bottom of the last page before the sheet music for the ballad “There’s No Land Like Scotland.”

Short sentimental poems are scattered throughout the issue, many focusing upon death, with the five-page poem about Agathe being unexpected. Albert Peck's "Fragment" is a nine-line nostalgic poem ending with the grave thought that "we are all mariners on this sea of life" and all of us end in "the great gigantic vase of death" (209); James Aldrich's "To a Spirit" is six quatrains that end with the reflection that the grave does not separate lovers for they will meet in paradise (217). "Elegy on the Fate of Jane M'Crea," by Thomas G. Spear, is an eight-stanza poem of rhyming couplets offering posthumous praise for a girl who has few left to grieve for her. In many stanzas of rhyming couplets, Louis Fitzgerald Tasistro's "Agathe.—A Necromant in Three Chimeras" describes Julio's finding his lost love dead, kissing her, and then dying with her. Agathe's father, realizing that his long-lost daughter is now dead beside her betrothed, reflects, "They rest in quiet, where they are" (217).

Three other sentimental poems vary greatly in subject and theme. G. G. Foster's "The Old Man Returned Home" is a forty-line sentimental poem with no rhyme scheme about how a man may still feel like a school boy even though he ages. Mrs. E. S. Nichols' four-stanza poem explains that spring, the mountains, and the sea are teachers. "Sweethearts and Wives," by P. N. (Pliny Earle, M.D.), three stanzas with an abab rhyme scheme, describes lovers rushing home to see sweethearts and wives.

In addition to the review on Lowell, that is—unexpectedly—the second selection in the 1842 issue, a review of Keats appears almost half way through

the issue and four additional reviews appear at the end of the issue, the section where all reviews usually appear. Jeremy Short's review, "St. Agnes Eve: A Chit-Chat About Keats," begins as a dialogue between the first-person narrator and a person named Oliver as they are having a drink together. The narrator regales Oliver with the sad fact that Keats does not get enough praise: "Ode to a Grecian Urn" is delicious (218), but "Eve of St. Agnes" is a "love story witchingly told," (219). When the narrator finishes, he notices that Oliver is asleep.

The four book reviews at the end of the issue were all written by Poe. In the first, on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Ballads and Other Poems*, Poe compliments Longfellow on lines that are perspicuous, precise and terse, but says Longfellow's didacticism is unnecessary. He explains that that poetry should devote itself to supernal beauty and novel combinations: "We thus clearly deduce the novelty, the originality, the invention, the imagination, or lastly, the creation of BEAUTY, (for the terms as here employed are synonymous [sic]) as the essence of all Poesy" (249). Poe also claims that too many of Longfellow's poems are simple-minded and faulty in rhyme. In the second review, on Algernon's *Ideals and Other Poems* (available online, perhaps juvenile), Poe praises the beauty of the volume but describes the poetry as imitative of Longfellow and commonplace.

The penultimate review by Poe, in between the two brief reviews, is well known for its contribution to short-story theory: it is a review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*. In the first line, Poe defines the genre of the tale

“as affording the best prose opportunity for display of the highest talent” (254), rating the tale above the essay and suggesting it has “points of superiority over the poem” (254). Then Poe announces that because of an accident, he cannot treat this review with the depth and thoroughness he would like and thus can offer only few paragraphs.<sup>158</sup> He praises Washington Irving, then Hawthorne,<sup>159</sup> as practitioners of tale-writing at its best, as art, saying that in the magazines of the day we have had enough “twattle,” “a full allowance of cut-and-thrust blue-blazing melodramaticisms; a nauseating surfeit of low miniature copying of low life” (254). Poe mentions that the twice-told tales are now thrice-told— “May we live to hear them told a hundred times!” (254)— and notes that some could rightly be called essays. Among the best tales of the collection, he lists “The Minister’s Black Veil,” “Wakefield,” and “Dr. Heidegger’s Experiment.” He closes by complimenting Hawthorne’s style and tone, “wild, plaintive, thoughtful, and in full accordance with his themes” (254) and emphasizes Hawthorne’s “originality both of incident and of reflection” (254).

The final review in the issue is brief, one paragraph of praise shorter than the title: Patrick S. Casserly’s “A Translation of Jacobs’ Greek Reader (adopted for all the editions printed in America) for the use of Schools, Academies, Colleges, and Private Learners; with copious Notes, Critical and explanatory; Illustrated with Numerous Parallel Passages and Apposite Quotations of the Greek, Latin, French, English, Spanish, and Italian Languages; and a complete

Parsing Index; Elucidated by References to the most Popular Greek Grammars Extant.”

Joseph Snodgrass, editor for the *Saturday Visiter*, recognized “the decided improvement” of the April 1842 *Graham’s* over earlier issues, noting especially “the insertion of reviews”: “We are . . . very sure the editor, Mr. Poe, is gratified by the change he has been permitted to make . . . . He is fond of reviewing, and, though, at times, provokingly hypercritical, is an excellent reviewer” (Thomas and Jackson 363).

Genres of Short Fiction 1842

Embury, “The Bachelor’s Experiment”

Readers of the 1842 issue of *Graham’s* would have found the subjects of both Embury’s sentimental tale and Poe’s gothic tale familiar: Embury writes of a bachelor, a subject usual in magazines like *Godey’s*; Poe, of a painting in an issue of *Graham’s* that has a painter in “The Miner’s Fate,” a painter in “The Bachelor’s Experiment,” and two poems that express a love for art. Embury continues to demonstrate the careful structuring and complexity as well as originality that Poe has admired in her work. Poe does not create a new genre—as with “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” in the 1841 issue; in fact, at the beginning of “Life in Death” he refers to Ann Radcliffe’s gothicism. But he continues to emphasize the precise and concise structuring that creates a

"totality, or unity, of effect" (*Essays* 15). "Life in Death" exhibits the suggestiveness for which Poe is still famous: readers move away from his narratives feeling that there is more there than they have experienced. His tales are not mere stories; as George Eveleth explains, "there is a kind of under-current of something—I know not what—that comes up, faint at first, and dimly seen, but increasing gradually in strength and brightness, till it opens into a full ocean, surging and sounding and flaming" (qtd. in Mabbott 5).

The bachelor was a familiar figure in nineteenth-century American literature, from the sentimental figures who appeared in women's magazines to better known, more complex figures like Miles Coverdale in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* and Herman Melville's fifth-floor bachelors, like the lawyer in "Bartleby." The bachelor in front of the fireplace, the center of domestic bliss, was a familiar figure to readers, sometimes "lonely and depressed at loose ends" (Bertolini 22), but always an ambiguous figure, a threat "to nineteenth-century bourgeois social and sexual ideology" (Berolini 20), apparently "incapable of releasing the natural upwelling feeling<sup>160</sup> that orients proper men towards the opposite sex and marriage" (Bertolini 22).

Embury's bachelor, in the seven-page tale, "The Bachelor's Experiment," is more complex, however. The rich, young Simon Decourcy Waldie is not simply a bachelor; he is also a quietly sentimental, inactive man. Nothing significant happens in the first two pages of the story because nothing significant happens in his life: he has no career, no wife. In a period in which the theory of separate

spheres is being embraced, he lives in the private sphere, ably maintained by his mother and servants, and takes no role in the public sphere, has no place in politics or business. Mr. Waldie is very well educated, having graduated from college with the "highest honours"; but one by one he rejects law, the ministry, and commerce, living a quiet life of seclusion, of "desultory thought and profitless study" (226).

When Mr. Waldie turns forty-five, however, his mother dies (his father had died some years before, but a head clerk took care of the merchant's business); and in his deep grief and loneliness, he becomes aware for the first time of the domestic contentment he has always had: "when he reflected upon the different degree of his grief at the loss of his father, he began to think that there was something in the nature of women particularly calculated to make man happy" (228). Except for one shortcoming, he thinks of himself as marital material and contemplates how to proceed. Perhaps influenced by nineteenth-century interest in science and theories of the perfectibility of humans, he decides to adopt three twelve-year-old girls from a local orphanage and "train up' a child in the way she should go; he would *educate a wife*" (228). Despite Mr. Waldie's distant attempts to educate and direct the young women for some ten years, the "bachelor's experiment" leads to three young girls evolving in directions inherent to their natures. One of them becomes a fringe and button maker before marrying a painter; one becomes a successful milliner and marries a successful draper and tailor. With only Celina left, Mr. Waldie realizes his



attempt to create a domestic haven has failed: Celina will not do; and he does not want to deal with the "many little troubles" that accompany marriage or reveal his one shortcoming.

Embury concludes her tale with irony. There is the marriage that usually ends the sentimental tale: on Mr. Waldie's fifty-fifth birthday, Celina marries the head clerk's son; and the pair live with Mr. Waldie, providing the domestic contentment he has not fully enjoyed since his mother's death. For the rest of his life, he can maintain the emotional distance he needs while living "in perfect harmony and peace" with an enlarging family. Over the years he even is able to reveal the shortcoming he has hidden for so many years: he wears a wig.

Embury's stories were well received in the 1840s by editors of the women's magazines and by readers, hence her representation in both the 1841 and 1842 issues of *Graham's*. Sentimental or domestic fiction was easy to read and to identify with. Jane Tompkins attempts to explain to present-day readers, however, that "In the 1850s the aesthetic and the didactic, the serious and the sentimental were not opposed but overlapping designations. Thus, the terms 'sentimental author' and 'genius' were not mutually exclusive, but wholly compatible ways of describing literary excellence" (17). But an additional issue arises. Does Embury's "The Bachelor's Experiment" fulfill any of the requirements Poe asked of fine fiction? Poe, for example, requires that "In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design" (299). In addition, an excellent

tale should have a "strong under-current of suggestion" that "runs continuously beneath the upper stream of the tranquil thesis" (298). Some readers not put off by the "sentimental" may argue that Embury's complex, carefully structured tale with its psychological depth and irony does have these characteristics. They would be comfortable with Poe's evaluation of Embury in his 1846 "Literati" series:

Her subjects are fresh, if not always vividly original, and she manages them with more skill than is usually exhibited by our magazinists. She has also much imagination and sensibility, while her style is pure, earnest and devoid of verbiage and exaggeration. I make a point of reading all tales to which I see the name of Mrs. Embury appended. (*Essays* 1185-86).

Poe, "Life in Death"

In the same month that Poe resigned from *Graham's*, he inserted "Life in Death" as the second tale and the third entry, in the April 1842 issue. As with "Murders in the Rue Morgue," Poe is the "conscious and conscientious craftsman" (Asseleneau 414) employing his principles for a new genre. He again uses the first-person narrator to unify the tale around one central effect, thus linking "the incidents with one another by placing them inside one consciousness" (Asseleneau 423). Within the perimeters of his critical viewpoint, Poe also

illustrates his range: "Murders in the Rue Morgue" is one of his "tales of ratiocination," written by "a lucid and impassive analyst"; "Life in Death," one of his "tales of imagination," written by an "inspired creator" (Asseleneau 414) and rich in suggestiveness, in what George Eveleth describes as an "undercurrent" (qtd. in Mabott 5). In "Life in Death," Poe also writes about what he designates, in "The Philosophy of Composition," as "the most poetical topic in the world," the death of a beautiful woman (*Essays* 19).

"Life in Death" has the darkness and mood, "gloom and grandeur" (200), light and shadow, his readers would associate with gothicism. Gothic romances by authors like Ann Radcliffe, whom Poe mentions at the beginning of the story, were popular with those *Graham's* readers who did not consider the gothic too German; and the architectural setting, the dark and deserted chateau, and the unrest and torment of the haunted protagonist contribute to the sensational that Poe acknowledged using in an 1835 letter to Thomas White when he defended his publication of "Berenice." Roger Asseleneau notes that stories like "Life in Death" have led some critics to think of Poe as "a mere mystifier who wrote his stories only to please the public and follow the current fashion," but Asseleneau insists that Poe "is never completely taken in by his own imagination. His apparent frenzy is always accompanied by lucidity" (415).

The narrator of "Life in Death" is a weak and feverish man,<sup>161</sup> who has lost considerable blood in a recent exchange with banditti or marauders. He and his valet have taken refuge in a recently vacated chateau, residing in a small

room in the turret in order to be less intrusive. The narrator describes himself as in a state of "incipient delirium" (200), caused by loss of blood and the opium he has taken to relieve pain, lower his fever, and induce sleep. In something of a "dreamy stupor," he contemplates the tapestries, armor, and especially the "very spirited modern paintings" on the walls while perusing a volume, found upon the pillow, that purports to "criticise [sic] and describe" the paintings. After hours of reading, while also experiencing the "magical influence . . . of the gorgeous richness and variety" of the paintings (200), the narrator adjusts the rays of the candelabrum, and Poe begins a frame tale.

The light of the candelabrum reveals a painting of "a young girl just ripened into womanhood"<sup>162</sup> in a niche formerly shaded. After closing his eyes for a moment and gathering his thoughts, the narrator glances again to make sure that he has not seen a real person: the painting has put a spell on him with its "perfect *life-likeness* of expression" (201). The narrator's emotions range from startled to confounded to subdued to appalled as he looks closer to see the "sad meaning smile of half-parted lips" and the "too real lustre of the wild eye" (201). After "some hours" contemplating the painting, the narrator obscures the painting by moving the candelabrum and turns to the volume he had been reading for guidance, thus letting "others interpret for" him (Hayes, *Poe* 111).

The last paragraph of "Life in Death," almost one column, quotes the story of the painting's origins: a young beautiful maiden falls in love with a "passionate, studious, austere" painter, "having already a bride in his Art." The

"maiden of rarest beauty" sits for him for weeks: he does "not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sat beside him" (201). When the painting is finished, the painter declares, "This is indeed *Life* itself!" (201), before turning to his wife who is dead.<sup>163</sup> In the closing line of the painting's story and of Poe's tale, the painter then adds, "But is this indeed Death?" (201).

The frame, as Hayes points out, is never closed (111). The reader, who has been introduced to an intelligent, a sensitive and thoughtful narrator, does not know what happened to the painter, what the narrator's view is of the couple's story, or what happens to the injured narrator. Is it possible that the epigraph of the story—"He is alive and he would speak if he were not observing the vow of silence"<sup>164</sup>—applies to the painter? the narrator?

Given Poe's emphasis upon the rich suggestiveness art should have, he would probably be pleased by the varying views critics have expressed about "Life in Death." Arthur Hobson Quinn calls the 1842 two-page tale one of Poe's "fine stories" (330); Richard Dowell describes the story as weakly constructed.<sup>165</sup> Kevin Hayes discusses the story in terms of the narrator as a tourist, a word that in the mid-nineteenth century was taking on negative connotations. He theorizes that when the narrator breaks into the chateau in the Appenines, "his behaviour suggests that the picturesque exists for the tourist's consumption" (*Poe* 111). Paula Kot notes "the male artist's penchant for objectifying a woman's character in art," even argues that both the male artist and the male narrator try to

dominate the woman, the artist by keeping her image in the painting, the narrator by his "aesthetic gaze." She calls the story "a parable of the male artistic process" (391-92). Scott Peeples appears sympathetic to Kot's reading, but Charles May insists the tale is not a didactic lesson against the excessive pride of an artist; instead, it "endorses the artist's dedication to the ideal bride, the bride who is the only possible manifestation of Supernal Beauty for Poe, that is, the art work itself" (*Edgar* 52).<sup>166</sup>

Peeples discusses Poe's craft, for example, his technique of doubles: the painting of the wife to substitute for the wife as a "comment on art and obsession"; and the narrator to serve as a double for the painter, "whose work he is 'translating'" for the reader, and to relate a tale just as the artist has painted a portrait. Peeples also calls attention to the "suspense-building" sentence, with all its "ands" that prefaces the painter's cry that "This is indeed *Life* itself!": "And then the brush was given, and then the tint was placed; and, for one moment, the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought; but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid and aghast, and crying with a loud voice . . ." (*Edgar* 91).

Poe himself comments on "Life in Death" by revising the work for publication in the *Broadway Journal* in April 1846. Seymour Gross argues that Poe made three significant changes to increase "the thematic coherence and totality of impression of his story" (16). First, he omitted the 400 words<sup>167</sup> at the beginning in which the narrator discusses tobacco and opium. When the narrator

begins to contemplate the portrait of the girl on the wall, his imaginings cannot be drug-induced, cannot be hallucinatory, if Poe is to portray his theme effectively. Poe wants "a 'sober' and 'certain' narrator, not an intoxicated dope addict, who is 'confounded, subdued and appalled' by the awful truth of the portrait." The narrator's "narcotized mind" would not know realize the truth of the painting, of the story (Gross 18).

Second, Poe eliminated the final question of the painter, closing with the following lines: "he gazed . . . crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed *Life*, itself' [and] turned suddenly to regard his beloved:—*She was dead!*" (Levine and Levine 68). According to Gross, the revised ending "transformed a parable of the moral deadliness of artistic monomania into a portrait of a man who cannot distinguish between the fundamental polarities of reality" (19). The revised ending tightens up Poe's purpose in showing how Art can reflect true life and yet destroy it as well. Third, Poe changed the title "from the sensation[al] 'Life in Death' to the more neutral 'The Oval Portrait'" and dropped the original epigraph to establish "the moral framework of the story," focused upon "the tragic waste of the best that life had to offer" (Gross 19).

## Conclusion

Clearly Poe was a "conscious and conscientious" (Asseleneau 414) artist and theorist during his writing career: his critical views tended to be systematic;

he frequently repeated his aesthetic principles. When he left *Graham's* in 1842, he had a clear idea of what an ideal magazine should be and continued to hope—as he had for so many years—that he could establish his own, first the *Penn*, later *The Stylus*. His own words best describe what he intended his magazine to be and clarify why the April 1842 issue of *Graham's* was Poe's last as literary editor.

For Poe, a magazine must be independent, “not so much as regards money, as in respect to my literary opinions and conduct.” Writing in 1841 to Robert T. Conrad, he stated, for too many years of my life I have “labored solely for the benefit of others . . . forced to model my thoughts at the will of men whose imbecility was evident to all but themselves” (*Letters* I: 154). In Poe's magazine, “a rigorous independence shall be my watchword still—truth, not so much for truth's sake, as for the sake of the novelty of the thing” (*Letters* I: 164).

Second, Poe argued that a magazine must be original. Writing in 1841 to Joseph Snodgrass, Poe states, “I shall aim at originality in the body of the work, more than at any other especial quality. I have one or two articles of my own in *statu pupillari* that would make you stare, at least, on account of the utter oddity of their conception” (*Letters* I: 152). The 1843 prospectus of *The Stylus* declares, “It will endeavor to be more varied and more unique,—more vigorous, more pungent, more original, more individual, and more independent” (*Essays* 1034). In a discussion of magazine-writing, Poe explains what he means by originality:



“There is no greater mistake than the supposition that a true originality is a mere matter of impulse or inspiration. To originate, is carefully, patiently, and understandingly to combine” (“Magazine-Writing” 398). Further, he argues that “a strong under-current of suggestion [must run] continuously beneath the upper stream of the tranquil thesis” of inventive tales, “novel combinations” (“Review of *Twice-Told Tales*” 298).

Third, Poe wanted the best writers of the day to fill his magazine—but with their best work, not hack work. He intended to publish no works that “are not of a high order of merit” (*Letters* I: 165).

Last, Poe wanted to “forward the literature” of the United States (*Letters* I: 143). In his 1840 prospectus for *Penn Magazine*, he writes, “It will endeavor to support the general interests of the republic of letters, without reference to particular regions; regarding the world at large as the true audience of the author” (*Essays* 1025).

And Poe thought of himself: “If I fully succeed in my purposes I will not fail to produce some lasting effects upon the growing literature of the country, while I establish for myself individually a name which that country ‘will not willingly let die’” (*Letters* I: 141).

## Afterword

In his reviews, when Poe directed writers to be original, imaginative, suggestive, and brief--to be sure that every word and detail had a purpose in order to create a "unity of effect or impression" for "an exaltation of the soul" ("Review of *Twice-Told Tales*" 298)--he was not only defining a new genre later called "the short story," he was pursuing his goals—to elevate American literature and, on a more practical level, to fill a magazine. This dissertation was begun to show the influence of magazines on the creation of the short story. Poe's entire writing career was involved in the magazine business. He was paid (little) for everything he wrote. He was influenced by what readers craved. He was influenced by others who wrote for magazines. He influenced and reviewed many who wrote for magazines. Because he reviewed books, he was familiar with much that was published in his lifetime, a knowledge that he would not have had if he had not been writing for the magazines. Clearly his world was the world of magazines. If Poe had not been involved in the magazine world, he might never have created the tales he did or theorized about imaginative literature of clear artistic value. Yes, Poe is responsible for the creation of the short story; but the medium of the magazine is also responsible.

*Literary works express and shape "the social context that produced them." Social and cultural contexts provide "society with a means of thinking about itself" (Jane Tompkins).*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Henry James was one of the first to "stigmatize Poe enthusiasts as chronically immature" (Gargano 247); he also labeled Poe "a charlatan who never outgrew an immature addiction to flashy effects" (Gargano 247).

<sup>2</sup> *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, the last work published in Poe's lifetime (March 1848), was Poe's 40,000-word explanation of God and the universe: the general proposition is that "Because Nothing was, therefore All Things are" (*Letters I*: 362).

<sup>3</sup> Poe's father, David Poe, was an actor who disappeared when Poe was two. It is assumed David Poe died from the effects of alcoholism in December 1811 in Norfolk (Meyer 5-6). When Stephen King was five or six, his father left to buy a pack of cigarettes and never returned.

<sup>4</sup> Poe attempted to obtain a teaching position; King was a teacher until his first novel, *Carrie*, was published. After each successfully published, he turned to writing as a career.

<sup>5</sup> When Stephen King received the National Book Award in 2003, Bloom denounced King as "an inadequate writer." He described King "as a writer of penny dreadfuls, but perhaps even that is too kind. He shares nothing with Edgar Allan Poe" ("Dumbing Down American Readers"). About Poe, however, Bloom has said, he "is an inescapable writer, but not a good one," adding, "I cannot

think of any other author who writes so abominably, and yet is destined to go on being canonical writes so abominably, and yet is so clearly destined to babominably, and yet is so clearly destined destined to be destined destined to being canonical" (Introduction 9). Bloom reluctantly introduced and edited a collection of critical essays on Poe.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen King convinced his publisher, Simon and Shuster, to publish *Riding the Bullet* in electronic form in March 2000. In July, he became the first major novelist to self-publish on the Internet with electronic installments of *The Plant* (Kirkpatrick).

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Uργο wrote "Capitalism, Nationalism, and the American Short Story" for the fall 1998 issue of *Studies in Short Fiction*.

<sup>8</sup> Detective C. Auguste Dupin first appeared in Poe's tale "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," originally published in *Graham's Magazine* in April 1841 (discussed in Chapter Five).

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Silverman reports that the day before Poe died had been windy with soaking rains; the newspaper called the day, "a real breeder of suicides" and a "precursor of Old Winter" (433).

<sup>10</sup> Most accounts of Poe's death indicate Poe was found in the gutter; Quinn and Meyer state Poe was found outside Gunner's Hall and brought inside. Silverman, Eckroyd, and Hayes explain that Poe was inside Gunner's when an acquaintance recognized Poe was in trouble and sent for Joseph Snodgrass.

<sup>11</sup> Silverman relates that the next day, Poe, still delirious, stated to his doctor that “the best his best friend could do would be to blow out his brains with a pistol!” (435)

<sup>12</sup> There is much speculation about Reynolds. Jeremiah N. Reynolds may have worked with Poe on *Pym*. An ex-naval officer who lived in New York from 1836 to 1858, Reynolds wrote a story about a whale called “Mocha Dick” (Miller 21).

<sup>13</sup> Herring was Poe’s Uncle Henry Herring, married to Poe’s Aunt Eliza Poe. When in Baltimore, a younger Poe had visited the Herring family often, and Herring introduced Poe to many people in the literary field (Sova, *Poe A to Z* 107). Herring came to the tavern October 3 and told Snodgrass to send Poe to the hospital because he thought Poe might be drunk and become belligerent. Medical records suggest Poe was not drunk; biographers today are not sure about what caused Poe’s condition.

<sup>14</sup> Poe was a friend of Joseph Snodgrass, a doctor, an editor, and a writer.

<sup>15</sup> Poe himself had joined the Sons of Temperance on September 15, 1849, in Boston (Thomas and Jackson 836).

<sup>16</sup> Edgar and Virginia Poe had a pet tortoiseshell cat named Catarina or Catterina, whom they called Cat.

<sup>17</sup> Rufus Griswold, an editor and anthologist, became Poe’s literary executor. Griswold met Poe in 1841. In an “Autography” entry in December, 1841, Poe described Griswold as “a gentleman of fine taste and sound judgment”

(Campbell, "Poe-Griswold" 437). Griswold was associated with over twenty papers or magazines in his lifetime and edited *The Poets and Poetry of America* (1842) and *The Prose Writers of America* (1845). Poe wrote a favorable review of Griswold's *Female Poets of America* (1849), and Killis Campbell records that on one occasion Poe sought Griswold's assistance in selling "certain of his [Poe's] literary wares" ("Poe-Griswold" 441). Some editors and writers in Poe's time thought of Griswold as a literary hack, following after established literary men and designating himself the arbiter of good literature in making selections for his anthologies. Hutchisson describes him as "a swampland hick" turned into "a sophisticated Manhattanite" (255). The end of Griswold's life was miserable: he nearly drowned after an epileptic fit, his tuberculosis returned, his fifteen-year-old daughter almost died in a train wreck, his face was burned in a gas explosion, and his third wife left him (Hutchisson 255).

<sup>18</sup> After Virginia died, Poe appears to have courted (or flirted with) Marie Louise Shew, Annie Richmond, Sarah Helen Whitman, and Elmira Royster Shelton.

<sup>19</sup> Poe accused Longfellow of stealing ideas from Poe's "The Haunted Palace" and using them in "The Beleaguered City." Griswold states that Longfellow's "Beleaguered City" was written first and was in Poe's possession, even though it was not published until after Poe's "The Haunted Palace." After Poe's death, Longfellow wrote Griswold to tell him he was mistaken about the order of events and the charge of theft.

<sup>20</sup> Dr. Thomas Dunn English and Poe both had an interest in phrenology. English contributed to *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* in 1839 when Poe was editor, and they corresponded frequently. However, later in their association, they attacked each other's character, and Poe successfully sued English. Even though the two never reconciled, English defended Poe in *Reminiscences of Poe*, asserting, "Had Poe the opium habit when I knew him (before 1846) I should both as a physician and a man of observation, have discovered it during his frequent visits to my rooms, my visits at his house, and our meetings elsewhere—I saw no signs of it and believe the charge to be slander" (qtd. in Quinn 350).

<sup>21</sup> This letter has been assumed to be by Poe or at least influenced by Poe. Poe's friend Henry B. Hirst wrote it (Thomas and Jackson 395).

<sup>22</sup> Poe supplied false background information in February 1843 for his *Philadelphia Museum* biography, mentioning, for example, the "elopement of [his] parents, their death 'on a visit to Richmond,' Poe's journey to Greece and St. Petersburg, his return from Europe on the night after Mrs. Allan's burial" (A. Quinn 373).

<sup>23</sup> In "To the Reader," a note in Griswold's first collection of Poe's works, Maria Clemm wrote that Poe wanted Griswold to "superintend the publication of his works," but preferred Willis should write the "observations on his [Poe's] life and character" ("Poe-Griswold" 446).

<sup>24</sup> Henry Beck Hirst was a Philadelphia poet and friend of Poe. Later, Hirst became addicted to absinthe and lived in a mental ward in a Philadelphia Almshouse (Thomas and Jackson xxix).

<sup>25</sup> Lambert Wilmer was a journalist, a poet, and a friend of Henry Poe. He and Edgar A. Poe associated with each other often until about 1843 when Wilmer became concerned about Poe's "excessive drinking," and Poe took offense (Thomas and Jackson xlix).

<sup>26</sup> John Neal was a lawyer, a novelist, and an editor.

<sup>27</sup> Both Baudelaire and Poe had rather large heads with prominent foreheads.

<sup>28</sup> Both had strained relationships with a father figure; both were alcoholics; both moved frequently and suffered periods of extreme poverty. Both were harsh critics.

<sup>29</sup> Cather states, "With the exception of Henry James and Hawthorne, Poe is our only master of pure prose" ("The Late").

<sup>30</sup> Charles May explains that Poe's theories were "not original with him," but drew upon "the practice and criticism of the German novella in the early part of the century by Goethe, A. W. Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, and E. T. A. Hoffman" (*The Short Story* 108).

<sup>31</sup> Brander Matthews' essay appeared first in 1885 and was later published in book form in 1901. (James) Brander Matthews, noted professor of drama at Columbia, wrote fiction, plays, and especially criticism on dramatic literature.



<sup>32</sup> Richard Steele published *The Tatler* from 1709 to 1711; Joseph Addison and Richard Steele published *The Spectator* from 1711 to 1712. Both magazines offered a social history of the times, focusing upon manners, morality, and literature.

<sup>33</sup> May suggests, however, that the approach of Poe and Matthews might not have had such "a disastrous effect" if O. Henry's "made-to-order formula stories" had not become so popular in the first decade of the twentieth century (*The Short Story* 109).

<sup>34</sup> Literary friction was created when Stephen King received the 2003 National Book Award, and much of the literary community objected to a popular writer receiving the award. Harold Bloom describes King as an author who is "dumbing down American readers."

<sup>35</sup> Edgar Allan Poe believed that Burton had never planned to pay the winner. It is one of the disagreements that led to Poe's resignation from the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

<sup>36</sup> Brander Matthews discussed "Philosophy of the Short-story" in 1883; Henry James called his collection of short fiction *Daisy Miller and Other Stories* in 1883.

<sup>37</sup> Graham's maternal uncle was from Montgomery County.

<sup>38</sup> Graham studied law with Judge Thomas Armstrong.

<sup>39</sup> J. Albert Robbins indicates that two local histories list both Graham and Peterson as reporters for *The Daily Focus*, but no existing issues validate this.

<sup>40</sup> It is not known where Graham obtained the money for this initial purchase or for the purchase of the two magazines. J. Albert Robbins speculates that Graham may have been aided financially by his uncle, his wife, or his friend Peterson.

<sup>41</sup> "Casket" means "a repository with no somber connotations of funeral unless one considered that 'literature, wit and sentiment' or whatever else editors had to offer, was 'laid out' in these repositories" (Tebbel 48).

<sup>42</sup> The publishers of the *Saturday Evening Post* named the magazine *Casket: Flowers of Literature, Wit and Sentiment* in 1826, with Samuel C. Atkinson the publisher for the first twelve years.

<sup>43</sup> He paid Burton \$3,500, one dollar for each subscriber (Genzmer).

<sup>44</sup> He was known as "a hustling young man" (Tebbel 49).

<sup>45</sup> Originally Thomas was a friend of Poe's brother, William Henry, but he met Poe in 1840 and they became frequent correspondents. Thomas lived in Cincinnati, practiced law, wrote for newspapers, and was active in politics, campaigning, for example, on behalf of William Henry Harrison.

<sup>46</sup> Frank Luther Mott and *The Illinois Monthly Magazine* (1831) called the 1830s and 1840s "the golden age of periodicals" (338, 341), noting that there were fewer than 100 periodicals—not newspapers—in 1825, but at least 600 by 1850 (342).

<sup>47</sup> *Godey's Lady's Book* was published from 1830 to 1898 by Louis A. Godey, who "brought unalloyed pleasure to the female mind" (Mott I: 580) and

would allow no content that “was not pure as the driven snow” (Mott I: 582). In 1837, Sarah J. Hale became editor and emphasized female education. At one time *Godey’s* was edited only by women, but men like Poe were also contributors. Godey, like Graham, believed in paying contributors.

<sup>48</sup> Paulding was a New York author, a collaborator with Irving, a Secretary to the Navy, and an admirer of Poe’s writing and career (Thomas and Jackson xxxvi).

<sup>49</sup> Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood became a good friend of Poe’s wife. She was a poet and the “only bluestocking whom Poe found totally congenial” (Thomas and Jackson xxxv). Mrs. Osgood and Poe later wrote poems to each other, but there is no evidence of an affair.

<sup>50</sup> Lydia Huntley Sigourney wrote verse that Poe considered sweetly sentimental and imitative; but, as a gentleman, he refrained from speaking ill of her work (Thomas and Jackson xlii).

<sup>51</sup> Bayard Taylor was an author, a poet, and an editor of both *Graham’s* and *Union Magazine*.

<sup>52</sup> Willis’ poems, tales, and travel literature enabled him to live comfortably in New York and travel in Europe. He was actively supportive of Poe’s editorial and writing career and defended Poe against Griswold’s false accusations.

<sup>53</sup> *The Southern Literary Messenger*, for example, claimed to “foster and encourage native genius” (Mott I: 505).

<sup>54</sup> Charles Fenno Hoffman, poet and sometime-editor, was a friend of Griswold.

<sup>55</sup> Theodore Sedgwick Fay wrote *Norman Leslie*, a novel that Poe criticized severely.

<sup>56</sup> Elizabeth Fries Ellet was a poet, the wife of a doctor, and a member of a circle of women who greatly admired Poe. It is thought that when he spurned her, she became his enemy (Thomas and Jackson xxiii).

<sup>57</sup> *The North American Review* paid \$1 a page from 1825 to 1850; *The Democratic Review* paid \$2 a page and made late payments; *The American Whig Review* paid \$2 a page; the *Southern Literary Messenger* offered Griswold \$1.50 a page for small type, \$2 for large type (Mott I: 505).

<sup>58</sup> The *Knickerbocker* rates ranged from nothing to \$2000 per year for Irving or \$50 a poem for Longfellow (Mott 510-11). Sometimes authors complained about not getting paid at all. Mott called these writers "magazine's great unpaid. There was no money in the *Knickerbocker*—certainly none for its contributors" (Mott I: 511).

<sup>59</sup> Mezzotint is a process of burnishing or roughening a surface in order to hold ink to create light and dark images.

<sup>60</sup> William Sartain published *Sartain's Union Magazine of Literature and Art* from 1849 to 1852. It was previously titled the *Union Magazine of Literature and Art* and edited by Caroline Kirkland from 1847 to 1849 (Mott I: 769).

<sup>61</sup> Felix O. C. Darley was an artist who drew the illustrations for "The Gold Bug."

<sup>62</sup> Joseph H. Ingraham wrote historical romances, such as *Lafitte, the Pirate of the Gulf* and *The Prince of the House of David*.

<sup>63</sup> The frontispiece was an illustration usually placed opposite the title page.

<sup>64</sup> Typically the engraving was inserted in, or "tipped in," to the front of the magazine during binding, with the illustrative text placed in the middle of the magazine.

<sup>65</sup> Both magazines were dated January 1741. Franklin's plan came first; and because he offered his editor Webbe only a twenty-five percent cut of the profits for the first 2000 sold, Webbe went to the rival printer Bradford for a better deal. Thus began a "stormy prelude to the appearance of the first two magazines to be published in America" (Mott I: 74).

<sup>66</sup> Some other early contributors were "Timothy Pickering, Dr. Rush, Tench Coxe, Benjamin Franklin, the Connecticut Wits, Francis Hopkinson, Philip Freneau, Dr. Ladd, John Witherspoon" (Mott I: 40).

<sup>67</sup> Few in number, these publications concentrated on reviews only. Most were labeled "dull"; a few of the quarterlies in America were the *North American Review*, the *American Quarterly Review*, the *American Quarterly Observer*, the *New York Review*, and the *Boston Quarterly Review* (Mott I: 367).

<sup>68</sup> Frank Luther Mott attributes this statement to Briggs (I: 367), since he

was editor of the *Broadway Journal* in 1845, but John Thompson has included the entire statement in his collection of Poe's *Essays and Reviews* within an excerpt from Poe's *Marginalia*, December 1846. Poe was also an editor of the *Broadway Journal* in 1845.

<sup>69</sup> *Tamerlane and Other Poems* was first published in 1827. Underneath the title was "by a Bostonian." Poe wanted anonymity at least until the volume "proved successful" (Hayes, *Poe* 44). The forty-page collection had one long poem and several short ones.

<sup>70</sup> Poe published *Tamerlane and Other Poems* in 1827; *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane and Other Poems* in 1829; and *Poems* in 1831.

<sup>71</sup> Poe was supporting his young wife, suffering from tuberculosis, and his mother-in-law.

<sup>72</sup> Arthur Hobson Quinn mentions Poe filled out an application for a teaching position (186); Peter Ackroyd says that Poe tried for a job as an usher in a school (55). Thomas and Jackson note that Poe applied at the Richmond Academy for a position as an English teacher (165). Poe did not get a job in any school.

<sup>73</sup> Poe had written for a job with William Gwynn, editor of the *Federal Gazette* and *Daily Advertiser* in Baltimore, in May 1831.

<sup>74</sup> In 1844 Poe was essentially a free-lance contributor to magazines, while Willis was editor of the *Mirror*.

<sup>75</sup> Park Benjamin was the editor of the *New World*, a New York weekly, from 1839 to 1844.

<sup>76</sup> The *Knickerbocker* in July 1842 said that Neal had “contributed more spoiled paper to line trunks and singe fowls than any other writer in the United States” (Mott I: 499n).

<sup>77</sup> *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* began in 1817 with a circulation of 3,700 and by 1830 over 8,000. It was imitated by the *London Magazine* (1820-1829), the *New Monthly Magazine* (1821), and *Fraser’s Magazine* (1830-1869) (Allen 22).

<sup>78</sup> Started when Poe’s stepfather John Allan was only twenty-one, the export business sold a variety of goods and exported tobacco. It prospered nationally and internationally until 1817 when the economy took a downturn (Silverman 10).

<sup>79</sup> Michael Allen notes that the *London New Monthly* ceased publication from a lack of variety, thus a lack of appeal to a larger audience.

<sup>80</sup> John Hill Hewitt won first place for his poem submitted under a pseudonym even though he was editor of the *Visiter*. Poe believed that the editor should have been disqualified. According to Hewitt, the two met a few days after the prizes were announced. Poe was so angry, he implied that Hewitt was no gentleman, and they would have come to blows had others not separated the two (Thomas and Jackson 134).

<sup>81</sup> Mott, author of a history of American magazines, claimed that *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Graham's* were two of the most popular in America in the 1840s.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas White was formerly a Richmond printer, who initially thought of Poe as a son. Mott describes White as optimistic but naïve and not necessarily a writer himself.

<sup>83</sup> Lucian Minor was a lawyer and friend to Thomas White. He contributed to the *Southern Literary Messenger*, but refused to become full-time editor even though White offered him the position.

<sup>84</sup> This compliment to Poe came in "A Reviewer Reviewed," written by Poe under the pseudonym Walter G. Bowen.

<sup>85</sup> Poe may have been drunk and then suffered remorse for his actions in that month. However, Thomas and Jackson and Silverman hint that Poe may have gone home to marry Virginia. Thomas and Jackson suggest that Maria Clemm, hearing that Poe might marry Eliza White, Thomas White's daughter, wrote Poe that she was going to send Virginia to another relative and he might not see her again. Poe drank, thinking he was losing Virginia.

<sup>86</sup> Edwin Percy Whipple was a Boston critic who "scoffed at Poe's 'Autography'" (Thomas and Jackson xlvi).

<sup>87</sup> At the request of readers curious about him, Poe's athletic abilities were glorified in the magazine: his swimming of the Thames, his jumping twenty feet and six inches.



<sup>88</sup> Poe was accused of copying British critics, publicity-seeking, and overkill (Silverman 122).

<sup>89</sup> What is known is that Poe ended up in New York City, perhaps lured by an offer to be a critic for a journal, and while there hobnobbed with other literary men. He wrote little, but his novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, was accepted for publication. During this time Poe also lent his name to the publication of a book on conchology. John Ostrom believes Poe also wrote the introduction, for which he was paid \$50 ("Edgar" 2)

<sup>90</sup> Poe had left New York in July 1838 when he could not find employment.

<sup>91</sup> Poe's one novel was entitled *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket. Comprising the Details of a Mutiny and Atrocious Butchery on Board the American Brig Grampus, on Her Way to the South Seas, in the Month of June, 1827. With an Account of the Recapture of the Vessel by the Survivors [sic]; Their Shipwreck, and Subsequent Horrible Sufferings from Famine; Their Deliverance by Means of the British Schooner Jane Guy; the Brief Cruise of this Latter Vessel in the Antarctic Ocean; Her Capture, and the Massacre of her Crew Among a Group of Islands in the Eighty-Fourth Parallel of Southern Latitude; Together with the Incredible Adventures and Discoveries Still Farther South, to Which That Distressing Calamity Gave Rise* and was published by Harper and Brothers in New York in 1838. Meyers believes Poe freely borrowed geographical details for *Pym* from Jeremiah Reynolds' book that Poe had reviewed in 1837 (96).

<sup>92</sup> Poe especially felt the economic downturn of the 1830s, trying to provide for himself, his wife Virginia, and his Aunt Muddy. He desperately needed a job.

<sup>93</sup> *Alexander's Weekly Messenger* was an independent magazine that promoted morality and religion.

<sup>94</sup> When Poe was a teenager in Richmond, he swam the James River "a distance of seven miles and a half [six miles], in a hot June sun, and against a tide of three miles an hour" (Thomas and Jackson 290).

<sup>95</sup> Lea and Blanchard had originally promised "as a personal favor" to print 1750 copies, but only 750 copies were printed (Hayes, *Poe* 84).

<sup>96</sup> Philip Pendleton Cooke became an early admirer of Poe's writing. Cooke, from Virginia, wrote poetry and corresponded with Poe for a time (Thomas and Jackson xxi).

<sup>97</sup> Burton began to deduct \$3 a week from Poe's salary, saying Poe owed him \$100. Poe, in a letter dated June 1840, writes out a detailed account of what was owed and comes up with a total of \$60 (*Letters* I: 129-32).

<sup>98</sup> This contest offered \$1000 in prize money: \$250 for a series of five short tales on the history of the country; \$100 for the best humorous tale; \$100 for the best essay on science or belles letters; \$200 for the best tale of pathos or interest; \$100 for the most graphic memoir of any living American; \$100 for the best serious poem of not less than 200 lines; and \$50 for the most interesting foreign-travel sketch (Thomas and Jackson 277-78).

<sup>99</sup> There is some disagreement as to whether Burton actually said this. The antagonism between Butler and Poe is one reason it might never have been said, and Poe biographer Arthur Quinn thinks that Graham may have romanticized the statement later in life.

<sup>100</sup> According to Hayes, this was Poe's "first attempt to use a personal attribute [genius] to discern a writer's character" (*Word* 102).

<sup>101</sup> One error Poe would not have made was to misspell "liaison" as "liason."

<sup>102</sup> Virginia broke a blood vessel while singing, thus showing the first sign of what was then called consumption, a disease with which Poe was all too familiar since his mother and stepmother had died of tuberculosis. Graham himself had often noted how solicitous Poe was of his young wife and would assume Poe would rather attend to her than to his magazine.

<sup>103</sup> The *Index* was a semi-weekly Washington publication started by Dow in 1841 as a weekly, then tri-weekly, then daily; but the stress of magazine work made Dow ill, and he resigned in 1842 after only a year (Hayes, *Poe* 117).

<sup>104</sup> After Poe left *Graham's*, he wrote tales and sought subscribers for *Penn Magazine* and later for *The Stylus*. He also gave lectures in several cities within a one-hundred mile radius in order to remain close to Virginia, who was dying of tuberculosis (Silverman 218). His lectures, entitled "The Poetry in America" and eloquently delivered to packed halls, offered his views of "American literary politics, the function of criticism, and the province of poetry" (Silverman 218).

Sometimes Poe recited poems; often he attacked both Griswold and Griswold's anthology *Poets and Poetry* as tasteless (Silverman 218). Hutchisson claims that Poe spent the years after *Graham's* alternating between small successes and bouts of depression caused by his inability to secure backers for his own magazine, failure to obtain a government position, large debts, and worry about Virginia's health.

<sup>105</sup> Poe and his wife took the train to New Jersey, then boarded a steamer for New York City. When they arrived, Poe walked in the rain to find a room for the two of them.

<sup>106</sup> Poe was overwhelmed with New York City, first with the abundance of food at his boarding house, then with the city itself: "the city is thronged with strangers" and "everything wears an aspect of intense life" (Hayes, *Poe* 124-25).

<sup>107</sup> According to Arthur Quinn, "the high postage rates for magazines caused it to become a daily newspaper" (434).

<sup>108</sup> Willis had known his share of hardships: he was estranged from his sister "Fanny Fern" and his brother, who was in prison in Ohio. In 1844-45, he suffered the deaths of his youngest sister and his mother as well as his wife and child in childbirth (Silverman 224).

<sup>109</sup> Maria Clemm told Willis that Poe was ill and his wife was "a confirmed invalid" (Thomas and Jackson 471).

<sup>110</sup> Quarles may be a reference To Francis Quarles (1593-1644), the English poet who wrote *Emblems*. Hutchisson suggests, "The poem provides a

gloss on Poe's status with the literary world, for he published it pseudonymously, under the poetic and suggestive name Quarles, or 'quarrels'" (164-65).

<sup>111</sup> Willis first published an editorial "Authors' Pay in America" in October 1844, calling for authors to receive more money than publishers for their own books. In January 1845, Poe's "Pay of American Authors" was published in the *Evening Mirror* and in February 1845 in the *Weekly Mirror* (Thomas and Jackson 473, 492).

<sup>112</sup> After Poe had left the *Weekly Mirror* in early 1845, *The Evening Mirror* ran "Charles F. Briggs's excoriation of Poe's character, which insinuated that Poe was insane" (Sova, *Poe A to Z* 83), and Thomas Dunn English's article denigrating Poe's character (Mott I: 330). Charles Briggs' May 26, 1845 article in the *Mirror* was an attack on Poe's "Literati" series as well as on Poe. Of the series, Briggs stated that a man like Poe, who had "infirmities of mind and body" and "petty jealousies," was "unfit" to write sketches on writers and their works. He also described Poe as short, with such a large forehead that he had a "balloonish appearance" (Thomas and Jackson online). Thomas Dunn English's June 23, 1846 response to Poe's attack on him, appeared in the *Evening Mirror*; it called Poe a drunk, forger, and liar. Poe sued English for libel and asked for \$5,000 in damages. The trial, in February 1847, soon after Virginia's death, took place without Poe's presence. Poe sued *The Mirror*, then edited by Margaret Fuller, and was awarded "\$225 and six cents costs" (Thomas and Jackson 688).

<sup>113</sup> Charles Frederick Briggs, seaman, author, and editor, was known for writing about "New York life, depicted in a light and amusing way" (Mott I: 757). According to Thomas and Jackson (online), he was often called Harry Franco after a character in his first novel. Briggs was initially impressed by Poe, later disillusioned.

<sup>114</sup> Bisco had been a New Jersey schoolteacher and former publisher of the *Knickerbocker* (Mott I: 757)

<sup>115</sup> Poe would often go to literary parties of the bluestockings, and he corresponded with a number of the women, for example, Frances Osgood, Elizabeth Ellett, Anne Lynch, Sarah Lewis, Anna Mowatt, Jane Ermina Locke, Annie Richmond, and Marie Louise Shew. He promoted Caroline Kirkland, Maria McIntosh, Elizabeth Oakes Smith, Amelia Welby, and Sarah Josepha Hale (Hutchisson 179, 181).

<sup>116</sup> Poe was scheduled to read a poem at the Boston Lyceum on October 16, 1845. Because Poe would not "write a poem to order" (A. Quinn 485), he recited an old poem, "Al Aaraaf," renamed "Messenger Star," then took a drink and began to tell the audience what he thought of the "Frogpondians" of Boston (A. Quinn 486).

<sup>117</sup> During these years, Poe made a number of acquaintances in female literary circles, such as Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood, Anne Lynch, and Elizabeth Ellet.

<sup>118</sup>John Ostrom characterized "The Philosophy of Composition" as "a tongue-in-cheek critical analysis" (5).

<sup>119</sup>"Penn" is a pun on the instrument and place of writing, Pennsylvania.

<sup>120</sup>Poe rarely wrote out the middle name of Allan because of his resentment of his stepfather John Allan's treatment of him.

<sup>121</sup>Scottish author John Wilson used the pseudonym Christopher North to write hundreds of articles in the twenty-five years he contributed to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. In 1820 he became Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University (Stableford). Early in his career, Poe is said to have imitated Wilson's style, admiring, as many readers did, the "negligence and ease," the "enthusiasm and refinement," of North, "the prince of the magazinists," who used a "kind of high-spirited and sometimes savage critical caricature," usually "against the Cockneys" (Allen 29, 48).

<sup>122</sup>Poe's letters went out to Washington Irving, John Pendleton Kennedy, and Fitz-Greene Halleck, to name a few.

<sup>123</sup>Poe regularly tried to get a government appointment but never succeeded. Within the next twenty months Poe made a total of only \$400, once offering some of his writings for half price to Graham.

<sup>124</sup>One of his best prospects was Georgia poet Thomas Holley Chivers, whom Poe described as "a gentleman of education & similarity of thought and feeling" (qtd. in Silverman 190); but Chivers withdrew when his three-year-old daughter died.

<sup>125</sup> A stylus is also a pen. Unlike other magazine titles, *The Stylus* would not indicate a specific area of the country.

<sup>126</sup> Apparently, without the discipline of his aunt and wife, Poe became drunk and embarrassed himself in Washington.

<sup>127</sup> Only fifty-seven tales had been written by October 1844 (*Letters I*: 272n).

<sup>128</sup> After her husband died, Sarah Josepha Hale began to write to earn money for herself and her five children, eventually becoming a successful editor in Philadelphia. Hale published a number of works by Poe and may have felt friendly toward him because Poe had met her son at West Point. Hale later campaigned President Lincoln to declare Thanksgiving an official holiday.

<sup>129</sup> John Kearsley Mitchell was a doctor of the Poe family and a personal friend.

<sup>130</sup> One might assume that Poe wrote this tale just to fill more pages since he was paid \$4 a page above his editor's salary for contributions. However, it is more likely that he had already composed this tale during the unemployed interval between his *Burton's* and *Graham's* editorial positions.

<sup>131</sup> A number of popular travel novels were reviewed in the magazines during this time; Mott suggests that "authorship and travelling" were "all the fashion" (I: 422). Many sailors were writing of their adventures, and travel in the American West was a common subject.



<sup>132</sup> According to the Northern Illinois University Library project on dime novels, Charles Peterson often used the pen names of Harry Cavendish, or Harry Danforth, two of the characters in some of his travel tales. Peterson, also an editor for *Graham's* and the *Casket*, began his own magazine, *Peterson's Ladies' National Magazine*, in 1842, probably at the urging of Graham, to compete with *Godey's*. *Peterson's* lasted until 1898.

<sup>133</sup> George Eveleth (from Maine) never met Poe, but the two corresponded. Thomas Olive Mabbott calls Eveleth the first Poe specialist, someone who admired Poe but "spoke his mind" (4). The letters of Eveleth and Poe were in Rufus Griswold's possession until after his death when they were sold. Mabbott published them in 1922.

<sup>134</sup> Born in New York to a wealthy family and living most of her life in Brooklyn, Emma Catherine Embury, in her twenties, began writing poems, and submitting her work to the periodicals, with the pen name Ianthe, asking for no payment. She enjoyed writing for entertainment and believed that women's work in the home would always take precedence over work outside the home.

<sup>135</sup> During her lifetime, Embury published several works of fiction and instruction: *Guido: A Tale* (1828); *Constance Latimer: or, The Blind Girl* (1838); *Pictures of Early Life, or Sketches of Youth* (1830); *American Wild Flowers in Their Native Haunts* (1845); *Love's Token Flowers* (1845); *Glimpses of Home Life: or, Causes and Consequences* (1848); and *The Waldorf Family: or, Grandfather's Legend* (1848) (Kunitz).

<sup>136</sup> Poe first created his Autography series to reveal personality through an examination of writers' signatures, using a list of 128 American authors' autographs with brief descriptions underneath, ranking them according to his own critical views, in the hope of someday having a "native literary canon" (Silverman 168-69). Poe had a tendency, however, to praise writers he liked, criticize writers he held a grudge against.

<sup>137</sup> A. Quinn states that Poe did not originate the detective tale; Voltaire preceded him in having the philosopher Zadig observe natural facts to infer events he has not witnessed. But Silverman calls Voltaire's 1748 *Zadig* only a near-model of Poe's more sophisticated detective tale (171). Peter Ackroyd notes that "the word 'detective' was not coined until 1843" (92); the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists the word's usage only as an adjective in 1843, as in "the detective police" ("Detective"). The word was first used as a noun in 1850.

<sup>138</sup> Poe often used the name "Augustus" or "Auguste" for characters who resembled his brother, William Henry Leonard Poe. In Poe's novel *Pym*, Augustus was a drinker and a sailor, like William Henry, and both the character in the story and William Henry died on August 1 (Silverman 173, 135).

<sup>139</sup> A. Quinn suggests the name may have two sources: (1) from Marie Dupin in "Marie Laurent," one of a series of stories about a French Minister of Police that Poe had read when he worked for Burton in 1838; (2) from the name of a French politician, a character "of antithetical qualities, a living encyclopedia and a believer in legal methods" (310-11). W.T. Bandy writes that Griswold had

in his possession a September 1840 letter to Poe, signed by S. Maupin, that mentions the name of "M. C. Auguste Dubouchet," a French language teacher. He theorizes that "Dupin" is a compound of the two names (509).

<sup>140</sup> Myers notes that "morgue" sounds like "morbid" and also reports that the building in Paris where dead bodies were housed was called the "morgue" (123).

<sup>141</sup> George Lippard, an admirer of Poe, was a journalist. In 1843 and 1844, he wrote "The Spermaceti Papers," satirizing Graham and associates. Lippard collected money on behalf of Poe for Poe's last trip to Richmond and wrote a "compassionate obituary" for Poe in October 1849 (Thomas and Jackson xxxi).

<sup>142</sup> The name "L'Espanaye" could be made up of Edgar Allan Poe's initials twice and almost contains the name Allan (Silverman 173).

<sup>143</sup> Silverman points out that a mother-daughter duo also live in Poe's home.

<sup>144</sup> Joseph Church exploits the fact that the murderer of the women goes unpunished to assert that Poe and his character Dupin "work to punish and silence womankind in the world" (445).

<sup>145</sup> "Draughts" is another name for checkers.

<sup>146</sup> Stephen Meyers suggests that Poe must have been inspired to use the orang-outang because of Philadelphia's July 1839 exhibit at the Masonic Hall: a "huge, hairy, red orang-outang" (123).

<sup>147</sup> In fact, Poe never let the reader believe that LeBon was guilty and thus carefully did not let LeBon's arrest become a red herring.

<sup>148</sup> At a time when Poe needed money, Graham and his brother William helped by producing the pamphlets. The first volume with "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Man that was Used Up" sold for 12 ½ cents each. They did not sell well and the other volumes were never produced.

<sup>149</sup> Lydia Sigourney "constantly produced saccharine, sententious verses for the magazines and newspapers" (Thomas and Jackson xlii). Poe gently reviewed her works as not original but of fine taste.

<sup>150</sup> Park Benjamin was a poet and an editor for *New World* 1839-1844.

<sup>151</sup> Theodore Sedgwick Fay, an editor of the *New York Mirror*, wrote *Norman Leslie* in 1835. Poe's extremely critical review of the work earned him the nickname "Tomahawk" critic and many enemies.

<sup>152</sup> Henry William Herbert used the penname Frank Forester. He wrote most of the sports essays in *Graham's*.

<sup>153</sup> Lowell and Poe had an odd association. In the early 1840s, Poe reviewed Lowell's poems, and Lowell wrote a biography of Poe for *Graham's*. They accepted contributions from each other for their respective magazines (Lowell managed the *Pioneer* until he lost his eyesight) and corresponded for a few years. When Poe criticized Longfellow and when he showed up drunk to meet Lowell, Lowell did not have anything else to do with Poe. In 1848, Lowell

wrote of Poe: "Three-fifths of his genius and two-fifths sheer fudge" (Thomas and Jackson xxxii).

<sup>154</sup> Ann S. Stephens won the \$200 in a May 1838 *Ladies' Companion* contest with the story "Mary Derwent. A Tale of the Early Settlers" under the pen name Catharine Rogers. Stephens was also an editor of the *Ladies' Companion* and *Peterson's* for years, frequently contributing to *Graham's* where she later became an editor. In 1858 Stephens published the reworked and expanded novel *Mary Derwent*, "a romantic and exciting tale based on historical events" (Henning).

<sup>155</sup> Eliza Leslie began writing by compiling a cookbook of dessert recipes, then turned to children's stories and romantic stories emphasizing moral conduct of young ladies and "tasteful living without depending on British models of behavior" (Dewey).

<sup>156</sup> Epes Sargeant, poet and playwright, worked with several New York journals until he returned to Boston to edit the *Evening Transcript* (Thomas and Jackson xl).

<sup>157</sup> William Wallace, a poet and lawyer, is said to have looked like Poe. They were friends, and he would defend Poe against critics. Wallace was "ardently patriotic," and his poem "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" is often anthologized ("Wallace, William Ross").

<sup>158</sup> The next month, May 1842, in his expanded review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, Poe offers the world the description of the short tale that is

now taught in many fiction classes. The tale should be read in one sitting, between one-half hour and two hours, uninterrupted. The effect must be sustained throughout, creating “unity of effect or impression” (298). The author does not fashion “his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect.” There should not be a word in the tale “of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design (298-99). Further, the tale must be original with “a strong under-current of suggestion” that “runs continuously beneath the upper stream of the tranquil thesis” (298).

<sup>159</sup> Poe had the highest regard for Hawthorne’s writing: “The style is purity itself. Force abounds. High imagination gleams from every page. Mr. Hawthorne is a man of the truest genius” (300). However, Poe does make two negative comments about Hawthorne in his May 1842 review. He suggests Hawthorne’s tales are too melancholy and do not have enough variety. He also charges Hawthorne with plagiarism, thinking Hawthorne has stolen a character from him: he believes Hawthorne’s Sir William Howe is an imitation of Poe’s William Wilson (later proved not true).

<sup>160</sup> Vincent Bertolini names the ailment that most bachelors suffer from spermatorrhea, “the involuntary loss of semen (through wet dreams or premature ejaculation, or during urination or defecation)” and emphasizes the

two common anxieties of the day, "excessive male sexuality and decreased procreativity" (23). The cure, of course, is to marry and have children.

<sup>161</sup> Kenneth Silverman notes that the narrator's sad state is like Virginia's ill health.

<sup>162</sup> Silverman points out that the girl in the portrait, young and beautiful, is much like Poe's Virginia.

<sup>163</sup> This plot has been said to be similar to Hawthorne's "The Birthmark." Seymour Gross states that Poe probably read Hawthorne's story after he wrote "Life in Death" and before he revised the tale as "The Oval Portrait."

<sup>164</sup> This motto refers to the vow of silence of the Carthusian order of monks, founded by St. Bruno of Cologne (c.1030-1101).

<sup>165</sup> Richard Dowell suggests that "Life in Death" was hurriedly written for the April issue; he believes that Poe originally wanted "Masque of the Red Death" for the April issue, but the tale was not ready. Dowell believes Poe wanted the full Hawthorne review of *Twice-Told Tales* in the same issue as "Masque of the Red Death," with the later exemplifying the unity of effect emphasized in the review.

<sup>166</sup> Some may consider how the artist, like the writer, can destroy his day-by-day life by his own devotion to art; Poe has a painful knowledge of such choices given the effect that his choice to be a writer and live a life of poverty had on areas of his life.

<sup>167</sup> Actually 659 words were eliminated in total; all references to opium were omitted in the revised version (Dowell 482).



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