Amorous Bondage: Poe, Ladies, and Slaves
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Joan Dayan

Amorous Bondage: Poe, Ladies, and Slaves

The *order of nature* has, in the end, vindicated itself, and the dependence between master and slave has scarcely for a moment ceased.—Thomas R. Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature* (1832)

In October 1989 I presented the Annual Poe Lecture at the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore. As part of the memorial to Poe's death, we walked to the grave and put flowers on the ground—wondering if Poe was really there, for some say the body has been removed. We then proceeded to the Library where I was to deliver the Sixty-Ninth lecture on Poe. I had titled the talk "Poe's Love Poems." In writing it, in thinking about those difficult last poems of Poe—unique in the history of American poetry—I turned to what I called "his greatest love poem," the much-contested review of Paulding's *Slavery in the United States* published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in April 1836.[1] Traditionally these lectures are published as monographs by the Poe Society of Baltimore. A month after my talk, I received a letter from the Society saying that they wanted to publish the proceedings but advised that I limit the paper to the "fine analysis of the love poems" and cut out the dubious part on slavery.

I realized then that the process of how we come to read or understand our fondest fictions results from a sometimes vicious cutting or decorous forgetting. I have not been allowed to forget my attempt to talk about the "peculiar institution" behind Poe's most popular fantasies. I have received letters from male members of the Poe Society arguing that Poe did not write the proslavery review. Three years ago, after I spoke on Poe at

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the Boston Athenaeum, an unidentified man appeared before me, saying: "I enjoyed your talk, but Poe had nothing to do with such social issues as slavery." He then referred to an ongoing communication he had had with another Poe critic following my talk in Baltimore, adding that I had "overstepped the bounds of good taste and discretion by contaminating the purest love poems in the English language."[2]

As these continuing confrontations demonstrate, the very questioning of authorship raises questions about Poe, property, status, superstition, and gentrification, questions that put Poe quite squarely in dialogue with the romance of the South and the realities of race. Just as the ideology of Southern honor depended upon fantasies of black degradation, racist discourse needed the rhetoric of natural servility to confirm absolute privilege. As I will argue, for Poe the cultivation of romance and the facts of slavery are inextricably linked.

I don't want to sound like Poe in his protracted discussion of his infamous performance at the Boston Lyceum in *The Broadway Journal* for nearly two years, but I do want to draw our attention to the coercive monumentalization of certain writers—specifically, how necessary Poe (and "his ladies") remain as an icon to the most cherished and necessary ideals of some men. Here is Floyd Stovall writing on "The Women of Poe's Poems and Tales": "They are all noble and good, and naturally very beautiful. . . . Most remarkable of all is their passionate and enduring love for the hero."[3] It is perhaps not surprising that some Poe critics—the founding fathers of the Poe Society, for example—sound rather like the proslavery ideologues who promoted the ideal of the lady as elegant, white, and delicate. Poe's ladies, those dream-dimmed, ethereal living dead of his poems, have been taken as exemplars of what Poe called "supernal Beauty"—an entitlement that he would degrade again and again. Think about Lady Madeline Usher returning from the grave as a brute and bloodied thing, reduced from a woman of beauty to the frenziedly iterated "*it*" of her brother Roderick. Many of the dissolutions and decays so marked in Poe's tales about women subvert the status of women as a saving ideal, thus undermining his own "Philosophy of Composition": the "death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world." No longer pure or passive, she returns as an earthy—and very unpoetical—subject.

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It doth haunt me still

Let us take my experience as prelude to a rereading of Poe that depends absolutely on what has so often been cut out of his work: the institution of slavery, Poe's troubled sense of himself as a southern aristocrat, and, finally, the precise and methodical transactions in which he revealed the threshold separating humanity from animality. As I will demonstrate, his most unnatural fictions are bound to the works of natural history that are so much a part of their origination. Read in this way, Poe's sometimes inexplicable fantasies become intelligible. Poe's gothic is crucial to our understanding of the entangled metaphysics of romance and servitude. What might have remained local historiography becomes a harrowing myth of the Americas.

When we read about masters and slaves in the justifications of slavery which proliferated following the Nat Turner rebellion in Virginia on 21 and 22 August 1831, called by most Southerners the "insurrection" or "servile insurrection," women are very often absent from the discussion. Yet the Southern lady, pure, white, and on her pedestal, remained the basis out of which developed the proslavery philosophy. It was she, that amorphous yet powerfully contrived vessel of femininity, who represented the refined and artificial wants of civilized society. The patriarchal defense of the intimate relation between master and slave found itself coordinate with the insistence on the subordination of women. Here is George Fitzhugh, writing in 1850 what would become part of his acclaimed *Sociology for the South*: "A state of dependence is the only condition in which reciprocal affection can exist among human beings. . . . A man loves his children because they are weak, helpless and dependent. He loves his wife for similar reasons. When his children grow up and assert their independence, he is apt to transfer his affection to his grand-children. He ceases to love his wife when she becomes masculine or rebellious; but slaves are always dependent, never the rivals of their master."[4]

I now turn briefly to the disputed review of James Kirke Paulding's *Slavery in the United States* and William Drayton's *The South Vindicated from the Treason and Fanaticism of the Northern Abolitionists*. Here, Poe explicitly makes philosophy out of color: turning the negro inside out, he makes metaphysics out of a biological trait. The mark of blackness compels him to elucidate the propriety of possession, a belief that underlies his most popular rituals of terror. Poe begins his review with the French Revolution, arguing that "property" is what everyone wants most, and

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that such desire is dubiously called the "spirit of liberty." He calls this Revolution—which made its first triumph "the emancipation of slaves"—"this eccentric comet," nearly the same words used by Thomas Jefferson in *Notes on the State of Virginia* to describe the negro's imagination.[5]

But the crucial section of the Paulding review remains Poe's analysis of the "patriarchal character." His strangely sober take on "moral influences flowing from the master and slave" depends on what he calls "the peculiar character (I may say the peculiar nature) of the negro."[6] We can go further. Poe suggests that the enslaved want to be mastered, for they love—and this is the crucial word for Poe—to serve, to be subservient. Dependence is necessary to reciprocal affection, yet note that Poe does not comment on Paulding's excursus on women as "guardian angels," whose "appropriate sphere is their home, and their appropriate duties at the cradle of the fireside." Indeed, Poe says nothing about what preoccupies the conclusion of Paulding's book: his disquisition on women abolitionists who have "prostituted" (his word) themselves by "assuming the character of a man."[7] What Poe does do, however, before getting back to Paulding, is to describe the "essential" negro. He notes an inscrutable power "which works essential changes in the different races of animals." Like Jefferson he faces the conundrum of color, pausing to consider "the causes which might and should have blackened the negro's skin and crisped his hair into wool."[8]

Poe then turns to that well-worn familial argument, which he describes as the "loyal devotion on the part of the slave" and "the master's reciprocal feeling of parental attachment to his humble dependent." These "sentiments in the breast of the negro and his master," Poe explains, are stronger than they would be under like circumstances between individuals of the white race: "That they [these sentiments] belong to the class of feelings 'by which the heart is made better,' we know. How come they? . . . They grow by the habitual use of the word 'my,' used in the language of affectionate appropriation, long before any idea of value mixes with it. It is a term of endearment. That is an easy transition by which he who is taught to call the little negro 'his,' in this sense and *because he loves him*, shall love him *because he is his*."[9] It seems at first that the language of affectionate appropriation says simply that you love most what you own. But Poe goes further: he suggests that you own what you love. For unlike George Fitzhugh, Thomas Dew, or Beverley Tucker, Poe is not simply speaking of desirable and ready submission, he is busy making convertible love and possession.

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Mud and spirit

I might have titled this essay "Mud and Spirit," for Poe's textual cruxes have always to do with conversions between matter and spirit, between the utmost carnality and absolute ideality. The debate in *Eureka* about the suspension in cosmic rhythms between matter and not matter is grounded in enlightened disquisitions on the physiognomies of man and brute and, more precisely, in the character of a man and the nature of the negro. In most natural histories—for example Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* or those other strangely unnatural "natural histories" of the Caribbean—as in the works of Southern theologians and proslavery advocates, the negro approximated the most destitute and most needy of all animals. For Edward Long in his extraordinary *History of Jamaica* (1774), negroes, excluded from the rest of mankind, were signal for a particular kind of exaltation. According to Long, from these degradations, from "mere inert matter," we can ascend "into the animal and vegetable kingdoms," until finally we proceed "from analogy" to "matter endued with thought and reason!"[10]

What is most striking and of course most infamous in Long's meditation is that the word *negro* calls up a disturbingly minute analysis of body parts and gradations of being, until finally he draws an analogy between the negro and the orangutan. "The oran-outang's brain," he claims, "is a senseless *icon* of the human; . . . it is meer matter, unanimated with a thinking principle."[11] Thomas Dew, Poe's friend and professor of political economy at William and Mary College, warned that even with "the free black . . . the animal part of the man gains the victory over the moral, and he, consequently, prefers sinking down into the listless, inglorious repose of the brute creation."[12]

When Long wrote about what he called the progression "from a lump of dirt to a perfect human being," he meant the move from matter to man. But what is the relation between those "creatures" constituted as brute exemplars of matter and the rarified vessels of spirit, those species of "true womanhood" who haunt the learned discourse on race as the absolute perfection so antithetical to—and yet as subordinated as—that lump of dirt? What do we gain by forcing proximity on those categories and claims the naturalists so rigorously separated?

Perhaps all of Poe's work is finally about radical dehumanization: You can de-materialize—idealize—by turning humans into animals or by turning them into angels. As Poe proves throughout *Eureka* and in his angelic colloquies, matter and not matter are convertible. Further, both

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processes, etherealization or brutalization (turning into angel or brute), involve displacement of the human element. We are dealing with a process of sublimation, either up or down. Animality, after all, emerges for most nineteenth-century phrenologists, theologians, and anthropologists in those beings who are classified as both human and beast: lunatics, women, primates, black men, and children. What remains unmentioned, and uncoded, is the manhood at the center of these operations. It is this powerfully absent construction that Poe intentionally probes. He, the white epistemologist of the sublime, the enlightenment "universal man," haunts Poe's writings. It is his divisions, as well as his projections, that Poe confounds.

Thus the unbelievable overturning of the law of identity and contradiction that I have argued to be central to Poe's work can now be considered as more than a fable of mind. Poe's reconstructions depend upon experiences that trade on unspeakable slippages between men and women, humans and animals, life and death. Poe deliberately undermines the taxonomic vocations of male supremacy and thus attributes to it a troubling, ambiguous vitality.

"My tantalized spirit"

Poe's tales about women—"Morella," "Ligeia," "Berenice," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "Eleonora"—are about the men who narrate the unspeakable remembrance: not the gun-toting, masterful cavaliers or gentlemen of southern fictions of the gentry, but the delicate acolytes of erudite ladies or the terrified victims of the lady revenants. In these tales, possession, multiple hauntings, and identity dissolutions suspend gender difference as a component of identity. The memorial act demands a willing surrender to an anomalous atmosphere where one thing remains certain: the dead do not die. They will not stay buried. In Poe's tales these awfully corporeal ghosts are always women. As we read the compelling narratives of the men who wait and watch for the inevitable return, we sense how much the terror depends on the men's will to remember, their sorcerer-like ability to name and to conjure the beloved, who is, of course, the exemplar for later "white zombies."

Poe's ideal of "indefinitiveness," his turn to the "ethereal," "ideal," "breath of faery," or "mystic," is most weirdly disrupted in his poetry. The three poems that trouble me most are the second "To Helen," "For Annie," and "To———." Terms such as "saintliness," "sweet," "ideal,"

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or "feminine perfection" (often used by critics to describe the women of Poe's poems) obscure how deliberately Poe fragments and dissolves conventional images of "womanliness." In these poems Poe reveals the progress of perfection: its absolute dependence on the imperfect. In "To Helen," we move from a lady's "upturn'd" face in a landscape of dying, smiling roses, with faces also "upturn'd," to the progressive elimination of the world of nature: "The pearly lustre of the moon went out: / The mossy banks and the meandering paths, / The happy flowers and the repining trees, / Were seen no more." Every part of the lady is obliterated, except for her eyes: "*Only thine eyes remained.* / They *would not* go—they never yet have gone / . . . . / They follow me—they lead me through the years. / They are my ministers—yet I their slave."[13]

There is something less than ideal or sanctifying about these eyes. They recall the eyes of the Lady Ligeia or Berenice's teeth forever imprinted on the narrator's mind. In the process of abstraction, once every piece of nature named is blotted out, no woman remains but only what Poe calls "less than thou." Woman, "the fair sex," and the "romance" she bears can only be experienced as fragment. Freed from marriage, domesticity, and any possible relation to property, the beloved is reduced to a haunting remnant. But what happens to the poet? Yielding himself passive to the lovelight, as does the death-obsessed imaginist of "For Annie," Poe renders himself up as "slave" to those omniscient eyes: "Their office is to illumine and enkindle— / My duty, *to be saved* by their bright light" (96–97). The bereaved lover thus figures himself through a servitude articulated as salvation.

As a way to read the surrender of these love poems, I want briefly to recall the rhetoric of redemption in Poe's Paulding-Drayton Review. In the scenes of suffering that conclude the review, Poe appreciates the all-consuming etiology of possession. As the master weakens, the servant remains fixed in a relentless, nearly superhuman deathwatch. How different are such spectacles of feeling from Poe's representation of the compulsive lover in these poems, or in the bedside vigils of "Ligeia" and "Morella"? For Poe, adoration is always a deadly business. When he wrote his review, Poe merely reiterated the sentimental decor necessary for maintaining the illusion of mastery. But by the time he composed these late poems, he had apprehended the ruse of sentiment and not only exposed, but satirized the inalienable bond between the illusions of reverent attachment and the matter of human bondage.

In "To———" written to Marie Louise Shew in 1848, Poe fantasizes

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about being swallowed up by the object of his affections. A strange turn takes place midway through the poem. He takes the name that he will not name, "two foreign soft dissyllables"—Lady "Marie Louise"—(she remains unnamed in the published version) as prod to his undoing:

> . . . And I! my spells are broken.
> The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
> With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
> I cannot write—I cannot speak or think,
> Alas, I cannot feel; for 'tis not feeling,
> This standing motionless upon the golden
> Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams,
> Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
> And thrilling as I see upon the right,
> Upon the left, and all the way along
> Amid empurpled vapors, far away
> To where the prospect terminates—*thee only*. (88)

Here we have another strange vanishing ritual, which like that of "To Helen" seems to mock the progress of corporeality from matter to man. The more closely Poe analyzes and purifies his notions, the more he tries to establish a solid foundation, the more he loses himself in fantasy. Poe's unlinked Great Chain completely mixes men, nature, women, reason, and dreams. Not only does feeling summon dissolution, but Poe takes heartfelt affection and turns it into lust. What Southerners dignified by the name love, Poe rather unceremoniously presents as fierce, inhuman desire. In "To———" he animates not feeling or thought, but instead wildly physicalized passion that has far from salutary effects on the soul.

The poet trades his subjectivity, his very power to speak or write, for the most fleshly part of his beloved, looking into her heart of hearts. Poe has coerced feeling into image; as in "To Helen," we are left with a strangely fetishized kernel of womanhood, those scintillant "star eyes." Here, "thee" is implicitly the "heart" that can be reached only through penetration "adown the gorgeous vista" into a tunnel-like space that thrills as it constrains, "upon the right / Upon the left, and all the way along / Amid empurpled vapors, far away / To where the prospect terminates—."

Why does Poe so often present himself in these later poems as a "slave" to the images he has created? What does he mean by this posture of enfeeblement, his claim of impotence? What I will suggest is that Poe

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articulates a specific relation of domination, where the speaker who has defined himself as possessor is in turn defined by his possession. I quote two passages of variously willed passivity: a stanza from "To Annie" and a passage from a letter to Sara Helen Whitman.

> Sadly, I know
>   I am shorn of my strength,
> And no muscle I move
>   As I lie at full length—
> But no matter!—I feel
>   I am better at length. (98)

> Oh God! how I now curse the impotence of the pen—the inexorable *distance* between us! I am pining to speak to *you*, Helen,—to you in person—to be near you while I speak—gently to press your hand in mine—to look into your soul through your eyes—and thus *to be sure* that my voice passes into your heart.[14]

To gain a voice necessitates the writer's becoming the beloved. Getting into her mind will ensure that his voice gets into her heart. To want to be in the place of another is to be possessed. Or put another way, if you can't have her, then you can become her. Poe understands the law of the heart, the power in the word *my*. And in nearly all of Poe's dealings with ladies, whether in letters (recycled to various "real" beloveds), poems, or tales, he has possessed all the others so fully that they become the same, not only interchangeable with each other, but with Edgar Poe.

Yet if we put "To Helen" or "For Annie" in their Southern context, we can go further. Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, proslavery apologist and professor of law at William and Mary, who befriended Poe and was his greatest supporter when Poe edited the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1835–36, wrote much about "obedience to the law of Love." In his "Moral and Political Effect of the Relation between the Caucasian Master and the African Slave," the terms of contrast are again limited to the benevolent master and grateful servant paradigm. But in *George Balcombe*, a romance of Missouri and Virginia, published in 1836, Tucker included women—and especially "genuine feminine devotion"—in his philosophy of feeling. He asked his male readers to seek those women who reject the " 'ologies" of female radicals," and prefer "to learn the housewifely duties and plain old fashioned sense of a Virginia lady." Referring to unmarriageable "learned ladies," George Balcombe warns that there are " 'secrets in heaven and earth not dreamed of in their philosophy.' " Instead, the

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uncorrupted—and "uncultivated"—woman will beware "*intellectual distinction*, or *distinction* of any kind," for such "a feeling unsexes her." This *real* woman "reads her Bible, works her sampler, darns her stockings, and boils her bacon and greens together."[15]

Before turning to Poe's review of Tucker's *George Balcombe*, I want to emphasize that Tucker's portrayal of the lady depends for its effect on another favorite subject of the gentleman George Balcombe: the zealous and appreciative negro. Balcombe's most lengthy disquisitions concern wives and slaves. What is the "noblest of God's works"? Balcombe has the answer: "a *right woman*—a *genuine unsophisticated woman*."[16] The "established order of the universe," Balcombe's magisterial hierarchy, depends absolutely on distinguishing superior and inferior beings: "I see gradations in everything. I see subordination everywhere." Within this created order, rising in a climax of subordination, white men are on top. Men of "delicacy" marry only women who know their place. Only these women can enjoy the bonds of matrimony, and only grateful negroes can be graced with "that strong tie . . . spun out of the interchange of service and protection." Those born slaves actually "feel themselves inferior," and that sentiment alone is "the *rationale* of the filial and parental bond."[17] Finally, Balcombe clinches his argument about negroes, tradition, and "inextinguishable affection" by joining women with blacks in happy servitude: "Is gratitude abject? Is self-abandoning, zealous devotion abject? If the duties of heaven require these sentiments, and its happiness consist in their exercise, which of us is it that is but a little lower than the angels—the negro or the white man? . . . Let women and negroes alone, and instead of quacking with them, physic your own diseases. Leave them in their humility, their grateful affection, their self-renouncing loyalty, their subordination of the heart, and let it be your study to become worthy to be the object of these sentiments."[18]

Poe reviewed *George Balcombe* in *The Southern Literary Messenger* in 1837. Most of the review is plot summary. Although Poe says nothing about Tucker's theory of servitude, he does pay attention to the women characters. The ever-blushing Mary Scott, who was "'beautiful and intelligent—gay, sprightly and impassioned,'" Poe praises as "imbued with the spirit of romance." Remarking on Elizabeth, whom he describes as "the shrinking and matronly wife of Balcombe," he concludes: "She is an exquisite specimen of her class, but her class is somewhat hacknied." Poe's favorite character is Ann, the proper Virginia lady, who in Balcombe's words is "'wise, generous, and delicate.'" Poe concludes his

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judgment of Tucker's ladies by asserting: "Upon the whole, no American novelist has succeeded, we think, in female character, even nearly so well as the writer of George Balcombe."[19]

Like women characters in the works of John Pendleton Kennedy and William Gilmore Simms, Tucker's proper ladies are passive and accommodating, utterly dependent on the men who regulate their destiny. In *George Balcombe*, Tucker's portrayal of the ideal wife reflects the character of her husband: "while her husband's light was above the horizon, [she] hid herself beneath it, or if she appeared at all, modestly paled her lustre in his presence."[20] But when Poe yields himself up to the "bright light" of Helen, he shifts the entire patriarchal argument to the domain that seems relevant to him, namely, the reversibility of supremacy. In Poe's mechanics of love, heartfelt men become vague and impotent, while beloved women become shadowy or reduced to pieces of prized and sexualized symbolic matter. In a time when many argued for sharper categorizations and more hierarchy, when ladies, slaves, and men endured ever more difficult trials of definition, Poe managed to confound and denaturalize the so-called "natural order" of things. In prostrating himself before the fetishized women of his poems or creating powerful intellects, mystics, and witches like Ligeia and Morella, Poe worked changes on the subservient women praised by his fellow Southerners.

As we have seen, Poe is preoccupied with repeated and varied postures of enfeeblement: a deliberate weakness that leaves only feeling, an obsession with the heart that links the white male writer, the white woman of his dreams, and the ungendered, unmentioned black. Without mentioning blacks, Poe applies the accepted argument on the "nature" of negroes and the "spirit" of women—both feeling, not thinking things—to the white men usually excluded from such categorization.[21]

When Poe dwells repeatedly on the extremes of savagery and cultivation, brute possession and tender affection, he refers to a long history of racialist writings, including those by natural historians such as George Buffon and Edward Long. Buffon described "Negroes" as "naturally compassionate and tender."[22] Edward Long discussed at length the "courteous, tender disposition" of the orangutan, debasing black women in the process. Long tells his readers that orangutans "sometimes endeavour to surprize and carry off negroe women into their woody retreats." He then turns to these negroes, to whom he grants not a trace of affectionate feeling, describing them as "libidinous and shameless as monkies, or baboons." Entertaining no question as to whether or not a black female

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would accept an ape for a husband, Long assures his readers that "hot" negro women seek out these animals to "embrace."[23]

If white women were imaged by advocates of slavery as emptied of all qualities that could attach them to physical reality while black women became vessels for the carnality that was expelled from icons of pure womanhood, Poe takes the blushing belle and makes her both passionate and suspiciously white, with a deathly, unnatural pallor that makes whiteness as negative and opaque as what Jefferson had described in *Notes on the State of Virginia* as an "immoveable veil of black." Further, Poe's voice as poet reconstitutes itself, the male lover in nineteenth-century America, as a wholly negative consciousness, obeisant to the law of the heart.[24] The law, as Poe defines it, however, has more to do with lust than propriety, and he substitutes monomaniacal frenzy for the delicately modulated feelings of the "civilized" Southerner.

There is a two-pronged program here. First Poe plays with the possibility of one thing passing into another and vice versa—the *convertibility* so much a part of his project. The superior male mind erected over the bodies of women continuously purified or defiled, and blacks alternately sentimentalized or cursed, turns into the very objects once posited as external to it. Second, Poe repeats, exaggerates, and transforms the immutable, romanticized attributes white women are granted by men. He dramatizes the fact of appropriation, and thereby undefines the definitions that mattered to civilized society. It is not surprising, then, that one Poe reviewer writing in 1856 reflected: "In perusing his most powerful tales, the reader feels himself surrounded by hitherto unapprehended dangers; he grows suspicious of his best friends; all good angels appear turning to demons."[25]

Dying to serve

To read much of nineteenth-century literature is to encounter conceits of servitude. From Caleb Williams's anguished and ambiguous declaration to Falkland's "Sir, I could die to serve you!" to Jane Eyre's "I'd give my life to serve you," to a Bartleby who quite literally dies to serve while refusing to do so, readers who thought they would escape to fictions, or romances, found themselves treated to scenes of mastery and servitude. Even the supernatural in many gothic tales had its real basis in the language of slavery and colonization, put forth as the most natural thing in the world. One has only to read the 1685 *Code noir* of Louis XIV, that

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collection of edicts concerning "the Discipline and Commerce of Negro Slaves in the French Islands of America," to understand how what first seems phantasmagoric is locked into a nature mangled and relived as a spectacle of servitude. Its surreal precisions in human reduction (how best turn a man into a thing), like Long's anatomical permutations on monkey, man, horse, and negro, demonstrate how unnatural the claims to right and property actually were.

The *Code noir* or *Black Code* is a document of limits.[26] Unlike the racist disquisition on blacks as lacking the finer feelings of a tender heart, the Code is not concerned with the tangled semantics of charitable servitude or lurking debauchery. We read instead sixty articles that take us into a chilling series of qualifications: prohibitions that permit, limitations that invite excess, and a king's grandiloquence that ensures divestment. There is no time for discussions of innate inferiority, natural difference, or nightmares of contamination. For the blacks and slaves in French America are introduced not as persons, but as a special kind of property: a "thing," according to Roman law, juridically deprived of all rights. Once acquired by a planter, legally divested of their self and removed from their land, slaves became the planter's possession. Alternately defined as chattels and as real property, they were sometimes movable assets (part of the planter's personal estate) and sometimes unmovable, disposed of as if real estate, or in especially macabre cases, as if garbage.

If the *Black Code* turned a human into a thing, a piece of movable property, it could be argued that "the law of the heart" accomplishes the same end. For the law of the heart remains inseparable from the fact of property. Southern proslavery apologists appreciated the special privileges that accompanied possession, as did some abolitionists, who could never quite liberate their objects of pathos from domination. The acclaimed dispossession of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* works only as long as the "negro" is kept forever separate in essence from the Anglo-Saxon, locked in the precincts of affectionate service, impressionable spirituality, and childlike simplicity. Stowe's fantasy, brimful of just pity, remains entirely affirming and satisfying to the "superior" white ego. How different, after all, is Stowe's representation of Tom stretched out supine on the veranda in order to be close to the dying Eva—what Miss Ophelia calls "sleeping anywhere and everywhere, like a dog"—from Poe's portrayal in the Paulding-Drayton Review of the bond between master and servant?

Poe's dramatizations of possession—a reciprocal devouring of self and other—reminds us of the force of language, especially literary language,

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to allow the covert continuation of domination. Fictions of sentiment and idealizations of love, the special realm of right-minded women and domesticated blacks, are linked in unsettling ways to the social realities of property and possession. Poe knew how the sanctifying of women depends upon a more sinister brutalization, or spectralization. His narrators in "Ligeia," "Berenice," and "Morella," for example, demonstrate how the language of love can animate and sustain utter servility.

Sentiment, as Poe confirmed in "The Black Cat," is not only coercive but also despotic. The rare and special love between slave and master, man and wife, based on the law of property, becomes the medium by which perfect submission becomes equivalent to a pure but perverse love. A slave, a piece of property, a black pet, once loved in the proper domestic setting, effects an excess of devotion, an inextricable bond that proslavery apologists—and even Captain Delano in Melville's *Benito Cereno*—argued can never be felt by two equals. Of course, Poe writes "The Black Cat" to demonstrate how destructive is the illusion of mastery: just as the pet of perfect docility turns into "*a brute beast*," "a man, fashioned in the image of the High God," is dependent on and utterly enslaved by the very thing he has so lovingly brutalized (603).

No place of grace

We need to reread Poe's romantic fictions as bound to the realities of race, keeping "every thing . . . within the limits of the accountable—of the real," as he urged in "The Philosophy of Composition." There is a logic to his excessive attention to blood, things dirtied, and bodies mutilated. Lurking in every effusion of ennobling love is the terror of literal dehumanization: not only the Burkean sublime or the Calvinist's rhetoric of sensation, but that most terrific conversion, the reduction of human into thing for the ends of capital.

Think about the degradation and rot, the "premature burial" in the confines of the Grampus in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* in terms of the slave ship: the "close atmosphere of the hold" where Pym hides; drinking water "putrid and swarming with vermin"; Augustus's body "loathsome beyond expression," reduced finally into a "mass of putrefaction." When Pym describes the ship of the dead, he uses rhetorical strategies characteristic of an apocalypse, but the ultimate disclosure here is the stench of a slaver (a return to the "skeleton ship" of Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*): "Of a sudden, and all at once, there came

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wafted over the ocean from the strange vessel (which was now close upon us) a smell, a stench, such as the whole world has no name for—no conception of—hellish—utterly suffocating—insufferable, inconceivable" (1085). In reconsidering Poe's relentlessly circumscribed settings, the pits of unspeakable crimes, we recall the holds of slave ships, those "'dens of putrefaction'" as C. L. R. James described them in *The Black Jacobins*, his history of the revolution in Saint-Domingue.

I take as parable for the late-in-coming recognition of the African American ever present though unrecognized in Poe's gothic, "Morning on the Wissahiccon," his strange meditation on the hidden though "real Edens" of the United States. Those ignored areas, less travelled than those on the northern and eastern seaboard, are located in "the gorgeous interior . . . of some of our western and southern districts" (939). Poe finally chooses a "pedestrian tour" along the Wissahiccon, "a brook . . . which empties itself into the Schuylkill, about six miles westward of Philadelphia" (942).

After describing the typical walk, he recounts his own visit to the stream, where, enwrapped in dreams of the "'good old days'," he sees "or dreamed that I saw" an elk from the days when "the red man trod alone." His fantasies of those idyllic days before the land had been marred "by the stern hand of the utilitarian" are interrupted by a curious intrusion. He suddenly hears a furtive "'hist! hist!'" and says: "In an instant afterwards, a negro emerged from the thicket, putting aside the bushes with care, and treading stealthily." The "noble animal" does not escape, but attracted by the offering of salt by the negro, bows, stamps, and "then lay quietly down and was secured with a halter." So, he ends his "romance of the elk" (944). The Native Americans have vanished, but their elk is now kept as a pet, domesticated by a wealthy family, whose black servant retrieves the animal into bondage. The romance of the Americas, as Poe knows, depends upon a sequence of subordinations, variously called love, care, or devotion. An entire history of violence, genocide, and slavery, it could be argued, is hidden in Poe's apparently tame and visionary landscape sketch.

The facts of race intrude almost imperceptibly, yet persistently into Poe's romance. "God's plan for securing the hearts of his creatures," to quote George Balcombe, Poe insists is analogous to the polemicist's plot to justify human bondage. But he reserves his greatest scorn for those who condemn slavery while continuing to restrict blacks to the status of objects: recipients of the charity of white men who continue to be mas-

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ters. As "critical reader of the transcendentalist ideologies of his time," Poe's compulsive satire on the "pundits," on their mystifying language and cant, was fueled by the abolitionist leanings of those he called the "Frogpondians": Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, and especially Longfellow.[27]

Emerson's 1844 address on the tenth anniversary of the emancipation of the negroes in the British West Indies preceded Poe's Lyceum debacle by about a year. For Emerson, the mettle of white men has been proved by their largesse on "behalf of the African": "Other revolutions have been the insurrection of the oppressed; this was the repentance of the tyrant. It was the masters revolting from their mastery."[28] Not only is Emerson idealizing, and decontextualizing, a far more disturbing history, but what he calls "elevation and pathos" keeps whites quite secure in their superiority while blacks, though no longer called slaves, remain inferior. Invited to the Boston Lyceum, Poe deliberately insults his audience by reading "Al Aaraaf" (which he introduced by saying he wrote it at nineteen years old), renamed "The Messenger Star of Tycho Brahe" for that "drunken" spectacle.[29] Poe's blustering and offensive performance no doubt had its sources not only in envy, insecurity, and aesthetic debate, but in his disapproval of Emerson's high-minded celebration of West Indian emancipation as a "piece of moral history."

Poe's attack in *Eureka*, carrying further his condemnation of those he called the oracles of "higher morality," those "thinkers-that-they-think," who wander "in the shadowy region of imaginary truth," remained grounded in his disdain for those he condemned in his reviews as "the small coterie of abolitionists, transcendentalists and fanatics in general." After all, what he attacked as "the frantic spirit of generalization" was one of the major accusations of proslavery advocates in the South who called the Northern abolitionists fools of abstraction who knew nothing of the particulars of Southern slavery. In order to understand Poe's unceasing condemnation of the Bostonians as a "knot of rogues and madmen," we need to reread literary history as regional debate.

Poe's obsessive attacks on Longfellow—and especially his critique of the poem "The Slave in the Dismal Swamp" in his 1845 review of Longfellow's *Poems of Slavery* (1842)—come not only from envy or aesthetic discretion, as some have suggested, but the acute knowledge of the facts behind Longfellow's romantic sentimentalism. The Dismal Swamp, sometimes called "the Great Dismal," was for a long time the receptacle of runaway slaves in the South. Poe no doubt read Samuel Warner's "Authentic and Impartial Narrative," an account of Nat Turner's "Horrid

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Massacre," published in 1831. Warner's description of the "very large bog, extending from N. to S. near 30 miles, and from E. to W. at a medium about 10 miles," where cypress and cedar cast an "everlasting shade," could well be a source for Poe's ghastly landscape of "Silence—A Fable" (composed in 1832 and published in 1835). Even birds do not fly over this gloomy swamp, "for fear of the noisome exhalations that rise from this vast body of filth and nastiness. These noxious vapors infect the air round about." Warner then exclaims, "It is within the deep recesses of this gloomy Swamp, 'dismal' indeed, beyond the power of human conception, that the runaway Slaves of the South have been known to secret themselves for weeks, months, and years, subsisting on frogs, tarrapins, and even snakes!"[30]

Poe must have known about the scouring of the swamp in pursuit of slaves, of the hounds that scented unsuccessfully after Nat Turner. Yet, as so often in his writings, Poe misrecognizes or disavows the facts he knows, condemning Longfellow for writing "a shameless medley of the grossest misrepresentation. When did Professor LONGFELLOW ever *know* a slave to be hunted with bloodhounds in the *dismal swamp*? Because he has heard that runaway slaves are so treated in CUBA, he has certainly no right to change the locality."[31] But some of what Poe says matters, for Longfellow's poem purifies the place. He cleans up the mire. The vessel for squalor, the bearer of putrefaction in "The Slave in the Dismal Swamp" is his "poor old slave, infirm and lame," who hides in an unreal landscape:

> Where will-o'-the wisps and glowworms shine,
> In bulrush and in brake;
> Where waving mosses shroud the pine,
> . . . .
> All things above were bright and fair,
> All things were glad and free;
> Lithe squirrels darted here and there,
> And wild birds filled the echoing air
> With songs of Liberty![32]

Longfellow's picture of the "hunted Negro," like other portraits of the pathetic hero so popular in the North, allows the reader pity but also distance from the poeticized object of emotion.[33]

Poe did not accept Longfellow's translation of the Dismal Swamp into an Edenic scene contaminated by one spot of deformity, the slave. In-

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deed, Poe's dark, stagnant waters, the "morass" and "wilderness" in "Silence—A Fable," at "the boundary of the dark, horrible, lofty forest," reiterates the locale of the hunted. It is "The Island of the Fay," however, that communicates something of the terror felt by those Southerners who read accounts of black "monstrosity" and feared insurgent slaves hiding in the shadows of the Dismal Swamp. Poe's voyager observes "in a single view both the eastern and western extremities of the islet." The two ends mark two extremes of landscape and two myths of the South: one a "radiant harem of garden beauties," a piece of heaven, filled with flowers, butterflies, and sun; the other "whelmed in the blackest shade." The voyager dreams about the dark side. In the gloom of the cypress he forces a merger between his idyll of innocence and an unrelenting dirge. Seen after "the light," the shadow upon shadow on this end of the island move Poe to fancy a place of enchantment. But what kind of enchantment? "This is the haunt of the few gentle Fays who remain from the wreck of the race." As in *Pym*, the narrative depends upon a crisis of black and white, but here what was white becomes utterly imbricated in and absorbed by blackness.[34] And yet the shadows that overtake the imagined "Fay," identified by Poe as "Death," are part of her very substance, what had made her "magic": "her shadow fell from her, and was swallowed up in the dark water, making its blackness more black" (937–38).

In what should be reread as Poe's fantasy of the South, the shadows of those who once lived "sweet lives" gradually dissolve "into the ebony water" and become "absorbed into its blackness," until finally, "the Fay, now the mere ghost of her former self, went disconsolately with her boat into the region of the ebony flood—and that she issued thence at all I cannot say,—for darkness fell over all things, and I beheld her magical figure no more" (938). The spirit's magic, her enchanted beauty, is hybrid, an amalgam of black and white. Poe rewrites the cult of purity central to Southern romance. All that remains of "the master race" are these spirits. But in this fable of color, the white fays, in getting back their bodies, merge into blackness. No longer pure, they disappear, blending with what had been construed as their antithesis in the "natural" order of things.

When we note varying denigrations of blacks in Poe's early works, it becomes even more unsettling that issues of race, like those of gender, have not figured significantly in Poe criticism.[35] But then, much that is necessary to the sanctification of something called "literariness"—those texts that are praised as art not politics—is risked if we put Poe in his

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place, if we avoid the romantic image of a genius in "Dream-Land," "Out of SPACE / out of TIME" (79). For instance, in "The Journal of Julius Rodman," the "faithful negro" Toby is described "as ugly an old gentleman as ever spoke—having all the peculiar features of his race; the swollen lips, large white protruding eyes, flat nose, long ears, double head, pot-belly, and bow legs" (1242). And of course, there is the orangutan in "Murders in the Rue Morgue," whose strange gibberish at first suggests "primitive" vocables: "it might have been the voice of an Asiatic—of an African" (416).[36] In Poe's review of Robert Bird's *Sheppard Lee*, a story of metempsychosis, lost bodies, and wandering spirits—an obvious source for Poe's "The Gold Bug"—Poe discusses the "negro servant, Jim Jumble . . . a crabbed, self-willed old rascal, who will have every thing his own way." In Bird's story, as Poe represents it in his review, Jim Jumble "conceives that money has been buried by Captain Kid, in a certain ugly swamp, called the Owl-Roost. . . . The stories of the negro affect his master to such a degree that he dreams three nights in succession of finding a treasure at the foot of a beech-tree in the swamp."[37] Sheppard Lee's failure to find the treasure, falling dead, and then turning into a ghost and looking for yet another body to inhabit (briefly possessing the corpse of a "miserable negro slave" called "Nigger Tom"), will be revised in Poe's tale of Legrand, who does the conceiving, and the manumitted black servant Jupiter, who knows (*nose*) nothing—unable to tell his left eye from his right—concluding with a final, successful treasure hunt.[38]

Yet even though Poe used racist stereotypes in stories like "The Man That was Used Up," "The Gold Bug," or "Murders in the Rue Morgue," I suggest that he exercised these images in order to tell another story. Let us take as example "The Man That Was Used Up: A Tale of the Late Bugaboo and Kickapoo Campaign" (1839). Not only does Poe describe the dismemberment and redemption of Brigadier General John A. B. C. Smith, but he writes the "other" into the white hero's tale, putting those called "savages" or "things" into the myth of Anglo-Saxon America. Reduced to "an odd looking bundle of something" by the Bugaboo and Kickapoo Indians in a "tremendous swamp-fight away down South" (doubtless, an allusion to the Dismal Swamp), the General is put together every morning by Pompey, his black valet. With each successive body part replaced, the General regains the voice of the consummate Southern gentleman while remaining utterly dependent on the "old negro" he debases. He calls Pompey "dog," then "nigger," then "scamp," and finally, once all his parts are reassembled, "black rascal" (315–16).

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When Poe was "dying" for "Annie," he was writing his most horrible tale of retribution, "Hop-Frog; or, The Eight Chained Ourang-Outangs" (1849). What Mabbott regards as "a terrible exposition of the darkness of a human soul" is Poe's envisioned revenge for the national sin of slavery.[39] As we have seen, orangutans were deemed the most appropriate analogues for blacks. Here Poe literalizes what natural historians perceived as bestial similitude and prophesies the apocalypse of "servile" war so feared by Southerners. In the fiery climax of "Hop-Frog," eight cruel masters get turned into orangutans by an enslaved dwarf "from some barbarous region . . . no person ever heard of" (900). Just as the unidentifiable "gibberish" of the orangutan murderer in the Rue Morgue "might have been the voice of an Asiatic—of an African," this unheard of place refers implicitly to Africa. Tarred and flaxed, the masters are burned to "a fetid, blackened, hideous, and indistinguishable mass" (908). The blind spot of most critics to slavery and its justifications as ground for the turn in "Hop-Frog" is exemplifed when Mabbott reflects: "The manner of chaining apes described is not mentioned by any authorities consulted."[40]

The dependence of much gothic fiction on Calvinist theology and apocalyptic text can be particularized as the relation between a "suffering"—alternately degraded and idealized—"servant" and an omniscient master. In Poe's narrations of domination, enslavement compels convertibility, where, as Hegel argued in his *Phenomenology*, the distinction between master and slave is transformed: "just as lordship showed its essential nature to be the reverse of what it wants to be, so, too, bondage will, when completed, pass into the opposite of what it immediately is."[41] Aware of the perils of mastery, Poe repeats the conversion narrative so much a part of material possession. As with Poe's tales about avenging women—those beloveds who haunt and possess the lover—"Hop-Frog" inverts and reconstitutes what Orlando Patterson has called "the idiom of power."[42]

"When ladies did not walk but floated"

Poe's "ladies," once returned to their home in the South, urge us to think about the way rituals of purity depend on reminders of dirt. In the fantasy of dissolution that concludes "The Island of the Fay," the fairy reveals her essence in dying. Her gist is black, and hence her death is a darkening. In this final spectralization, Poe responds to racial taxonomies that depend for their effect on precariously rarified white women. This

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spirit exudes the shadows that had always filled her. In 1852, three years after Poe's death, George Frederick Holmes reviewed *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Holmes moves from the descent of the novel "from its graceful and airy home" to "a more vulgar mission," thus, he believes, tainting its "robe of ideal purity" to "that sex," who must be protected by "'the lords of creation,'" unless she, like her fiction, "deliberately steps beyond the hallowed precincts—the enchanted circle—which encompasses her with the halo of divinity."[43]

What Poe called the "circumscribed Eden of dreams" he knew to encompass more than just maiden purity. Women can be granted "spirit" by men only because these men delimit ceremonies of subordination that include women, blacks, dogs, and children. Just as slaves earn benefits when they labor and obey, women deserve gallantry as long as they are inert or inactive vessels. But if these privileged women interact with their maker, get too close to the men who act on them, men could be threatened with the foul contamination they feared. In love stories that become ghost stories, Poe's narrators first look upon, idealize, and feel with the mind, hollowing out the beloved image, and then turn on the object of their affections, only to suffer retribution for their conversion, or "alternation," as the narrator of "Berenice" puts it.

In "Our Cousin, Mr. Poe," Allen Tate writes that Poe's "exalted idealization of Woman" was "more intense, than the standard cult of Female Purity in the Old South." Tate suspects that Poe "was not quite, perhaps, a Southern gentleman." For he turns his dead ladies into vampires, and most important, these erudite women could never be part of the social and economic needs that undergirded antebellum Virginia. After all, Virginia perpetuated itself "through the issue of the female body, while the intellect, which was public and political, remained under the supervision of the gentlemen."[44]

What then is the nature of Poe's intensity in writing about women? In his "private" dealings with women, Poe was excessively polite, if not chivalric in courtly, Southern style. In his personal life, he appreciated the value of recycling terms of endearment, the more romantic the better. It did not matter what he did to his ladies—whether he courted more than one at the same time, lied, or betrayed—as long as he remained genteel. Yet Poe's objects of affection should not blind us to Poe's serious attention to women writers, nor to his awareness of society's mechanisms of control. Writing about Elizabeth Barrett Browning, he laments that a false code of gallantry prohibits the serious critique women deserve as

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well as men. Poe as critic did not want to subject women to "the downright degradation of mere puffery," and when he turns to Barrett's *The Drama of Exile*, he does not spare her his critique. He praises her for "very extraordinary resources," but condemns her for representing Eve not as "a woman" but instead as "a mystical something or nothing, enwrapped in a fog of rhapsody about Transfiguration." Unlike his cloying and sentimental reviews of Frances Sargent Osgood and Lydia Huntley Sigourney, Poe is tough on Barrett, no doubt because her "obscurity" reminds him of "the cant of the transcendentalists."[45]

Like those Southern gentlemen who kept "black wenches" and "white ladies" neatly categorized, Poe does not explicitly connect the idea of race to that of gender, yet he suggests such a coupling in his fictions and poetry. Although he reviews both Margaret Fuller and Lydia Maria Child, he never mentions their essays against slavery or their comparison of violated slaves to women subordinated in marriage. Only once in a review does Poe link the institution of marriage and that of slavery. Reviewing Longfellow's *Poems on Slavery*, he describes "the Quadroon Girl" as "the old abolitionist story—worn threadbare—of a slaveholder selling his own child." He adds, "a thing which may be as common in the South, as in the East, is the infinitely worse crime of making matrimonial merchandise—or even less legitimate merchandise—of one's daughter."[46]

What Poe seldom did in his criticism, he accomplished in his fictions. Let us recall that in "Ligeia" Poe's blond Lady Rowena of Tremaine is married off for money: "Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment *so* bedecked, a maiden and a daughter so beloved?" A "lady" like Ligeia becomes the site for a crisis of racial identity. In life, Ligeia "came and departed as a *shadow*," and before her bodily "return," the narrator envisions "a *shadow* . . . such as might be fancied for the shadow of a shade." That Ligeia would not tell her lover about her family, or ever reveal her "paternal name" makes this lady sound as if she might well be Poe's rendition of the favorite fiction of white readers: the "tragic mulatta" or "octoroon mistress."[47]

In "Ligeia," Poe signals the same physiognomic traits as did taxonomists of color in the Caribbean and the South: hair, eyes, and skin. Ligeia has "the raven-black, the glossy, the luxuriant and *naturally-curling tresses*" also used by Stowe when describing Harry in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and by Child in her portrayal of Rosabella in *A Romance of the Republic* and Rosalie in "The Quadroons," with her "glossy ringlets of . . .

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raven hair." In *A Romance of the Republic* miscegenation is safely reinscribed as nature's delightful caprice and the charming ability to speak many languages, to be mixed up or "polyglot." The female products of white and black coupling are represented as compounds of flowers blended, shaded, or striped in "mottled and clouded" hues and color naturalized as an "autumnal leaf" or the color of a pear made golden by the sun. Here, the origin myth for the mulatta is a "tropical"—never African—"ancestry."[48]

Ligeia's eyes, like those of the sensuous Creole beauties described by numerous observers, are large and expressive. But Poe goes further: "far larger than the ordinary eyes of *our own race*. They were even fuller than the fullest of the *gazelle eyes* of the tribe of the valley of Nourjahad." Mabbott notes that Poe alludes "to *The History of Nourjahad* by 'Sidney Biddulph' (Mrs. Frances Sheridan)" and then quotes from this text that describes Nourjahad's "seraglio" as "adorned with a number of the most beautiful female slaves, . . . whom he purchased at vast expense."[49] Ligeia's sirenlike voice, the reiterated " 'strangeness' " in her beauty, and her passion all suggest a racial heritage that would indeed be suspect, but Poe's rhapsodic and tortured circlings around the *whatness* of eyes that are linked to those of a dark tribe suggest how masterful had become the euphemisms for marks of blackness in a land preoccupied with construing purity out of impurity. If we recall Poe's elaborate, phantasmagoric decor of the bridal chamber wrought for the new bride Rowena with its "few ottomans and golden candelabra, of Eastern figure," we are reminded that the scene for Ligeia's resurrection is indeed a harem devoted to the memory and perpetuation of a submission far more grounded in a particular and "peculiar" institution than has previously been noted.

Could a white lady of sufficient piety be described as having such "wild eyes," "wild desire," and "wild longing"?[50] Ligeia's "skin rivalling the purest ivory" links her further to the dubious status of women of color. How can you detect color in a white "suspect"? As colors faded and hair and eyes became closer to those of "pure" whites, new distinctions had to be invented. The attempt to name, label, and classify the degrees of color in between the extremes of black and white resulted in fantastic taxonomies of a uniquely racialized enlightenment. The epistemology of whiteness, absolutely dependent for its effect on the detection of blackness, resulted in fantasies about secret histories and hidden taints that would then be backed up by explicit codes of law. And since it was not always possible to detect black blood in lightened skin, natural historians

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assured their readers that the tone of whiteness was different: unnatural, less animated, dull or faded, white but pale or closer to yellow, with a tint ranging from grayish yellow to yellowish white like ivory. This gothic obsession with identity and origins—for example, the indeterminacy of Isabella with "dark, olive cheek" in Melville's *Pierre* ("I seem not of woman born")—gets its metaphors and the myth of its ambiguities from the mottled discourse of racial identity.

Further, if matrimony remains a woman's sole purpose, even a Southern writer like Tucker in *George Balcombe* suggests, though indirectly, the horrific slippages that Poe deliberately intensifies. According to Tucker's gentlemen, a proper woman is endowed with primitive qualities that civilized society hones into generous sentiments. Docile, she learns to cherish her husband's superiority and subordinate herself to the "master feeling of her heart." A turn to God, "the great King above all gods," clinches these bonds of affection. God loves and asks nothing in return from "us helpless worms" except "our hearts."[51] Poe takes this fiction and exposes it as coordinate with the most terrifying possession. In Poe's tales about women, marriage turns what was cherished into what is scorned. In this process of reciprocal repulsions, the "Conqueror Worm" gets into the heart, "seraphs sob at vermin fangs," and as beastliness reveals itself to be the true if concealed ground of immaculate femininity, the Great House collapses.

Poe demonstrates that if justifications of slavery depended on making the black nonhuman and unnatural, women were also subject to the mind of man. They would always remain on the side of the body, no matter how white, how rarified or ethereal, or how black, earthy, and substantial. They can be hags or beauties, furies or angels. They are nothing but phantasms caught in the craw of civilization, and Poe's gothic literalizes the way that racialist terminology—and the excesses of a system that depended on discourses of gender purity for its perpetuation—generated its own gods and monsters.

Getting back to Richmond

Though Poe left Richmond in 1827, he returned home in 1835 and became editorial assistant, principal book reviewer, and finally editor of *The Southern Literary Messenger*. In 1830 the total population of Virginia was 1,211,405, of whom 694,300 were white, 47,348 were "free persons of color," and 469,757 were black slaves. Further, the 1820 census

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figures for Richmond demonstrate the high percentage of African Americans in the city of Poe's youth: about two-thirds of the households owned slaves.[52] So, Poe's Virginia could be argued to be a very African place.

Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion—in Southampton, some seventy miles below Richmond—along with accounts of butchery and, very often, stories of "unoffending women and children" victims were summoned whenever the question of emancipation was raised. And since emancipation in the British West Indies had been finalized in 1834, a year before Poe's return, we can imagine that many proslavery advocates found themselves faced with a double bind: rebellion or emancipation. It could be argued that folks in the Virginia Tidewater knew more about the revolution in Saint-Domingue than many in the Northern states, since proslavery newspapers and pamphlets compared "General Nat's" failed insurrection to the successful working of blood by Dessalines in Haiti in 1804, "when in one fatal night more than 1000 of the unfortunate white inhabitants of the island of St. Domingo (men, women and children) were butchered by the Negroes!"[53]

Some Virginians even feared that some of the refugees of Saint-Domingue who settled in Southampton had brought their negroes with them. "Over ten thousand émigrés from that island fled to the southern States, bringing with them new elements of fear of slave uprisings."[54] The *Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, for example, published frequent accounts of women tortured by black insurgents, their eyes gouged out with corkscrews and bellies ripped open to reveal unborn children to their dying mothers.[55] Although Southern newspapers tended to underplay white-sponsored atrocities during the last years of the war for independence, they did report General Rochambeau's use of bloodhounds from Havana, Cuba to disembowel black prisoners in his spectacular arena set up on the grounds of the old Jesuit monastery at Cap Français. Most of the French colonists—nearly 25,000—seeking refuge in the United States ended up in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, and Norfolk. As the exiled white Martiniquan lawyer and historian Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry noted, Norfolk was especially attractive, since "the inhabitants of this place have shown a constant affection for the French."[56]

Poe returned to Richmond as fear of black terror and retribution spread. Note that in the review of *Slavery in the United States*, though Poe refers to "recent events in the West Indies" and talks of "the parallel movement here," he nowhere refers to the Nat Turner insurrection.

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Perhaps Poe knew that his readers would too readily recall the Turner rebellion and white vengeance in southeastern Virginia, the inhuman carnage that finally cost many innocent blacks—some estimate about 200—their lives. As Poe worked on the *Southern Literary Messenger*, increasing circulation from five hundred to about thirty-five hundred, what became known as the Great Southern Reaction of the 1830s and 1840s created a closed, nearly martial society intent on preserving its slave-based civilization.

Slave trading in the city of Richmond was frequent and had reached its height in Virginia during the 1830s. Some have argued that Virginia slave traders enjoyed an affluence rivaled only by tobacco merchants of the previous century: "Prior to 1846, the Bell Tavern, on the north side of Main just below Fifteenth, was the scene of a great many of these deplorable spectacles."[57] Poe must have frequently walked past the Richmond slave market, which was only two blocks away from the offices of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. He doubtless witnessed slave auctions and experienced the terror of those led through the streets, chained in slave coffles, readied for their journey to the Deep South.

We have evidence of Poe's relationships with the leading proslavery advocates in Virginia, but what about his relationship to those variously represented in the Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831–1832 as "pets," "playmates of the white children," "the merriest people in the world," "valuable property," or "monsters"? How can we begin to think about those who left no written records but were a constant presence, whose existence though distorted or erased informed Poe's unique brand of gothic narrative in ways that have been ignored?

Poe's guardians, the Allans, had at least three household servants (all slaves, but at least one of these was owned by someone else and bonded to Mr. Allan). On 1 January 1811, Mr. Allan hired a woman named Judith from Master Cheatham for 25 pounds, "to be retained and clothed as usual under a bond of £50."[58] According to some accounts, Judith was Edgar's "Mammy," perhaps the "Juliet" or "Eudocia" mentioned by receipts and the bills of sale as being in John Allan's household. Whatever her name, she sometimes took him to the "Old Church on the Hill" grounds where he spent many late afternoons. After all, his foster mother Fanny Allan was often too ill to attend to Poe. Though we hear about Poe's dead mother Eliza and all those subsequent, surrogate pale mothers (especially Jane Stannard and Fanny Allan in Richmond), we are never reminded of the black woman in the house. When Poe was awaiting entry into West

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Point in 1829, living with Maria Clemm in Baltimore, he sold a slave. In April 1940, *The Baltimore Sun* published the record of the bill of sale of "a negro man named Edwin," calling it an "Item for Biographers." The article begins: "While examining some entries in an underground record room at the Courthouse a few days ago a Baltimore man who wishes his name withheld quite by chance came across an old document relating to Edgar Allan Poe, which seems thus far to have entirely escaped the poet's biographers."[59]

Many Virginia accounts of the Nat Turner rebellion blamed its occurrence on superstition and religious fanaticism. But these written accounts of the "extraordinary" beliefs of negroes, shared by many whites, probably mattered less to Poe than his daily encounters with slaves in his own house or on the plantations he visited. Poe's gothic, his unique tools of terror, finally have less to do with "Germany" or the "soul," as he once proclaimed in the Preface to his "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," than with African American stories of the angry dead, sightings of teeth, the bones and matter of charms, the power of conjuring. Let me add that such stories, merging with early Christian folk beliefs transplanted to the South, as well as the frenzy of revivals with whites and slaves caught up in the Holy Spirit, might also have encouraged the strangely sentient landscapes of Poe, his obsession with the reciprocities between living and dead, human and animal, the possessions and demonic visitations of his most well-known tales.[60]

Dialogue with the dead

In writing *Fables of Mind: An Inquiry Into Poe's Fiction*, I struggled with the philosophical and religious cruxes in Poe's tales. Philosophy meant Locke. Religion meant Calvin and Edwards. The path to enlightenment was clear. I could explain the dark hauntings, the spectral return of a Ligeia who took possession of the physical Rowena by looking at Calvin's insistence on visibility in the flesh, by Locke's paradoxes on identity, and even Newtonian mechanics. Yet what if we turn to the equally critical ground in Poe's past, that of African American belief? In "Unspeakable Things Unspoken," Toni Morrison notes the presence, the shadow, the ghost from which most critics have fled.[61] In a world where identities wavered between colors, where signs of whitening and darkening were quickly apprehended by all inhabitants, enlightenment depended on shadows. The gods, monsters, and ghosts spawned by racist discourse re-

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defined the supernatural. What the white masters called sorcery was rather an alternative philosophy, including spiritual experiences shared by both blacks and whites. The most horrific spirits of the Americas were produced by the logic of the master filtered through the thought and memory of slaves.

After "Ligeia" was published in 1839, Poe sent it to Philip Cooke and asked whether or not the ending was intelligible. What most dismays Cooke about the ending is the way "the Lady Ligeia takes possession of the deserted *quarters* . . . of the Lady Rowena." He explains, "There I was shocked by a violation of the ghostly proprieties . . . and wondered how the Lady Ligeia—a wandering essence—could, in quickening *the body* of the Lady Rowena . . . become suddenly the visible, bodily, Ligeia."[62] Consider the ending: Ligeia with her "huge masses of long and dishevelled hair" and "wild eyes" enters and takes the place of the "fair-haired, the blue-eyed Rowena." Seeing the quickening, risen flesh, the narrator thinks, "Can it be Rowena?" only to recognize Ligeia. Familiar with stories of the returning dead, Poe worked them into the tale he called his "best." The spirit so fills the living body that no trace remains of the once-alive vessel; taken by the spirit, the body reacts. Its gestures and lineaments conform to ghostly demands. We are no longer dealing with a narrator in trance, a madman who hallucinates, a drugged murderer, but the scene of possession. Not by a white master—the affectionate appropriator of Poe's disputed review—but by a spirit, conjured and rising up, like Ligeia, from quiescence to revenge.

I grew up in the South and recall the terrors that constitute knowledge, the awful concreteness of the spirit and theories that needed no John Locke to reveal wandering souls or shape-shifting identities. Who are the ghosts to drag you down? Blood on the carpet, a look at the moon that could kill you, circumscribed by fear of women who left their skin at the door—haints more present than the living. The question is how to bring what has been constituted as mere foolishness or worse into the study of a literary text without turning practice into cliché, without turning African American belief into a trope in yet another scholarly exercise. I conclude with two slave stories recorded by Moreau de Saint-Méry before he left Saint-Domingue for the United States. These stories of genesis suggest that cosmologies of color were not the property of whites alone:

> According to them, God made man and he made him white; the devil who spied on him made another being just the same; but when he fin-

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> ished the devil found him black, by a punishment of God who did not want his work to be confounded with that of the Evil Spirit. The latter was so irritated by this distinction, that he slapped the copy and made him fall on his face, which flattened his nose and swelled his lips. Other less modest negroes say that the first man came out black from the hands of the Creator and that the White is only a negro whose color has deteriorated.[63]

Poe's racialized gothic—the terrors of whiteness in Poe's *Pym*, the shadows and shades in fairyland, the blurring of privilege and perversion in tales about ladies who turn into revenants and lovers who turn into slaves—requires that we rethink the meaning of color and the making of monsters, as well as question the myths of the masters who still haunt the halls of the academy.

University of Arizona

Notes

An early version of this paper was presented at the University of Arizona, 18 December 1991. I am grateful to Edgar Dryden and Drexel Woodson for their sharp questions.

1 Edgar Allan Poe, review of *Slavery in the United States* by J. K. Paulding and *The South Vindicated from the Treason and Fanaticism of the Northern Abolitionists* by William Drayton, *Southern Literary Messenger*, April 1836. Reprinted in *Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1902), 8:265–75. Although the review is often noted as the "Paulding Review," Bernard Rosenthal argues that it is more accurate to refer to it as the "Paulding-Drayton Review," since the other book under review (*The South Vindicated*) once thought to be anonymous is now known to be by William Drayton, to whom Poe dedicated his *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque, 1839–40*. See Rosenthal, "Poe, Slavery, and the *Southern Literary Messenger*: A Reexamination," *Poe Studies* 7, 2: 29–38. Here I refer only to Paulding's *Slavery in the United States* since I believe that Poe responds primarily to that text. For my full analysis of Poe's review, see "Romance and Race" in *The Columbia History of the American Novel*, ed. Emory Elliott (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), 94–102.

2 Not until 1941, when William Doyle Hull claimed in his doctoral dissertation at the University of Virginia that Nathaniel Beverley Tucker wrote the Paulding review did scholars question Poe's authorship. See William Doyle Hull, "A Canon of the Critical Reviews of Edgar Allan Poe in the *Southern Literary Messenger* and *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, with an examination

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of his relationships with the proprietors" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1941). Previous to Hull's work, the review was included in James A. Harrison's Virginia edition of Poe's work, and both Hervey Allen in *Israfel* (1929) and Arthur Hobson Quinn in his *Critical Biography* (1941) discuss the Paulding review as Poe's work. After Hull, the institutional erasure of Poe, slavery, and the South has continued in the Library of America edition of Poe's *Essays and Reviews* (1984), which omits the review. I cannot rehearse the arguments for and against Poe's authorship of the review here, but direct the reader to the excellent, still unsurpassed analysis by Bernard Rosenthal cited in note 1. A marvel of restorative historiography and detection, Rosenthal's essay remains the most convincing unraveling to date of the enigmatic review. Besides emphasizing Poe's friendship with proslavery apologists like Thomas Dew and Nathaniel Beverley Tucker and his attachment, even if vexed, to the idea of Virginia aristocracy, Rosenthal demonstrates that the letter of 2 May 1836, used by Hull and others to prove Tucker's authorship of the review, must refer to a different essay. Among the many other details he adduces to question Hull's contention, Rosenthal demonstrates that there remains a "basic chronological inconsistency in relation to the letter and the appearance of portions of the April *Messenger* in the *New Yorker*" (31–32). See also John Carlos Rowe, "Poe, Antebellum Slavery, and Modern Criticism" in *Poe's "Pym": Critical Explorations*, ed. Richard Kopley (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1992), 117–41, which came to my attention after this essay was completed.

3 Floyd Stovall, "The Women of Poe's Poems and Tales," *Texas Studies in English*, no. 5 (1925): 197.

4 Originally published as "Slavery Justified by a Southerner," later included in *Sociology for the South, or The Failure of Free Society* (1854). Cited here from *Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South*, ed. Eric L. McKitrick (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), 45.

5 Thomas Jefferson, in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, talks about the "wild and extravagant" imagination of the negro which, "in the course of its vagaries, leaves a tract of thought as incoherent and eccentric, as is the course of a meteor in the sky" (ed. William Peden [New York: Norton, 1954], 189).

6 Poe, review of Paulding, 270.

7 James Kirke Paulding, *Slavery in the United States* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1836), 309.

8 Poe, review of Paulding, 270–71.

9 Poe, review of Paulding, 271–72.

10 Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, or General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of that Island* (London, 1774; reprint, New York: Arno, 1972), 2:356, 372.

11 Long, 2:30.

12 Thomas Dew, *Review of the Debate in the Virginia Legislature*, in *Slavery Defended*, 30. After the Nat Turner rebellion, Virginia's legislators debated

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openly during January and February 1832, with antislavery spokesmen arguing for colonization of the blacks in Liberia and stressing the destructive effects of slave labor. In the end, most delegates accepted the proslavery argument that colonization was too costly to implement. It is generally agreed that Dew's expert analysis of the debates with his conclusions and recommendations defeated once and for all western Virginia's gradual emancipationists and ushered in a decade of repressive slave controls (the "black laws") and expanded patrol and militia systems.

13 Edgar Allan Poe, *Poetry and Tales*, ed. Patrick F. Quinn (New York: Library of America, 1984), 95–96. All subsequent quotations from Poe's poetry and tales are from this edition and are cited in the text.

14 Edgar Allan Poe, *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. John Ward Ostrom, vol. 2, rev. ed. (New York: Gordian, 1966), 396.

15 Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, *George Balcombe, A Novel*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1836), 1:88, 277, 275, 278.

16 Tucker, 1:273.

17 Tucker, 2:164–65.

18 Tucker, 2:166.

19 Edgar Allan Poe, review of *George Balcombe. A Novel*, by Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, in *Essays and Reviews*, ed. G. R. Thompson (New York: Library of America, 1984), 956, 975–76.

20 Tucker, 1:275.

21 Some proslavery advocates, however, deprived the black even of feeling. William Beckford Jr. (not the Beckford of Fonthill, author of *Vathek*), in his *Remarks Upon the Situation of the Negroes in Jamaica* (London: T. and J. Egerton, Military Library, 1788), arguing against emancipation in the West Indies, wrote: "A slave has no feeling beyond the present hour, no anticipation of what may come, no dejection at what may ensue: these privileges of feeling are reserved for the enlightened" (84).

22 George Louis Leclerc Buffon, *A Natural History of the Globe, of Man, of Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Reptiles, Insects, and Plants*, ed. John Wright, trans. W. Kendrick, 3 vols, new edition with improvements from Geoffrey, Griffith, Richardson, Lewis, Clark, Long, Wilson (Boston: Gray and Brown, 1831), I:163.

23 Edward Long, 2:360, 364, 361, 383.

24 Besides Hegel's elaboration on "The Law of the *Heart*, and the Frenzy of Self-Conceit," 391–400, his concept of the "Beautiful Soul" in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper and Row, 1967) is also useful here. For Hegel the "identity" of the "Beautiful soul" comes about "merely in a negative way, as a state of being devoid of spiritual character." The " 'beautiful soul' . . . has no concrete reality" (676).

25 *North American Review*, 83 (October 1856): 432.

26 Note that in three hundred years the *Code Noir* has not been translated into English. Most significantly, this codification of methodical divestiture re-

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mains so difficult to find that it has vanished from historiography. I first read the *Code Noir* in a collection that included the additional royal edicts, 1699–1742: *Recueils de règlements, édits, declarations et arrêts . . . concernant le commerce, l'administration de la justice, la police des colonies françaises de l'Amérique . . . avec Le Code Noir et l'addition au dit Code* (Paris: Chez les libraires associés, 1745).

27 I am referring throughout to Poe's argument against the transcendentalists as elucidated in my *Fables of Mind* (New York: Oxford, 1987).

28 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Emancipation in the British West Indies," *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1904), vol. 11:146.

29 Poe then retold the story in two consecutive articles of *The Broadway Journal*. For an account of this episode, see Arthur Hobson Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1969), 487ff.

30 Samuel Warner, "Authentic and Impartial Narrative of the Tragical Scene Which Was Witnessed in Southampton Country (Virginia) on Monday the 22nd of August" in *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831: A Compilation of Source Material*, ed. Henry Irving Tragle (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1971), 296–98.

31 Edgar Allan Poe, review of *Poems on Slavery* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in *Essays and Reviews*, 763.

32 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Poems on Slavery* (Cambridge: John Owen, 1842), 1:285.

33 No one has demonstrated more powerfully than Winthrop D. Jordan in *White Over Black* how excessive sentimentality diminished the possibility of action or ethics in the antislavery program: "A romantic sentimentalism was a symptom of, and perhaps a subtle yet readily intelligible social signal for, a retreat from rational engagement with the ethical problems posed by Negro slavery" (New York: Norton, 1977, 370–71).

34 For a discussion of color in *Pym*, see Dayan, "Romance and Race," 107–09.

35 Dana D. Nelson's *The Word in Black and White: Reading "Race" in American Literature 1638–1867* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992) came to my attention after I completed this essay. Her rigorous redefinition of "race" in both fictional and nonfictional works of Anglo-American writers is crucial to understanding the metaphysics of whiteness, the rewriting of race as aesthetics, and the connections in America between race, romance, and nation. See especially "Ethnocentrism Decentered: Colonial Motives in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*," 90–109. In yet another turn on Poe and race, Toni Morrison in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992), claims Poe as crucial "to the concept of American Africanism" (32).

36 As I have argued in "Romance and Race," Poe's Dupin knows how to detect

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unadulterated barbarism, and the descriptions of the affectionate, yet easily enraged ourangutan who loves to mimic his master and violate women refer readers to the familiar fantasies of consanguinity between black men and apes. As Edward Long puts it in his *History of Jamaica*: "an oran-outang . . . is a human being . . . but of an inferior species . . . he has in form a much nearer resemblance to the Negroe race, than the latter bear to white men" (103).

37 Edgar Allan Poe, review of *Sheppard Lee: Written by Himself* by Robert Bird, in *Essays and Reviews*, 390–91.

38 See Robert Montgomery Bird, *Sheppard Lee* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1836), 1:36–38, and esp. 2:156–77, where Sheppard Lee enters the body of Tom, saying, "If thou art dead, my sable brother, yield my spirit a refuge in thy useless body!" Awakening as Tom in the chapter "In which Sheppard Lee finds every thing black about him," Lee, expecting to be "the exemplar of wretchedness," finds instead the surprise of humane and gentle treatment by a "good-natured" and " 'right-born master,' " thus replicating the hyperbolized scenes of plantation life so dear to the proslavery argument.

39 See discussion of "Hop-Frog" in Dayan, "Romance and Race," 103–04.

40 Thomas Ollive Mabbott, ed., *Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), 3:1344.

41 Hegel, 237.

42 See Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982), 17–34.

43 George Frederick Holmes, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," *Southern Literary Messenger* (December 1852): 721–31.

44 Allen Tate, "Our Cousin, Mr. Poe," *Collected Essays* (Denver: Allan Swallow, 1959), 459. I thank Stephen Rachman for drawing my attention to Tate's essay.

45 Edgar Allan Poe, review of *The Drama of Exile and Other Poems*, by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in *Essays and Reviews*, 116, 118, 119.

46 Poe, review of *Poems on Slavery*, in *Essays and Reviews*, 285.

47 Note that the offspring of a "misalliance" between a white man and a black female slave followed the condition of the mother. In laws trying to curb interbreeding, light-colored women were prohibited from using the name of the father. Especially problematic is the use of the term *mulatto*. Virginia Domínguez writes in *White By Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1986), that "Limited lexical options meant that the term *mulatto* was used to denote anyone who did not appear all white *or* all black" (49). In Europe and the United States, and in most of the Caribbean by the late 1700s, the general term mulatto was used to metonymize varying nuances of skin color and extent of blood mixture. Note, however, that colonial taxonomies were far from lexically limited

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but bear witness to a frenzied nomenclature of color. According to Moreau de Saint-Méry's theoretical taxonomies of color in *Description de la partie française de l'Isle Saint-Domingue*, mulatto was one of eleven categories of 110 combinations ranked from absolute white (128 parts white blood) to absolute black (128 parts black blood), pushing the invisibility of color differentiation to fantastic extremes. Such a system not only displaced the human element from the hybrid offspring of colonial coupling, but became a desperate attempt to redefine whiteness. This analysis of rituals of color and black codes is elaborated in my *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (forthcoming, Univ. of California Press, 1994).

48 Surely one of the most problematic uses of women by well-intentioned abolitionists was their conversion of the racist portrayal of a demonic and lascivious ape-woman into a sentimental heroine, processed as the refined, potentially salvagable, but ever fallen "tragic mulatta."

49 Mabbott, 2:332.

50 I am indebted here to my student Jennifer Ellis's analysis of Ligeia in her paper, "Rereading Poe's Textual Body in 'Ligeia', and Ligeia's Body as Text: Doubling and the Racial Unconscious" (December, 1992).

51 Tucker, *George Balcombe*, 2:51–52; 1:71–72.

52 Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: 1820–1860* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), 20.

53 Warner, 293–94.

54 Clement Eaton, *The Freedom of Thought Struggle in the Old South* (1940; reprint, New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 90.

55 See Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1988), 38–40, and Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black*, 375–80, for excellent summaries of white reactions in the United States to the black revolution in Saint-Domingue.

56 Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Voyage aux Etats-Unis de l'Amérique, 1793–1798*, ed. Stewart L. Mims (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1913), 55–56.

57 Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1976), 111.

58 I am grateful to Jean M. Mudge for this information.

59 I thank Jeffrey Savoy of the Poe Society of Baltimore for sending me this article.

60 The biography that deals most with the contact between the young Poe and slaves is Hervey Allen's *Israfel: The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe*, 2 vols. (London: Brentano's Ltd., 1927). Note that the revised, one-volume edition of *Israfel* published in 1934 excludes these discussions of Poe and his African American surround.

61 Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in Literature," *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 28 (Winter 1989), 12.

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62 Philip Cooke to Poe, 16 September 1839, in *Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, 50.

63 Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint-Domingue* (1797; reprint, Paris: Société de l'Histoire des Colonies Françaises et Librairie Larose, 1984), 1:58.

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