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are "more compelling because more akin to our experience of mystery in the world." Considering Edith Wharton's short story "The Duchess at Prayer," Eleanor Dwight reveals the influence of Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" on both language and details of plot and setting. Kent Ljungquist persuasively argues that Poe's "Eleonora" influenced language and imagery in F. Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise, and that Poe's "To Helen" shaped such elements in Fitzgerald's Tender Is the Night.


Finally, D. M. McKeithan and Henry W. Wells elaborate upon the lives of two great scholars, Killis Campbell and Thomas Ollive Mabbott—men who were vitally influenced by Poe, and who, in turn, vitally influenced our understanding of him.

Clearly, as this fine volume attests, a variety of important writers have been vitally influenced by Poe. Yet perhaps, I wondered, as I finished Fisher's book, casting back to that afternoon in the Endicott Bookstore, the word "influenced" may be, in some cases, too weak. I vividly remember that in response to my inquiry as to whether Poe had influenced him, Isaac Bashevis Singer had paused from inscribing my book, turned up to me with gleeful eyes and grin, and declared, emphatically, "Not 'influenced'—'inspired'!"

Richard Kopley Pennsylvania State University, Du Bois


Joan Dayan's *Fables of Mind*, as sugested by the subtitle, is an inquiry in the philosophic sense—an exploration of Poe's views regarding the human mind and the dilemma of knowing and knowability as the mind interacts with the facts of the material universe. Dayan
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contends that Poe’s tales “are complicated critiques of the law of identity and contradiction, the law of cause and effect, and of any abstract notion of body and soul” (p. 3). The key word in these critiques is “convertibility,” the means by which “the facts of matter can be turned into suppositions of mind” (p. 9). Such convertibility leads to the “ruling idea” of Poe’s fiction—“the reduction, pulverization, and materialization of the very idea of having an idea” (p. 198). Dayan goes on to suggest that Poe’s philosophic skepticism about knowing is revealed not only in the twists and turns of his plots, but also in the very language he employs in delineating those plots, a language “that keeps us wondering in the variable realm of the either/or” (p. 7).

Dayan begins with *Eureka*, where the universe according to Poe is a physical demonstration, through the forces of attraction and repulsion, of convertibility. Dayan herself accomplishes a necessary bit of convertibility in this chapter, revealing that the hoaxes and jests are part of the grand design Poe had in mind: “Simply stated, Poe refuses to choose between spirit and matter, or prophecy and jest; a mixture of both will give the truest and most poetical ‘view’ of the universe” (p. 36). Even Poe’s language, in its uncertainty, is used to demonstrate the principle involved: “Poe believes in the limitations of our mind, and he proves this belief by luring us with concord and giving us chaos” (p. 27). Hence in *Eureka* we encounter “a diction composed of two warring strains (distinctness and abstraction), coerced into reciprocity” (p. 46) in order to “prove anything not provable (the paradoxical labor of Poe’s best tales)...” (p. 52). The end result is that in *Eureka* “we confront simulations of cosmic consolidation and fragmentation through a language alternately condensed and digressive. In this difficult dynamic, the status of ‘truth’ is itself questioned” (p. 78).

From *Eureka* Dayan shifts to the landscape pieces, “The Domain of Arnhem” and “Landor’s Cottage,” both dealing with the mad attempt to convert the material world into a representation of the creator’s mind. The tales of women—“Berenice,” “Morella,” and “Ligeia”—“demonstrate how profoundly Poe felt the need to annihilate a sure notion of identity and contradiction....Here, Poe wants to push his reader to the point where seeming opposites—what is and is not, man and woman—can be converted into and dismantled or replaced by each other” (p. 134). Finally, Dayan deals with the nature of life and death as set forth in “A Dream,” “A Decided Loss” (“Loss of Breath”), “The Bargain Lost” (“Bon-Bon”), and “Eleonora.” Here, “Poe proves, by his ambivalent or ambiguous writing...that questions of identity are not so much philosophic as linguistic difficulties. And even questions of life
and death, body and soul are no more than a wrangling with words” (p. 201).

Dayan’s is a tough-minded book, requiring of the reader the same careful attention she has applied to Poe. Although at times assertive rather than demonstrative, opaque rather than clear, it nonetheless rewards the diligent reader with an insightful explication of the intricacies of Poe’s thought and art. Several books about Poe have appeared recently; Dayan’s is one of the more important.

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Hawthorneans who cut their literary teeth on the formalism of New Criticism have persistently looked askance on psychoanalytic interpretations of Hawthorne’s works. Biographically oriented readings have likewise been suspect. Gloria Erlich’s authoritative and illuminating book should compel such purists to reconsider their position. With a thorough knowledge of Hawthorne’s fiction at her disposal, Erlich combines psychological theory and a close reading of the Hawthorne-Manning family correspondence to identify a network of family themes that form the substructure of Hawthorne’s writing. Not only does she provide valuable information about a period of Hawthorne’s life that biographers have largely ignored—the childhood years that were dominated by his uncle Robert Manning, but she also gives us new insights into such perplexing and psychologically disturbing stories as “The Wives of the Dead” and “Roger Malvin’s Burial.”

It has taken almost twenty years for the Oedipal conflicts analyzed by Frederick Crews in *The Sins of the Fathers* (1966) to be related to a real-life father surrogate. Erlich convincingly identifies Uncle Robert in the role and documents the ambivalent relationship Hawthorne had with his mother’s brother, the man upon whom he had to rely for guidance and support after his father’s death, but whose authority he nevertheless resented. The form that this latent hostility takes in Hawthorne’s fiction is outlined by Erlich; one motif will immediately be recognized by Hawthorne buffs—“the triangular pattern of a young man, a sexually tempting young woman, and an older man who has a blighting effect on the younger one.” Readers will also encounter an occasional fillip. Who would have credited Uncle Robert’s scientific management of his