

Edgar Allan Poe's "Morning on the Wissahiccon": An Elegy for His *Penn Magazine* Project

Diana Royer
Miami University

When Edgar Allan Poe arrived in Philadelphia in the spring or summer of 1838, the city boasted a population of nearly 206,000 and was second only to New York as a publishing center. The exact number of magazines in existence at this time is unknown, but one estimate shows New York State as having 57, Pennsylvania 42, and Massachusetts 14.¹ Certainly Philadelphia was ahead in the number of weekly miscellanies and women's magazines, and these periodicals had an average annual circulation larger than those of other cities.² Thus Philadelphia was a likely choice of residence for a writer ambitious of literary acclaim and hoping for financial security, as was Poe.

Poe wrote in a time when this country's periodicals were flourishing: while in 1825 there were less than 100 American magazines, by 1850 there were close to 600.³ Many of the new magazines failed within a brief period of time, but the failure of one never seemed to daunt the prospective publisher of another. William Charvat describes the rise of the periodical in these decades in terms of the decline of the novel and feels Poe must have been aware that the prospects for success lay within the magazines.⁴ Indeed, Poe's volumes of poetry had not sold well and he couldn't get a publisher to take a collection of his short fiction, partially because his stories had been published in dozens of periodicals, which brought him some recognition but made the material "old" in publishers' eyes. Poe's experience in Philadelphia would reinforce his belief that the magazines were his best market: he published over two dozen stories and much more nonfiction while living there.

Despite this rate of publication, Poe's life in Philadelphia was a series of residential moves and professional and social mishaps. Initially Poe, his wife Virginia, and mother-in-law Maria Clemm boarded at 202 Mulberry (now Arch) Street, moving in September, 1838 to a house on Sixteenth Street, near Locust. Here they resided until around May, 1842, when they moved to an unknown location. In September, 1842 the Poe family moved into a row house on Coates Street, only to

move again in April, 1843 to a house behind 234 (now 530) North Seventh Street, and leaving that address to reside somewhere now unknown before their April 6, 1844 departure for New York. In Poe's letters and the remembrances of neighbors, the reason for the moves was a combination of financial necessity and seeking healthier neighborhoods for Virginia, who suffered from tuberculosis.⁵

While in Philadelphia Poe repeatedly tried to launch his own magazine, which he first called *Penn Magazine* and then *The Stylus*. Several factors seem to have contributed to the failure of this project at various times: the economy, Poe's connection with magazine publisher George R. Graham, and, perhaps, Poe's personal shortcomings. Poe was acquainted with and formed friendships with a large number of people in the publishing field. The extensive list ranges from journalists whose names are forgotten today, such as the adventure writer Mayne Reid or the editor John Stephenson DuSolle, to writers of now minor status like James Kirke Paulding and George Lippard, to men whose names have become household words, like Charles Dickens and Nicholas Biddle. Poe ate and drank with, corresponded with, and asked for financial or publicity support from these figures and many others, alternately finding them encouraging and hostile.

DuSolle, for example, often reviewed Poe's works favorably in his newspaper *Spirit of the Times*, supported and noticed Poe's prospective magazine, yet insinuated in print that Poe took elements of his prize-winning story "The Gold-Bug" from another writer.⁶ Thomas Dunn English, a poet and prose writer, was friendly with Poe and his family, yet included a "malicious caricature" of Poe in his temperance novel *The Doom of the Drinker*.⁷ And famous is the story of Rufus Wilmot Griswold, who included Poe in the important compilation *The Poets and Poetry of America*, then slandered him after his death. Why Poe evoked alternating reactions to himself within and among people cannot be fully determined, but extensive documentation offers his drinking, his temper, and his vituperative pen as some possibilities. Indeed, while Poe's disgust with the majority of the contents of the magazines in his day was the impetus for his conception of his own, his criticisms quite possibly cost him financial backing and the fictional contributions of other writers.

Poe wanted to put out his own periodical because he loathed the magazines and gift books of his day which emphasized and paid handsomely for plate illustrations while pirating literature for which the author received no money at all. In his personal correspondence and the prospectus for the *Penn Magazine*, which

he published initially in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Poe repeatedly stressed his periodical would contain “no steel engravings.” Indeed, it would have artwork “only introduced in the necessary illustration of the text.”⁸ As for its emphasis, *Penn Magazine’s* “leading feature” was to be “an absolutely independent criticism.”⁹ Poe wanted the magazine “to become known as one where may be found, at all times, and upon all subjects, an honest and a fearless opinion.” In short, he wished “to kick up a dust” in the American periodical field.¹⁰

Poe deplored the state of American literary criticism, which amounted to laudatory puffs of works by popular writers, personal friends of publishers and reviewers, and those who could benefit a journal financially. Poe had been allowed a rather free rein by publisher Thomas Willis White when reviewing for *The Southern Literary Messenger*, developing a forthright, at times caustic, style of criticism that nonetheless probably was a factor in the magazine’s increased circulation. Moving to Philadelphia, Poe was constrained by William E. Burton, owner of *Burton’s Gentlemen’s Magazine*: hired in July, 1839 for a salary of \$10 a week, Poe was forced to conform to the magazine’s routine style of puffing authors. Burton, a Londoner by birth, had a successful acting career in England and America, managed and owned theaters in New York and Philadelphia, and founded his own magazine with an eye toward including “something of art, something of literature, and much of sports and the theater.”¹¹ He constantly urged Poe to tone down his criticism and make his reviews more pleasing. When Burton offered his magazine for sale in May, 1840, ostensibly to oversee the building and management of a new theater in Philadelphia, Poe saw an opportunity to launch the *Penn Magazine* he had been thinking about for at least eight months and published his prospectus. Burton promptly dismissed him. Angry at first, since he felt Burton’s resignation from the publishing business left it clear for him to enter, Poe soon turned his energies to distributing his prospectus and securing contributors, subscribers, and a financial backer.

Setting a target date of January 1, 1841 for publication of the premier issue, Poe wrote to nearly everyone he knew. Even a Cincinnati watchmaker who had once written Poe requesting a manuscript copy of a poem was sent a prospectus and requested to secure subscribers in the Queen City. Despite encouraging responses in letters from associates and supportive publicity blurbs from editors of other journals, Poe failed to find a financial backer. He publicized that he was ill in

December and would have to postpone the first issue of *Penn Magazine* until March 1841, but a February bank crisis in Philadelphia and, most likely, the appearance of the new *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine* in January 1841 caused Poe to "postpone" his premier issue yet again.

George R. Graham, who had worked as a cabinet maker while studying law, ultimately made publishing his career. He acquired *The Casket, or Flowers of Literature, Wit, and Sentiment* in 1839, then bought *Burton's* in November, 1840, and combined its subscription list with that of *The Casket*, launching *Graham's* with a list of about 6000 subscribers. Poe had only the promise of 1000 subscribers for his *Penn Magazine*¹² and no financial backer, so for an increase in salary to \$800 a year he became a literary editor for Graham, who reputedly promised he would help Poe bring out *Penn Magazine* in six or twelve months hence.

Looking back on the history of their relationship, it is easy enough to conjecture that Graham made a shrewd business move by employing Poe and thus removing the threat of a rival publication. This is certainly the way Poe saw it, for while he was associated with *Graham's* the circulation jumped from 6000 to 40,000.¹³ Poe's column "Autography," evaluations of American writers' work he began in *The Southern Literary Messenger*; his cryptographical series, carried over from *Alexander's Weekly Messenger*, a Philadelphia newspaper for which Poe freelanced while working for *Burton*; his criticism; and his fiction—especially the new format of the detective story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" introduced—probably did boost *Graham's* circulation. But so too did the plates of John Sartain and works by popular writers like poet Lydia H. Sigourney and tale writer Emma C. Embury. After he resigned from *Graham's* Poe remarked in a letter to Daniel Bryan, a minor poet who was postmaster of Alexandria, Virginia, that Graham deluded him regarding the *Penn Magazine* project because Graham knew Poe would succeed on his own: "Every exertion made by myself for the benefit of 'Graham', by rendering that Magazine: a greater source of profit, rendered its owner, at the same time, less willing to keep his word with me." ¹⁴

Graham did set up nearly impossible conditions for supporting Poe's magazine financially: Poe had to secure continued contributions from William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, Fitz-Greene Halleck, Washington Irving, John Pendleton Kennedy, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Kirke Paulding, and Nathaniel Parker Willis—some of the most sought-after American writers at the time.¹⁵ Poe

diligently wrote to these men, outlining his project, but of course was unable to secure their unanimous allegiance. Many of these writers had contracts to write exclusively for other magazines, and working against him was the fact that Poe had lambasted Bryant, Halleck, Irving, Longfellow, and Willis in print. Just what reply each author made to Poe is lost to us now, but as he makes no boasts in his correspondence to friends about having secured the allegiance of any of them he probably had little success. Graham couldn't have lost: had Poe enlisted the authors, Graham would have (at least) half ownership of the magazine and its sure-to-be significant profits; if Poe failed, as he did, Graham had ventured and lost nothing himself.

Poe needed Graham despite his underhanded business dealings. Virginia suffered pulmonary hemorrhaging in January, 1842 and Poe approached Graham for monetary aid. The publisher's refusal added to Poe's growing trepidation over their relationship, which he expressed in a letter to Frederick W. Thomas:

You ask me how I come on with Graham? Will you believe it Thomas? On the morning subsequent to the accident I called upon him, and, being entirely out of his debt, asked an advance of two months salary—when he not only flatly but discourteously refused. Now that man *knows* that I have rendered him the most important services; he cannot help knowing it, for the fact is rung in his ears by every second person who visits the office, and the comments made by the press are too obvious to be misunderstood.

Poe went on, "The project of the new Magazine still (you may be sure) occupies my thoughts. *If I live*, I will accomplish it, and in triumph." ¹⁶ Thomas, a popular novelist and songwriter, was a friend of Poe's brother Henry and met Poe in 1840 during, as Kenneth Silverman describes it, "a time when Poe was beginning to attract ardent admirers, persons deeply affected by his works and by what they glimpsed or imagined of his personality." ¹⁷ Such vocal supporters of his work as Thomas, coupled with the circulation increases of magazines he had worked on, undoubtedly fed Poe's belief that his own magazine would be successful.

Poe resigned from *Graham's* in April, 1842, claiming that the magazine was too concerned with publishing plates and sentimental literature. According to Poe Graham asked him to return to work within a few months, whereupon Poe remarked to a friend, "Should I go back to Graham I will endeavor to bring about some improvements in the general appearance of the Magazine, & above all, to get rid of

the quackery which now infects it.”¹⁸ But instead of returning to *Graham's*, Poe continued his *Penn Magazine* efforts, confessing to Daniel Bryan, “I am making earnest although *secret* exertions to resume my project of the ‘Penn Magazine’, and have every confidence that I shall succeed in issuing the first number on the first of January,” this time in 1843.¹⁹ Poe wrote to several people over the next year and a half about his magazine project, renaming it *The Stylus* in February, 1843 and finding a financial backer in Philadelphia publisher Thomas C. Clarke. Clarke, however, pulled out because the weekly newspaper he had started in 1842, the *Saturday Museum*, was having financial troubles (indeed, it failed in 1844). Other reasons for Clarke’s balking may have been his greater comfort with producing inexpensive newspapers and his staunch temperance.²⁰ Clarke seems to have become aware of Poe’s drunkenness on a trip to Washington, D.C. made, in part, on *Penn Magazine* business and Clarke’s money. He did later commission the temperance novel by Thomas Dunn English which covertly presents Poe’s excessive drinking.

Remaining optimistic in his personal correspondence about someday running his own magazine, Poe used a commission to write an article to accompany the plate “Morning on the Wissahiccon” to write a disguised attack on the current state of letters in America. Poe had previously written an article for another Sartain plate entitled “The Island of the Fay,” which *Graham's* had published in 1841, and had used the piece to poke fun at Joseph Rodman Drake’s and Fitz-Greene Halleck’s use of fairies in their poetry. His dislike of plates must have made his writing accompanying pieces for them a particularly odious task, one which he made bearable by conceiving subtexts for his genteel writing. The picturesque surface prose of “Wissahiccon” was geared to the reader of the New York gift book *The Opal*, appearing in the issue dated 1844 but sold in late 1843 for holiday giving.

In conceiving his *Penn Magazine* Poe had declared, “I am anxious, above all things, to render the journal one in which the *true*, in contradistinction from the merely *factitious*, genius of the country shall be represented. I shall yield nothing to great names—nor to the circumstances of position.”²¹ He objected to what he saw as regional and social favoritism in American letters. At that time New York, Philadelphia, and Boston were the largest publishing centers, and all favored northern, especially New England, authors. While Baltimore, Richmond, and other points south and west were considered by some as producing a few decent writers, any newcomers from these regions came up against an entrenched northern literary

tradition.²² The discussion with which Poe opens "Morning on the Wissahiccon" puts forth this predicament in terms of America's landscapes.

A topic widely discussed in the magazines throughout the first half of the nineteenth century was the development of an American style in literature and pictorial art, the establishment of a tradition distinct from England's. In "Morning on the Wissahiccon" Poe acknowledges the inevitable comparison of American and European landscapes, by which he also means literature, correctly noting "not deeper has been the enthusiasm, than wide the dissension, of the supporters of each region."²³ As with the current debate over which literature is better, "The discussion [of landscapes] is one not likely to be soon closed, for, although much has been said on both sides, a world more yet remains to be said" (939). One problem Poe sees is that British tourists "regard our Northern and Eastern seaboard as all of . . . the United States, worthy consideration" (939), just as British critics only consider the fiction produced in these regions. They say less of "the gorgeous interior scenery of some of our western and southern districts" because tourists have seen less of it, just as critics have read less from these regions because less gets published (939).

Further, Poe laments, British tourists "content themselves with a hasty inspection of the natural *lions* of the land" (939)—that is, critics concern themselves only with the literary lions. The problem is that just as "there are innumerable quiet, obscure, and scarcely explored nooks" that "the true artist" will prefer "to each *and to all*" of the other scenes, there are writers who haven't been as published who are better than lauded authors (939).

Pointing out that British travel writers have a certain number of column inches to fill and so must "[steam] it, memorandum-book in hand, through only the most beaten thoroughfares of the country" (941), Poe insinuates that like those tourists who speedily visit attractions by steamboat, British book reviewers rush through a reading of only the most published American authors. To remedy this the traveler, like the reader in literature, must spend time and explore the "sweeter portions" of America and its literature which "are reached only by bypaths" (941). Poe insists that the reader must exercise critical reading faculties and look at new authors for their works' merits, just as the tourist "must *walk*," "leap ravines," and "risk his neck among precipices," or "leave unseen the truest, the richest, and most unspeakable glories of the land" (941). In a final comment comparing Britain and America, Poe remarks that in England the sights are "so thoroughly known" and

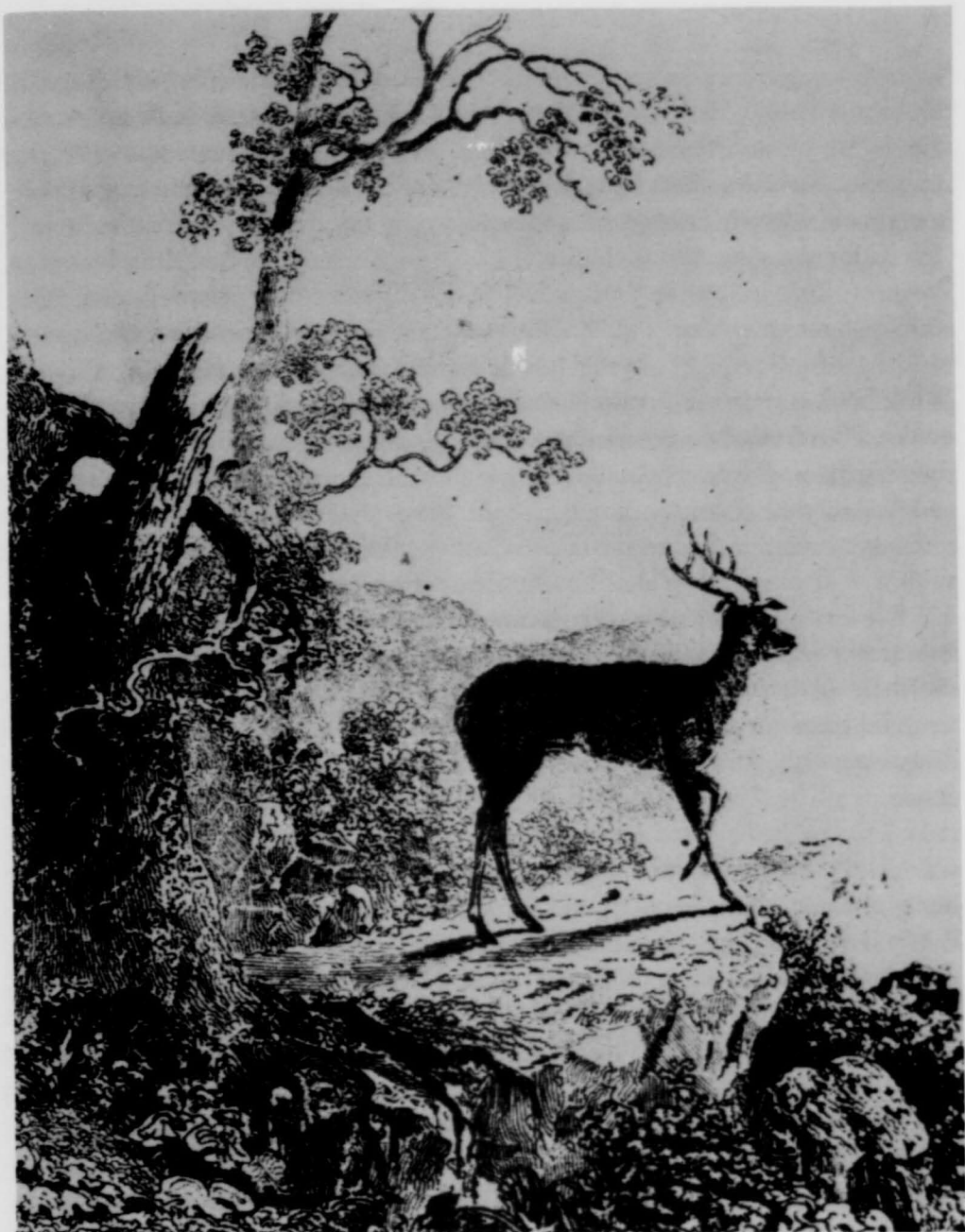


Plate by John Sartain which inspired the Edgar Allan Poe short story.

“so well-arranged are the means of attaining them” that little effort is required of the tourist (941). All of these sights are “collated with only the most noted, and with by no means the most eminent items” of the American landscape (941). He suggests it is unfair to compare the best works of British literature, those universally known and admired, with America’s popular and still developing fiction.

Concentrating next on a discussion of the character of American literature, Poe uses rivers to represent magazines and mountains to represent books. River scenery, and by extension periodical literature, has received “much . . . fame” because of “the predominance of travel in fluvial over that in mountainous districts” (941). While book sales were rising in Poe’s day, more people read magazines than bought books, a fact brought home to Poe when none of his books sold terribly well. And the magazines with larger circulations got all the attention and reviews both abroad and in America; correspondingly, like the “large rivers” that “absorbed an undue share of admiration,” “they are more observed, and, consequently, made more the subject of discourse, than less important, but often more interesting streams” (941-42). New magazines and smaller journals like Poe’s proposed *Penn Magazine*, as well as new writers, like the Southern Poe, were less recognized than the established Northern writers.

To continue his analogy, Poe associates his talent and his proposed *Penn Magazine* with the Wissahiccon, and George Graham and *Graham’s* with the Schuylkill. The Wissahiccon, a mere “brook,” “empties itself into the Schuylkill” (942), as Poe had poured his talent into *Graham’s*, increasing the volume of its subscribers. Expressing how unfairly the American literary scene has treated him, he writes:

Now the Wissahiccon is of so remarkable a loveliness that, were it flowing in England, it would be the theme of every bard, and the common topic of every tongue, if, indeed, its bands were not parceled off in lots, at an exorbitant price, as building-sites for the villas of the opulent. (942).

Poe speculates that were he to publish his magazine in England it would both be acclaimed for its high quality *and* be popular. Further, its contents might be reprinted and he remunerated for it—wishful thinking, considering British magazines often stole Poe’s work from American periodicals without even naming him as author.²⁴ Lastly, Poe’s fictional works would be “building-sites” for the imagination of those

endowed with this mental ability, for while he desired popularity among a readership he viewed as intellectually unsophisticated, Poe wished to create a fiction that could appeal to more skilled readers.

Poe's frustration over his own relative obscurity as a writer and over his inability to launch the *Penn Magazine* increases as the sketch progresses: "It is only within a very few years that any one has more than heard of the Wissahiccon, while the broader and more navigable water into which it flows, has been long celebrated as one of the finest specimens of American river scenery" (942). But, Poe declares, the public is mistaken about *Graham's* (allegorized as the Schuylkill in the sketch), for its "beauties have been much exaggerated," its "banks . . . are marshy," and it "is not at all comparable, as an object of picturesque interest, with the more humble and less notorious rivulet of which we speak" (942). *Graham's* pictorial embellishments ("beauties") have been overrated and its fiction ("banks") is sentimental, whereas the *Penn Magazine* would contain quality works of greater interest.

After allegorically putting forth these complaints against Graham and his magazine, Poe explains how to read his own fiction by citing Fanny Kemble as the author who first wrote about the Wissahiccon. Kemble was a British actress who married an American and published six books on her life experiences in this country. While her 1835 *The Journal of a Residence in America* which Poe mentions actually names only the Schuylkill, she appears to describe parts of the Wissahiccon. Poe's reference invites the perceptive reader to find the true meaning of his own sketch: he calls Kemble's journal a "droll book" that has "opened all eyes" (942). Kemble's volume excited a mixed response among its readers. To some it was a pleasing work by America's favorite actress, but others condemned it as a harshly critical work by a British tourist. By terming it "droll," Poe indicates his appreciation of Kemble's undercutting of American character and institutions and signals that he too is about to undercut Americans—specifically, the critical abilities of the American reader of popular fiction. If readers of his sketch will but "open their eyes" they will find a fiction that, like Kemble's, can elicit different responses from different readers. Just as "the true beauty of the stream lies far above the *route* of the Philadelphian picturesque-hunters," so too the critical reader must look beyond the picturesque surface of "Morning on the Wissahiccon" (942). He or she must be "the adventurer who would behold its finest points" by wandering up and down the stream (or

text) “as best suits his fancy”—and he “will meet his reward” (942). In a true invitation to the voyage Poe offers a description of the landscape of the Wissahiccon that also exhibits, to the perceptive reader, his critical ideas about good fiction.

In noting that “the brook is narrow” (942-43), Poe asserts that his fiction drives at one effect, an important aesthetic he had discussed in his 1842 review of Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales*. Poe there delineated the “skilful artist” as writing a tale in this fashion: “having deliberately conceived a certain *single effect* to be wrought, he then invents such incidents, he then combines such events, and discusses them in such tone as may best serve him in establishing this preconceived effect.”²⁵ To achieve this effect, “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.”²⁶ Poe followed his own advice closely; each word he selects for his fiction carries meaning in terms of the overall piece. Poe pointed out that in Hawthorne’s work, “a strong undercurrent of *suggestion* runs continuously beneath the upper stream of the tranquil thesis.”²⁷ The same applies to Poe’s writing, and indeed, he develops water imagery in “Wissahiccon” to suggest his own subtext:

Its banks are generally, indeed almost universally, precipitous, and consist of high hills, clothed with noble shrubbery near the water, and crowned at a greater elevation, with some of the most magnificent forest trees of America, among which stands conspicuous the *liriodendron tulipiferum*. The immediate shores, however, are of granite, sharply-defined or moss-covered, against which the pellucid water lolls in its gentle flow. . . . (943).

Taking Poe’s analogy of a stream to the thesis of a text, the banks would be sentences, and their being precipitous could mean they are steep, that is, difficult or learned, but it could simultaneously mean they have several precipices, or layers. Whatever layer one reads is well-written, being “clothed with noble shrubbery near the water” and “crowned at a greater elevation,” a higher level of thought, with “magnificent” American trees, “conspicuous”ly the *liriodendron tulipiferum*. As the only specific flora mentioned in the essay, this draws attention to itself. Until 1875, when a Chinese species was uncovered, the American Tulip Tree was believed unique and generally is the highest growing tree in its environment.²⁸ With this esoteric knowledge, Poe may have been suggesting the qualities of his own fiction. This notion is supported by the emphasis that his prose, like the rocks, may be “sharply-defined or moss-covered,” offering hard, realistic detail or a picturesque description

as the situation and audience requires. In either case his words surround and give form to an apparently transparent surface text.

Sometimes Poe's works of fiction may seem to digress, but he tells readers this is planned: "Occasionally in front of the cliffs, extends a small definite *plateau* of richly herbage land, affording the most picturesque position for a cottage and garden which the richest imagination could conceive" (943). Like the earlier reference to "building-sites for the villas of the opulent," this one proposes that astute readers will use their imaginations to build upon the ideas in Poe's seeming digressions, which are actually philosophical proposals.

In further describing his fiction Poe writes, "The windings of the stream are many and abrupt, as is usually the case where the banks are precipitous" (943). His layered fiction is more complex in its themes than popular literature; the "voyager's eye," or that of the exploring reader, will find "an endless succession of infinitely varied small lakes, or, more properly speaking, tarns" (943)—that is, numerous subtextual meanings. Poe qualifies with "tarns" because they are mountain lakes, indicative of *elevated* subtexts dealing with loftier ideas than popular fiction.

Unlike other romantic writers who ask directly for a willing suspension of disbelief or who, like Hawthorne, evoke moonlight as the medium by which to "read" their works, Poe emphasizes the daylight the title suggests and warns the reader that the "height of the hills" (943), the levels of narrative and depth of ideas, and the density of foliage, the complex prose and ideas, require all the light one can shed on them. He is alerting readers that to get the beauty of what he has done in "Morning on the Wissahiccon," as well as in much of his other fiction, they must scrutinize his text. To demonstrate, Poe offers a narrative about an elk that essentially is a description of an uncritical reader being hoaxed by his prose, falling prey to popular literary conventions.

The narrative is told in the first person, as so much of Poe's fiction is, to draw the reader into collusion with the narrator; in essence, the reader's and the narrator's experience are shared. In "Morning on the Wissahiccon" Poe creates a narrator who mimics the uncritical reader. Like the narrator, most readers would visit the stream/text and spend much time "floating in a skiff upon its bosom," just reading and enjoying its surface message (943). Such a reader succumbs "to the influence of the scenes" and "the gently moving current," or the gentle diction and rhythm of the sentences, and is lulled "into a half slumber," that is, into not exercising the

intellect (943). Poe evokes romantic thoughts in the reader not by appealing to the imagination but by using popular conventions to get a stock response, conjuring up “the ‘good old days’ . . . when the red man trod alone, with the elk, upon the ridges that now towered above” (943). These ideas “took possession of [the narrator’s] mind”—and by extension the reader’s—and, unaware, “the lazy brook had borne [him], inch by inch” along the stream (943), just as the reader is borne through the narrative, until both the narrator and the reader take the appearance of the elk as a majestic thing. The narrator admits that “for a few minutes, this apparition neither startled nor amazed [him]” (944). Essentially, Poe has demonstrated how he gets readers to accept the absurd. The narrator remarks, “During this interval my whole soul was bound up in intense sympathy alone” (944). This is very much like Poe’s language in his 1842 review of Hawthorne: “During the hour of perusal, the soul of the reader is at the writer’s control.”²⁹ Poe *has* engaged the uncritical reader to the extent the elk is seen as “repining, not less than wondering” at the changed landscape (944).

But Poe wants uncritical readers to know their error, so the elk moves its *head* and this movement “dispelled the dreaminess” in the narrator’s own mind to the extent he “arose upon one knee” or becomes half-aware that something is going on with the text (944). The narrator “hesitated” whether to stop floating on the stream or to move closer to the elk—whether to continue reading carelessly or to look at the text more closely. Just then he hears “hist! hist!” coming “from the shrubbery overhead” (944); the subtext is calling to the reader to be heard. A servant steps out of the bushes and easily subdues the elk, a sign that the author can manipulate literary conventions just as easily. The essay ends as the narrator’s “romance of the elk” is shattered: it is not a noble elk but “a *pet*,” meaning a favorite literary convention, “of great age,” implying it has been used a long time in literature, and “very domestic habits,” employed to appease the domestic reader (944).

Poe left Philadelphia, *Graham’s*, and his failed *Penn Magazine* project behind and moved to New York City on April 6, 1844. By October, 1845 he had acquired sole interest in the *Broadway Journal*. But the hopes he had expressed through “Morning on the Wissahiccon” about literature of merit being rewarded and of his own periodical being lauded were not to come true: by December he had to sell a half interest in the *Broadway Journal* because of financial problems. The last issue of the magazine appeared in January, 1846. A year later, February, 1847 found him

proposing to revive plans for *The Stylus* among his correspondents; in 1848 he issued a prospectus and planned a promotional tour through the southern and western states. In April, 1849 he secured a financial backer and printer for *The Stylus* and embarked on a promotional tour southward—a tour that ended with his death in Baltimore, on October 7, 1849.

Notes

1. Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957) 1:375.
2. Mott 377-78.
3. Mott 341-42.
4. For discussion, see William Charvat, *The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800-1870* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968) Chapter 4.
5. Kenneth Silverman, *Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991) 140-219; Dwight Thomas and David K. Jackson, *The Poe Log* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1987) 248-456; Edgar Allan Poe, *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. John Ward Ostrom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948) 197-98 and 234.
6. Thomas and Jackson 422.
7. Thomas and Jackson 437.
8. Edgar Allan Poe to Joseph Evans Snodgrass, 17 January, 1851, *The Letters*, 152; Thomas and Jackson, 300.
9. Edgar Allan Poe to John P. Kennedy, 31 December, 1840, *The Letters*, 150.
10. Thomas and Jackson, 300; Edgar Allan Poe to Philip P. Cooke, 21 September, 1839, *The Letters*, 119.
11. Mott 673.
12. Thomas and Jackson 205, 206.
13. Thomas and Jackson 205.
14. Edgar Allan Poe to Daniel Bryan, 6 July, 1842, *The Letters*, 205.
15. Halleck was a popular New York poet, Kennedy a congressman and novelist in Baltimore, Paulding had collaborated with Irving on the magazine *Salmagundi*, and Willis was probably the most successful magazinist of his times.
16. Edgar Allan Poe to Frederick W. Thomas, 3 February, 1842, *The Letters*, 192.
17. Silverman 176.
18. Edgar Allan Poe to Frederick W. Thomas, 12 September, 1842, *The Letters*, 212.
19. Edgar Allan Poe to Daniel Bryan, 6 July, 1842, *The Letters*, 205.
20. Thomas and Jackson 412.
21. Edgar Allan Poe to Daniel Bryan, 6 July, 1842, *The Letters*, 206.
22. Charvat explains one of Poe's designs in starting his own magazine as escaping "eastern critical cliques by getting subscribers in the South and West, where the influence of the cliques was slight" (91).
23. Edgar Allan Poe, "Morning on the Wissahiccon," *Edgar Allan Poe: Poetry and Tales*, ed. Patrick F. Quinn (New York: Viking, 1984) 939. Further references are to this edition and appear in the text.
24. For Poe works pirated by British magazines, see Silverman 133, 137, 198, 200.
25. Edgar Allan Poe, "Twice-Told Tales. By Nathaniel Hawthorne," *Edgar Allan Poe: Essays and Reviews*, ed. G. R. Thompson (New York: Viking, 1984) 572.
26. Poe, *Essays and Reviews*, 572.
27. Poe, *Essays and Reviews*, 571.
28. Alan Mitchell, *American Nature Guides: Trees* (New York: Gallery Books, 1990) 54.
29. Poe, *Essays and Reviews*, 572.