Annabel Lee Study Guide

Annabel Lee by Edgar Allan Poe

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

Written in 1849, "Annabel Lee" was published the same year, just two days after Poe's death on October 7. It appeared in two newspapers, the *Richmond Examiner* and the *New York Tribune,* and then in the 1850 edition of *The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe.* The poem has since become one of Poe's most popular works. Using a melodious narrative form, the speaker laments the death, many years ago, of his beloved young bride Annabel Lee. His loss moves him to state that envious angels caused the girl's death to "dissever" (separate) the young married couple. He tells briefly of her funeral and entombment "in her sepulchre ... by the sea." The narrator then reveals that he has been unable to accept their separation. Since her death, he has spent night after night at her tomb, an astonishing and perverse example of the immortality of young love.

Author Biography

Poe was born in Boston in 1809, the son of Elizabeth Arnold Poe and David Poe, both minor professional actors. Both his parents died before he was three years old, and he was subsequently raised in the home of Frances Keeling Valentine Allan and her husband John Allan, a prosperous exporter from Richmond, Virginia. As a youth, Poe attended the finest academies in Richmond, his stepfather overseeing his education, and he entered the University of Virginia at Charlottesville in 1825. He distinguished himself academically at the university but was forced to leave due to inadequate financial support from his stepfather. Poe returned to Richmond in 1827 but soon left for Boston. There he enlisted in the army and published his first collection of poetry, *Tamerlane, and Other Poems.* Poe was discharged from the army in 1829, the same year he published a second volume of verse. Neither of his first two collections attracted much attention. After briefly attending West Point, Poe went to New York City and soon after to Baltimore. He married his cousin Virginia Clemm in 1836 after receiving an editorship at *The Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond. Poe thereafter received a degree of recognition, not only for his poetry and fiction, but as an exceptional literary critic. He also occasionally achieved popular success, especially following the publication of his poem "The Raven."

Poe's wife Virginia died from tuberculosis in 1847. After a period in which he was involved in various romantic affairs, Poe planned to remarry, but in late September, 1849 he arrived in Baltimore for reasons unknown. In early October he was discovered nearly unconscious; he died on October 7, never regaining sufficient consciousness to relate the details of the final days of his life. Since his death Poe's work has been variously assessed, with critics disagreeing on its value. Today, however, Poe is acknowledged as a major literary figure, a master of Gothic atmosphere and interior monologue. His poems and stories have influenced the literary schools of Symbolism and Surrealism as well as the popular genres of detective and horror fiction.

Poem Text

It was many and many a year ago,

In a kingdom by the sea,

That a maiden there lived whom you may know

By the name of Annabel Lee;

And this maiden she lived with no other thought

Than to love and be loved by me.

She was a child and I was a child,

In this kingdom by the sea,

But we loved with a love that was more than

love□

I and my Annabel Lee□

With a love that the winged seraphs of Heaven

Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,

In this kingdom by the sea,

A wind blew out of a cloud by night

Chilling my Annabel Lee;

So that her highborn kinsmen came

And bore her away from me,

To shut her up in a sepulchre

In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,

Went envying her and me:

Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,

In this kingdom by the sea)

That the wind came out of the cloud, chilling

And killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love

Of those who were older than we□

Of many far wiser than we□

And neither the angels in Heaven above

Nor the demons down under the sea,

Can ever dissever my soul from the soul

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:

For the moon never beams without bringing me

dreams

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

And the stars never rise but I see the bright

Eyes

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side

Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride,

In her sepulchre there by the sea□

In her tomb by the side of the sea.

Plot Summary

Lines 1-2:

Poe introduces the setting of "Annabel Lee" in these lines. Though vague, his use of "many and many a year ago" shows with its repetition that the poem will tell about an event that occurred in the far past. The physical location "a kingdom by the sea" and the use of the abstract time frame produce a romantic, legendary quality for the narrative setting. These lines also establish the rhythmical use of anapests and iambs. Here, however, the first two syllables may be read as a spondee, a combination of two stressed syllables in a row. If one emphasizes both words, "It was," and keeps stress also on the first syllable of "many," the poem begins with the strong effect of three stressed syllables in a row.

Lines 3-4:

These lines introduce the character of Annabel Lee. Her description as someone "whom you may know" adds to the legendary quality of the poem, and the use of the personal pronoun "you" creates a feeling of intimacy between the speaker and the reader.

Lines 5-6:

The speaker's relationship to Annabel Lee is introduced in these lines. Her devotion to the speaker, whom we later learn (in line 39) was her husband, appears in the fact that her only thought was to "love and be loved" by the speaker. The repetition of "love'V'loved" emphasizes the relationship between the two.

Lines 7-8:

The repetition of the word "child" in line 7 establishes the youth of both characters at the time of Annabel Lee's death. It implies that their love was an innocent love, removed from the corruption that may be associated with the adult world. The repetition in line 8 of line 2 from the first stanza presents the phrase as a refrain, creating a harmonious, linking effect every time it is used in the poem.

Lines 9-12:

These lines associate the relationship between the speaker and his bride with heavenly qualities. Through repetition of the words "love" and "loved" the magnitude of their feelings develops. The suggestion that angels□"the winged seraphs"□envy or covet the lovers' feelings for one another elevates this relationship above any other on earth or in heaven.

Lines 13-16:

In line 13, The pronoun "this" refers to the jealousy of the angels introduced in lines 11-12, while line 14 repeats the refrain from the first two stanzas. In line 15 the speaker names the cause of Annabel Lee's death. A chilling wind emerges from the sky, and so her death is tied to heaven and the jealousy of the angels. He places the action in the "night," an appropriate time for an insidious deed to be executed by the covetous angels.

Lines 17-20:

The speaker describes Annabel Lee's funeral in these lines. Also she is further characterized; with the reference to her "highborn kinsmen" the reader discovers that she belonged to an upper-class family. The use of the formal word, "sepulchre," rather than a more common word such as "tomb," adds to this impression of the girl's birthright. The word "sepulchre" also has a more formal tone to it, suggesting the finality of the couple's relationship. This finality□the speaker's total isolation from his love□is also developed by using the words, "shut her up" and "away from me" rather than using a phrase such as "placed her there." Note that this stanza concludes with the refrain, which also lends a note of completion to the lovers' relationship. However, in the final two stanzas of the poem, the reader will learn that in spite of Annabel Lee's death, the speaker has not stopped loving her.

Lines 21-26:

This stanza repeats the speaker's belief that the envious angels caused Annabel Lee's death by blowing a chilling wind from the cloudy sky. All this repetition serves to emphasize the conflict in the poem, the loss of the speaker's love. Line 21 uses alliteration in its repetition of *h,* a sound that suggests the airy blowing of wind. The word "Yes," followed by an exclamation mark, creates the first hint of a frantic tone that will develop in the last two stanzas. The phrase "as all men know" in line 23 adds to that legendary quality of the poem. The refrain appears again in line 24. And a rhyme link occurs in "chilling" and "killing" (lines 25 and 26) which emphasizes the horror of Annabel Lee's death and sets the mood for the desperate method of mourning that the speaker unveils in the last stanza.

Lines 27-29:

These lines continue to elevate the relationship between the speaker and his bride by repeating the word, "love," and by stating that they love more than even older and wiser people.

Lines 34-37:

The speaker offers proof that his love for Annabel Lee is eternal. He explains that the "moon" and the "stars" are celestial messengers which bring her love to him in the form of "dreams" and in visions of her "eyes." Association of Annabel Lee with these heavenly bodies immortalizes her and her love. Alliteration of the consonant *b* occurs in the words "beams," "bringing," "beautiful," "but," and "bright." Internal rhyme exists in "beams" and "dreams" and in "rise" and "eyes."

Lines 38-41:

In these lines the speaker finally reveals the shocking fact that he visits Annabel Lee's tomb nightly, reposing there next to her. It is also in line 39 that the speaker reveals the fact that Annabel Lee was his "bride." The love he feels for her finds expression in repetition of the words, "my darling," and in the statement that she is his "life." The rhymes "tide," "side," and "bride" create an auditory link between lines 38 and 39. The final two lines, in their parallel construction, both beginning with "in her" and ending with "the sea" create a strong sense of finality. For some readers, the double naming of the location to identify Annabel Lee's burial chamber ("sepulchre" and "tomb") as the setting of this eternal exchange has the eerie effect of allowing the theme of death to overshadow the theme of love in this poem.

Lines 30-33:

In these lines the speaker asserts his faithfulness to Annabel Lee, a loyalty that transcends death. The "angels" have already been referred to as those jealous of the extraordinary love between the speaker and his bride. The phrase, "demons down under the sea," brings to mind the Greek myth of Andromeda, who is about to be devoured by a sea monster when she is rescued by the hero Perseus. Note the alliteration of the letter "d" in the words "demon," "down," "under," and "dissever[5]" to create a heavy sound; the internal rhyme of "ever dissever" to create a melodious effect; and the repetition of "soul" to emphasize the extent of the lovers' union. These lines have been connected to St. Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* by Richard Wilbur. St. Paul's eighth chapter reads "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God."

Themes

Memory and Reminiscing

Readers are urged by the tone and setting of this poem to question how well the speaker actually remembers his relationship with his dead lover. From the very first line, the speaker admits that he is talking about things that happened "many and many years ago." Repeating the word "many" emphasizes the amount of time that has passed since Annabel Lee's death. This encourages readers' suspicions, since memories, especially extremely pleasant memories, are often idealized versions of reality. In the third stanza, the poem makes a point of mentioning once more that there is a considerable distance of time between the events being described and the speaker as he is recalling them. It becomes even more difficult to believe that his brief, youthful love affair could have been as pure and beautiful as he describes it. If his claim was that a recent love had died because of angels' jealousy, or that he thought every day about a lover who died the year before, then his obsession could be attributed to strong but normal grief. With the distance of time indicated here, though, there has to be a strong possibility that he is not actually responding to the love affair that he lived, but instead to a false, inflated memory of Annabel Lee.

The sea is used here as a poetic device to represent memory. It is linked to the life the speaker had with Annabel Lee because they lived together in a kingdom next to it. It is linked to her death, as he makes a point of mentioning twice in the last two lines that her body is put to rest beside the sea. As a vast, mysterious force, a traditional place of enigma and danger, the sea is a fitting symbol to represent the past, which is as attractive to the speaker as the sea is to those who sail it. In line 31 he speculates that the demons who might come to disrupt his memory of Annabel Lee□who might "dissever" his soul from hers□lurk under the sea.

Death

Like many of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories and poems, "Annabel Lee" concerns itself with the human problem of having to carry on and make sense of the world after the permanent disruption that death causes. In this particular case, the speaker of the poem is so distraught over his loss that he bends reality to find a cause for her death that his mind can accept. Readers are not given a physical, medical explanation for her death, other than that a "chill" came down upon her, because in his mind mere physics would be too simple to destroy a grand love like the one he remembers. The explanation that is offered instead is that the angels envied the young couple's happiness and, most uncharacteristically for angels, killed her out of jealousy. For the narrator, this explanation makes sense of the randomness of disease and death by providing a culprit; he needs this in order to accept the idea that his love might not have been great enough to stop death. In fact, he cannot accept death as a separation from the girl he loved, but believes that they are still linked, which may be true for him in a psychological

sense, although there is no way of knowing if the deceased, wherever she may be, might also feel this way. The situation related in this poem is real more in a psychological sense than in any other sense, and this makes death (which is an absolute, unchangeable limit in the real world) serve as an appropriate tool for Poe's type of writing.

Class Conflict

The speaker of this poem presents himself as an underdog, struggling throughout his entire love

affair against those who attempt to use their superior social positions against him. At first, the speaker implies that the world looked down on his relationship with Annabel Lee because they were both children, making a point of emphasizing *she* and I to show their common bond against the opposition, presumably from adults. If, as most critics agree, this poem is based upon Poe's relationship with his cousin Virginia Clemm, then he has altered the facts here to fit this theory of opposition: even if Virginia was only thirteen when they married, Poe himself was twenty-seven. By presenting himself as a child, he puts himself and Annabel Lee on one side and the adult world on the other. Later in the poem, there is opposition from the angels, who are jealous because the young couple has more happiness than they themselves have in heaven. The angels, obviously from a higher and more privileged class than a couple of children on Earth, have killed Annabel Lee, the narrator says. After Annabel Lee's death, her body was taken away by "her high-born kinsmen." Although it is not directly stated, the implication here is that the speaker is prohibited from visiting his deceased love or from participating in her funeral because of class distinctions. The love affair in this poem is opposed by forces more powerful□adults, angels, and the upper social class. The endurance of the youngsters' love against all of these is a testament to its strength.

Style

"Annabel Lee" consists of six stanzas that range from six to eight lines each. The poem uses repetition and rhyme to create the qualities of unity and euphony, or a pleasing musicality. The repeated use of the end rhymes "sea," "Lee," "we," and "me" offer a link from stanza to stanza throughout the poem. The name "Annabel Lee" appears at least once in every stanza, and the phrase "kingdom by the sea" also appears frequently, adding to the unified structure. Repetition of key words within lines gives the poem its pleasing sound while at the same time emphasizing main ideas. For example, in line 1, "many and many" establishes the fact that a long period of time has elapsed since the speaker began mourning, an important fact to recognize if the reader is to understand the extent of the speaker's grief.

The poem's rhyme scheme begins simply with an *ababcb* pattern but gets more complicated as the poem progresses, repeating rhymes within a line (known as internal rhyme) and ending with the pattern *abcbddbb* in the last stanza. The lines increase in length and in number in this last stanza. These devices□the increasingly complex rhyme scheme and lengthening of lines□allow the poem to intensify in dramatic pitch.

The predominant rhythm that the poem uses is the anapest. An anapest is a type of meter consisting of three syllables, with one stressed syllable occurring after two unstressed syllables. For example in the first line, the first syllable of "many" and the word "year" receive stress after two unaccented syllables, as shown below:

Itwasma / nyandma / nyayear / a go.

The anapest rhythm is an exciting, climactic one that builds in momentum just as the overall structure of the poem does. To vary the rhythm, the poem also uses iambic feet, or pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables, as in "ago" in the line shown above.

Historical Context

In 1849 America was still expanding westward, and the addition of each new state stirred anew the debate between supporters of slavery and the reformers (referred to as "Abolitionists") who wanted to abolish slavery. The slave trade had developed as the country was developing during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many of the settlers of the original thirteen colonies brought "indentured servants" from Europe. These were usually citizens of the lower classes who were willing to sell their freedom for a time, usually seven years, in exchange for the price of passage to the new continent. From that practice, the practice of permanently keeping people with different physical characteristics seemed a natural progression. Some colonies, most notably Virginia, dabbled in keeping American Indians for slave labor, but, possibly because of the bloody confrontations that had served to take the country from the Indians, the European property owners never felt comfortable keeping them around. The Dutch built a profitable trade selling captured Africans in the colonies and in the Caribbean. Slavery was first legally recognized in the colonies in 1650. By 1676, Dutch traders were selling 15,000 Africans in the Americas each year. There were several reasons why slavery became a Southern institution. The slaves were from agricultural societies, and, as the colonies developed, the South, which was warmer and more fertile, became agricultural, while the northern states tended toward manufacturing economies that would have more required for training the slaves than would have been practical.

Around the time of the Revolutionary War, the issue of slavery was hotly debated. In 1768 the Mason-Dixon Line established the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland, providing a line of demarcation between the slave-holding south and the free north. The first American society for abolishing slavery was founded in Pennsylvania in 1775. A number of states, including southern states, passed laws outlawing the barbaric slave trade (it was eventually outlawed on a national level in 1808). The laws were empty gestures, though, because there were already more than enough slaves in the country with little need to import more. In Virginia, for example, there were as many slaves as there were whites, while South Carolina had twice as many slaves a free whites. Slavery was firmly established as part of Southern society, but Southern politicians could feel the pressure from Abolitionists to end the practice. To support their way of life, southerners felt that they had to assure that slavery was accepted in as many new states as possible.

The first half of the 1800s was marked by expansion, and as each new state joined the Union there were bitter debates in Congress about whether slavery would be allowed there. For the most part, the South remained slave territory and the North remained free, but there were bitter fights for states near the border or those west of the Mississippi river. The Missouri Compromise, in 1820, was one notable case of Congressional decision-making: there were 11 slave states and 11 free states when Missouri, a slave territory, applied to enter the Union, so Northern politicians insisted that the territory had to give up slavery if it wanted statehood. As a compromise, Maine, a free territory, was admitted, and Missouri was allowed to keep its slaves, and a new dividing line for states that came from the land bought in the Louisiana Purchase was

established. The next major occasion for setting boundaries came in the 1840s, when President Polk, unsuccessful in his attempt to buy land from Mexico, sent troops to the Southwest to start a war against Mexico. With the American victory, Mexico gave up everything north of the Rio Grande, losing 35% of its land and opening up the opportunity for new states. The struggle between Abolitionists and the supporters of slavery who felt threatened reached new levels as the government prepared to decide which new states, if any, would have slaves.

As the struggle continued between those who fought for the moral cause of freedom and those who fought to hold onto their traditions, the debate over what to do with slaves who escaped to free lands became more intense. Freed slaves became more prominent. Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave, published his autobiography and started an Abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star,* which he supplemented with money raised from speaking fees in Europe. In 1838 a secret organization called the Underground Railroad established a path of safe hiding places that escaping slaves could follow north to Canada. In an effort to calm the growing rift between the North and the South, Congress enacted a new, harsh Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, toughening the penalties against escaping slaves and the people who assisted them. Free blacks in free territories could be arrested and taken south into slavery if anyone so much as accused them of being escaped slaves, while people accused of helping escaped slaves faced time in jail. The law was found unconstitutional in 1854 and then upheld by the Supreme Court in 1857. When "Annabel Lee" was published, eleven years before the outbreak of the Civil War, the question of slavery and its legal and moral ramifications was part of everyday American life.

Critical Overview

One of the first critics to comment on a connection between Poe and the speaker in "Annabel Lee" is John Cowper Powys, in his 1915 work *Visions and Revisions: A Book of Literary Devotions.* He writes that in poems such as this Poe expresses "a certain dark, wilful melancholy," a cold mood that Poe "must surely himself have known." Powys's suggestion may spring from Poe's experience with loss, and in particular the death of his child bride, Virginia Clemm. Virginia's death occurred in 1847, two years prior to the writing of this poem, and her loss could have created for Poe the atmosphere or mood that he reproduces in his poetry. Even before her death, however, Poe had experienced the death of his actress mother when he was a small child, and then the death from brain cancer of Jane Stanard, a friend's beautiful mother whom the fourteen-year-old Poe had idolized; and he had already stated in his "Philosophy of Composition" that the most appropriate subject for poetry is the death of a beautiful woman because it carries with it the most emotional power.

Despite the coldness and "artificiality" he observes in Poe's poems, Powys remarks that "to say they are artificial does not derogate from their genius." Early assessments of Poe's verse dismissed it as overly musical and vulgar, but later critics have found more to praise in it. Noting that Poe wrote several kinds and degrees of poetry, George Saints-bury wrote in a 1927 essay, later included *in Prefaces and Essays,* that "I know nothing that can beat, if I know anything that can equal, 'Annabel Lee.'" He explains: "It begins quite quietly but with a motion of gathering speed and a sort of flicker of light and glow of heat: and these things quicken and brighten and grow till they finish in the last stanza, that incomparable explosion of rapturous regret that towers to the stars and sinks to the sea."

Rather than focus on the subject of the poem. Floyd Stovall in his book *Edgar Poe the Poet* recognizes the "hypnotic effect of the repetition of harmonized sound and sense through the poem, building up to a climax in the last stanza." He commends this effect as the poem's most "pleasing" quality and contends that "the value of the poem subsists more in its form than its meaning." Not all critics would agree with Stovall, however. The well-known modern poet Richard Wilbur admires the deeper meaning in Poe's poetry. In a 1981 talk delivered to the Poe Studies Association and later published in *The University of Mississippi Studies in English,* Wilbur connects "Annabel Lee" to the divine love of God. Using references to St. Paul's *Epistle to the Romans,* Wilbur suggests that Poe has been inspired by it to create in the character of Annabel Lee the symbol of a "kind of blessed communion," one in which the speaker experiences a love that is "more than love." Wilbur supplies the excerpt from St. Paul which states that "neither death, nor life, nor angels ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God." From this allusion, Wilbur concludes that "Poe asserts that the soul of Annabel's lover shall never be severed from hers, or from the divine love and beauty which her soul communicates."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3
- Critical Essay #4
- Critical Essay #5

Critical Essay #1

Jeannine Johnson received her Ph.D. from Yale University and is currently visiting assistant professor of English at Wake Forest University. In the following essay, Johnson argues that what inspired Poe to compose "Annabel Lee " was not his affection for any one person but his interest in contemplating the general nature of beauty and love.

"Annabel Lee" was the last of Edgar Allan Poe's poems to be published, appearing October 9, 1849, in the *New York Tribune,* two days after the author's death. Since the poem first appeared in print - and continuing to the present day - there have been competing claims as to the source of Poe's inspiration for this work. His wife Virginia had died in 1847 after suffering a prolonged illness, and many readers have believed that the poem was written in her memory. Frances ("Fanny") Osgood, a poet and a friend of both Poe and his wife, stated unequivocally that the poem was written to celebrate his love for Virginia (A. H. Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography).* Fanny, with whom Poe carried on a long and intimate (though largely literary) correspondence is herself thought by some to be a candidate for the muse of "Annabel Lee." In addition, there are two other women who might have inspired Poe in the writing of this poem: Nancy ("Annie") Richmond and the poet Sarah Helen Whitman, both of whom Poe met and fostered relationships with in 1848. According to the literary critic J. Gerald Kennedy, Poe "seems to have regarded [Annie Richmond] as a virtual reincarnation of the dead Virginia Poe" *{Poe, Death, and the Life of Writing),* and Kennedy has no doubt that it is with Richmond in mind that Poe writes. Other readers have imagined that a more likely muse was Sarah Whitman, to whom Poe was briefly engaged in late 1848.

Of all the possibilities, the case for Virginia seems strongest, if only because the narrator of "Annabel Lee" emphasizes that *"She* was a child and/was a child." When Poe married Virginia, she was indeed a child: his wife was just 13 years old at the time of their wedding, while Poe was a less youthful 27. Of course, in composing the poem Poe chooses his words in large part for their figurative value. The quality of their youth - especially the speaker's - seems more metaphorical than literal: Poe uses the word "child" to emphasize the innocence and purity of their bond. Because of his beloved's youth and their untainted love for each other, he is a child in spirit, if not in chronological age.

Given the importance of figurative meaning, we cannot depend solely upon literal interpretations of poetry, nor read them as simple statements of autobiographical fact. Thus perhaps we need not choose from among the several candidates for a specific source of inspiration for "Annabel Lee," or even enter this debate at all. Poe indirectly offers some insight into his purpose for the poem in the essay "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846).

In it, Poe dissects his earlier work "The Raven" (1845), reconstructing the deliberate process by which he chose the style, form, tone, and subject of his most famous poem.

It is not clear whether Poe intends for us to take seriously every detail of his sometimes outrageous "philosophy." Nevertheless, he is sincere on at least one point: that "the death ... of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetic topic in the world - and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover" *(Edgar Allan Poe: Poetry, Tales, and Selected Essays).*

Poe developed this theory of the "most poetic topic in the world" several years before he composed "Annabel Lee," which suggests that the general theme was a greater influence on its composition than was a particular person. He used the death of a beautiful woman as his topic not only in "Annabel Lee" and "The Raven" but in many of his other poems, most notably "Lenore" (1831) and "Ulalume" (1847). Poe also visited this grim subject several times in his fiction, and the narrator mourns the loss of his fair beloved in the tales "Ligeia" (1838) and "Eleonora" (1841).

Not only is the theme of "Annabel Lee" one that is common to multiple works by Poe, but several of its phrases echo earlier compositions. For instance, many critics have noted the similarities between "Annabel Lee" and Poe's first published poem, "Tamerlane" (1827). In "Tamerlane" the love of which the poet speaks "was such as angel minds above might envy," while in "Annabel Lee" "The angels, not half so happy in Heaven, / Went envying her and me." "Thus," comments Poe's biographer, Arthur Hobson Quinn, "in his first and in his last poem he thought in terms of a spiritual passion that transcended human limits" *(Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography).* This is an idealized view of love which Poe held throughout his life, from the time before he met Virginia to the time after her death. And it is largely his interest in examining a "spiritual passion that transcended human limits" which inspired Poe to write this poem.

Though Poe argues in "The Philosophy of Composition" that the death of a beautiful woman is the most poetic topic, he makes a slightly different claim in the article "The Poetic Principle." The essay is based on the text of a lecture frequently presented by Poe during 1848 and 1849, and it overlaps with "Annabel Lee" both in the time period in which it was written and in subject matter. In "The Poetic Principle," Poe declares that though beauty is the goal of poetry, its proper topic is love: "Love ... love - the true, the divine Eros - the Uranian, as distinguished from the Dionaean Venus - is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetic themes" *(Edgar Allan Poe: Poetry, Tales, and Selected Essays).* "Uranian Venus" refers to love that is spiritual, pure, and eternal. It is a rare love that transcends the physical world, as opposed to a "Dionaean," or earthly, common, and finite, type of love.

In "Annabel Lee," the poet celebrates this true Uranian love: "we loved with a love that was more than love." Poe repeats the word "love" three times, as if to demonstrate the inadequacy of that human word for a condition that is divine. Even though Annabel and her lover were young, the speaker contends that their feelings surpassed those of all others: "our love it was stronger by far than the love / Of those who were older than we - / Of many far wiser than we...." The poet argues that wisdom and age do not determine one's power to love deeply and honestly, and he then goes on to proclaim that "neither the angels in Heaven above / Nor the demons down under the sea / Can ever dissever my soul from the soul / Of the beautiful Annabel Lee."

Even though the speaker claims to possess an everlasting love that transcends all physical boundaries, he feels compelled to visit Annabel's grave again and again. The poet tells us that not only does he visit the gravesite, but he enters her tomb in order to lie down next to her corpse. What is more, it is clear from the present verb tense that this is a repeated action: "all the night-tide, I lie down by the side / Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride / In her sepulchre there by the sea - / In her tomb by the side of the sea." The poem ends by emphasizing the material location of their union: the final two lines are nearly identical as they point us to the "sepulchre" or "tomb" in which the lovers lie. Given these circumstances, J. Gerald Kennedy asks, "why does he try to achieve physical proximity to the corpse if his love is indeed spiritual and lasting? His action seems an unconscious betrayal of anxiety, a reflexive acknowledgment of the very separation which the poem itself seeks to deny" *(Poe, Death, and the Life of Writing).* In other words, the poet has boasted of the strength and significance of his spiritual bond with Annabel Lee. Yet, in his need to be near the body of his beloved, he seems to contradict his own assertions and indicate that a physical connection is just as important as a non-physical one.

We may better understand this apparent contradiction if we recall that the poet's tale is poignant because he loses not only love but beauty. Poe revised the poem a few times, making some minor alterations which nevertheless affect the overall meaning of the poem. In an earlier version of the poem, Poe writes in the third stanza, "A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling / My beautiful Annabel Lee." In the final version of the poem, Poe changes the lines to read: "A wind blew out of a cloud by night / Chilling my Annabel Lee." With the revision, Poe infuses the event with the mysterious and potentially sinister characteristics of night-time. Furthermore, the addition of two syllables ("by night") to the third line requires Poe to shift "Chilling" to the fourth line, and it allows him to delay using the word "beautiful" to describe Annabel. He does not include this word until the fifth stanza, at which point we know that she has died. This is significant because one of Poe's main projects in this poem is to explore the link between beauty and death.

Through the first two-and-a-half stanzas, the speaker never explicitly reveals that his beloved has died. In the first four lines of the third stanza, he refers to a time at which Annabel was still alive: when she experienced a fatal chill. The action of death is so abrupt that the poet appears not to have the time to name it: "A wind blew out of a cloud by night / Chilling my Annabel Lee; / So that her high-born kinsmen came / And bore her away from me, / To shut her up in a sepulchre / In this kingdom by the sea." One moment Annabel Lee is hypothermic, and the next moment she is being buried by her relatives. Only a semi-colon signals the change from life to death, and the sentence recreates the swift and sorrowful transformation that occurs in the lovers' history.

In the fourth stanza, the poet is able to slow his recollections somewhat, and there he speaks directly of that moment which is so painful to him: "the wind came out of the cloud, chilling / And killing my Annabel Lee." The poet has explicitly acknowledged her death, and in the final stanzas he can now refer to her beauty. Between the fifth and sixth stanzas, the speaker repeats the phrase "Of the beautiful Annabel Lee" three times. The poem is full of repetition - this is a favorite technique of Poe's - but this triple

refrain is unique because it occurs in such rapid succession, and the poet thus calls attention to this line.

Why does the poet want to underscore at this point in the piece that Annabel Lee was beautiful? Surely we are led to believe that she was attractive in life, but there is a particular kind of beauty that comes with her death. In the fifth and sixth stanzas the poem shifts from narrative to memorial. That is to say, in the first part of the poem, the speaker has told the story of his relationship with his beloved and of her death. In the latter part, he tells us what his life is like now and the way that he tries to honor her memory. As the poem turns from story to commemoration, the vocabulary also changes. There is in the sixth stanza a notable emphasis on visual imagery that is not present in the rest of the poem. For instance, the poet mentions the moon and the stars in which he observes "the bright eyes" of his dear Annabel. His love becomes not just something to feel or imagine but to touch and to see. In fact, the beauty that he conjures comes to replace the "love" about which the poet has spoken earlier in the poem: he uses "love" eight times in the first five stanzas, but this word disappears in the sixth. The theoretical idea of "love" gives way to a more concrete notion of loveliness, and the absence of the former term in this last stanza suggests that, though we may want to value the ethereal qualities of true love, its tangible elements are what we ultimately cherish most.

Source: Jeannine Johnson, in an essay for *Poetry for Students,* Gale, 2000.

Critical Essay #2

David Kelly is an instructor of literature and writing at several community colleges in Illinois, as well as a fiction writer and playwright. In this essay, Kelly examines whether the verbal excesses of "Annabel Lee " are justified, or if the poem is just an exercise in cleverness for its own sake.

A sure sign of weak poetry□and if Edgar Allan Poe had any weakness as a writer, it was his poetry□is that it is padded with extra words that serve no purpose but to fill out its metrical scheme. The word "extra" is key here. We all think that we can recognize which words can be considered useless to a poem, but that concept is open and is constantly interpreted in different ways. The interpretation of what is necessary and what can be dismissed as filler seems to be at the root of the controversy about whether Poe was a good poet or a bad one. A poem like "Annabel Lee" provides the author with a good forum for clever word trickery. Some people praise such cleverness, while others immediately become suspicions of a poet who might be more enamoured with the sounds of words than with what ideas they represent□in other words, there is a good chance, if his poems are *too* musical, that Poe may be willing to settle for weakness in his poem's thoughts if he feels audiences are kept amused enough with the excellence of his music.

Poe's supporters, who have grown in number through the generations, encourage readers to be skeptical, but to keep open, unprejudiced minds about the fact that such suspicious could turn out to be unfounded. Serious content is possible even when the style is as conspicuous as it is in "Annabel Lee." Just because it is is possible, though, is no evidence of whether he has achieved it or not, just as the music of the poem is no true sign that it is only light verse, popular but lacking content.

Some of the brightest lights in the English-speaking literary establishment, including Henry James and T. S. Eliot, dismissed Edgar Allan Poe's poetry as juvenile, as the kind of stuff that could only appeal to underdeveloped tastes. It is certainly easier for a person in their teens to appreciate Poe than to even follow what is said by James or Eliot, but we have to be careful to not identify universality as a weakness, or obtuseness as a strength. The charge against Poe has to be examined, though, if only because there have been many weak poets who write like Poe. Our first piece of evidence would be the strong, unavoidable rhythm of his poems, evident in "Annabel Lee": it is exactly the sort of thing that a poetaster with nothing to say would use to simulate profundity.

It does not help Poe's case to note that the speaker of the poem actually *is* juvenile in his attitude. This is not to say that it is immature to grieve, but there has to be a question, when one holds onto grief for "many and many a year," of whether the emotion really is not fading or whether the person finds that he likes striking the pose of a griever. Grief is not forgotten, but there is more to it than latching onto the first flush of emotion and staying frozen in that state for years. An immature point of view only knows the initial feeling, having, of course, never matured beyond it. It is small wonder that

young people are able to relate so well to this poem, given that its speaker looks at life from a young person's perspective.

To counter the charge of juvenility, one only needs to focus on the fact that emotions are the business of poetry, and that if learning to get past them were the standard for maturity then all poems would just have to be juvenile. That the speaker of "Annabel Lee" cannot grow out of his grief, which some people might consider an embarrassing personality weakness, can actually be a source of pride in the experience-obsessed world of a Poe poem. To him, "maturity" in the sense of being able to put a lost love out of one's mind would be a wasteful, soul-deadening thing. The "highbrow kinsmen," the angels and demons, and those who are older and wiser all expressed their objections to the young lovers' affair, and the maturity that they represented proved useless in stopping passion. Readers get the sense that it is their opposition that, at least in part, has given the speaker the tenacity to hold on to his memories. Youth rises to its best when it has to oppose the challenge to grow up, act mature, and to keep its unruly emotions in check. One gets the feeling that Poe would accept the accusation that his mournful poetry was juvenile, that his only objection would be in calling this label an accusation.

There is long and ongoing aesthetic argument to be made about whether an artist can be considered successful simply because she or he is able to provoke the response they intended. This question frequently is raised in modern art, with artists who use offensive materials or abuse cherished symbols to create works that are meant to shock: if audiences are in fact shocked, does that necessarily make the work art? What if a work is agreeable, and that is all that it aspired to be: are we to consider Liberace an artist in the medium of schmaltz?

It seems that, at least in certain cases, the objection to juvenile writing should be lifted from works that intend to be accessible to a wide age range. Accepting Poe's juvenile subject matter as artistry because he intended it to be juvenile would mean that some of his detractors would have to, however grudgingly, keep their objections to themselves, providing he had a good reason for intending to write that way. One good case to be made in favor of juvenilia is that it is so familiar to everyone, being a part of the human experience. Not everyone lost someone close to them in youth, but almost everyone who has gone through adolescence knows what it is like to suffer and feel that the world does not understand suffering of such depth. Even the most mature reader□even James or Eliot□must be able to find within themselves some echo of this poem's emotional overkill.

The style with which Poe presents his ideas really ought to be juvenile, in order to give the idea of unstoppable love and inconsolable grief their right presentation. This is the time to consider whether or not the extra words, which seem added for purely cosmetic reasons, might actually prove their worth. Throughout the poem, there are plenty of cases where Poe uses more words than should be needed if he were only trying to make his point cerebrally. The most glaring example of verbal excess seems to be the constant reiteration that all of this happened in "a kingdom by the sea." Mentioned once or even twice, and this phrase gives the poem a fairy-tale aura. When the sea is

repeated seven times, though, and always at the ends of lines, readers cannot help feeling that the author was dragging around a handy little chock of a phrase that he could rhyme with "Annabel Lee" whenever he felt the need. The same suspicion of padding holds for the second "many" in line one, all of line ten, and the inclusion of both "chilling" and "killing"□they could be left out without any loss to the meaning of the poem, and exist only to serve a rather gaudy form.

But poetry isn't only about meaning□the aspect of sounds is involved as well. If it didn't care about the work's musicality, a poem might as well be a work of prose. The objection that is raised to "Annabel Lee," as well as to Poe's other poems, is that sound has not only been acknowledged but has been given the main role. Most students of literature agree that the intellectual aspect should dominate, that the sound does its work well when it supplements the meaning, not when it rules it.

In poetry that aims to stand up straight and look squarely at life's mysteries, Poe's method of melodiousness at the expense of quiet thoughtfulness would be inexcusable. This poem is told through the speaker's eyes, though, and it is therefore not free to address reality straight-on: it is filtered through his mind and his vocabulary. It is the character of the young man who lost his lover that is talking to us in this sing-song way, and is adding phrases to make the song come out right. This rhythm and repetition may not describe grief at its rawest, but they do describe grief as this character sees it. In the end, it turns out to be unfair to accuse Poe of weakness if his verse sounds like the work of someone who is immaturely obsessed. The voice seems right to the mind of the character, and, juvenile or not, the character deserves to be examined. Whether Poe wrote this way because of his own limitations is a debate for biographers, but it is not the issue here. However he came up with it, "Annabel Lee" provides an excellent, whole psychological snapshot of a particular personality.

Source: David Kelly, in an essay for *Poetry for Students,* Gale, 2000.

Critical Essay #3

In this essay, Reilly disputes the contention of Buford Jones and Kent Ljungquist that Frances

Sargent Osgood's poem "The Life-Voyage. A Ballad" served as the model for Poe's "Annabel Lee. "

Professors Buford Jones and Kent Ljungquist exercise more ingenuity than care in arguing that there are enough "internal parallels alone" to make Frances Sargent Osgood's "The Life-Voyage. A Ballad" a "probable model" for "Annabel Lee" [see "Poe, Mrs. Osgood, and 'Annabel Lee,'" *Studies in the American Renaissance* (1983)]. Noting that Poe must have been familiar with "The Life-Voyage" when he wrote "Annabel Lee," Jones and Ljungquist cite what they believe are five "parallels" between the two poems: 1) both contain the phrase "sounding sea"; 2) both "are ballads"; 3) both "begin in fairy tale fashion beside the sea"; 4) both present a fair maiden "who is envied by the angels in heaven"; and 5) both share the "theme of angelic-demonic ambivalence." But Jones and Ljungquist fail to make their case: two of these alleged "parallels" do not exist, and though the remaining three are genuine, none can be adduced as convincing evidence that Mrs. Osgood's poem served as a "probable model."

Of the three genuine parallels, the phrase "sounding sea" does occur in the first and second stanzas of Mrs. Osgood's poem and in the closing stanza of the earliest version of "Annabel Lee." But why should Mrs. Osgood's use of the phrase be considered a "probable" source for Poe when, as Jones and Ljungquist admit in a footnote, Poe must for years have been familiar with Milton's use of "sounding sea" in "Lycidas"? The fact that the phrase occurs in Blake' s *The Four Zoas* and in Tennyson's "The Lover's Tale" (works not published before Poe's death which cannot, of course, have influenced "Annabel Lee") suggests that it was not sufficiently uncommon to identify any single work as its "probable" source in Poe's poem. Moreover, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* the word "sounding" appears as an adjective "frequently in 18th century poetry." One such appearance especially noteworthy here, though not cited by the *Dictionary,* occurs in the story of Lysander and Aspasia at the close of "Night V" of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts,* a work with which Poe was familiar. As in "Annabel Lee" the love of Lysander and Aspasia was "envied" by "all who knew" and their sorrowful tale related in *Night Thoughts* is played out upon "the sounding beach."

The second genuine parallel cited by Jones and Ljungquist is that both "Annabel Lee" and "The Life-Voyage" are ballads. But the fact that the two poems can be considered ballads is meaningless because the ballad as a genre is an omnium-gatherum of such generous proportions that it includes works having little in common. Poe's poem is a personal story of lost love which achieves its unique effects largely through its narrative voice and its haunting repetitions. It is not written in stanzas of traditional ballad quatrains. Osgood's poem is a didactic tale addressed to a young child, a moral allegory tracing the journey of personified "Innocence" as she bears the "divine gem" of "Truth" across the perilous seas of life to her "home" in "yonder skies." Though Mrs. Osgood's

poem is written in ballad quatrains, the kind of repetition we associate with the traditional ballad plays almost no role in her poem. Jones and Ljungquist's third point□that both "Annabel Lee" and "The Life-Voyage" begin in fairy tale fashion beside the sea□is also valid. In Poe's poem, however, "a kingdom by the sea" is the locus of all the action, whereas in Mrs. Osgood's, "beside the sounding sea" is only a point of departure: by line twenty her heroine has "bravely put to sea" on a voyage which occupies the remaining one hundred and eight lines, a voyage which is the subject of the poem.

The fourth parallel alleged by Jones and Ljungquist□that the heroine of each poem "is envied by the angels in heaven"□does not, in fact, exist. Nowhere does Mrs. Osgood's poem suggest that the "fair maiden" (that is, "Innocence") is envied by anyone, least of all by the angels in heaven. Quite the contrary, the "angels" are instrumental and faithful in assisting "Innocence" in her effort to reach the safety of heaven. Even the "evil spirits" who beset her are not motivated by envy: they simply play their role in a conventional contest in which "Innocence" traditionally finds herself the prize. The last parallel, what Jones and Ljungquist call the "theme of angelic-demonic ambivalence," is also non-existent. This theme, which alleges that angels are transformed into devils and vice versa, is one of the longstanding interpretations of that controversial passage in Poe's ballad where Annabel Lee appears to have been the victim of both angels and demons or of angels as demons. Jones and Ljungquist hold that the angels in "The Life-Voyage" are similarly transformed into "demons" and back into angels as they alternately assault and assist the maiden on her voyage. But Mrs. Osgood's scenario is quite otherwise. "The Life-Voyage" is an old-fashioned Christian allegory laced with a distinct element of Manichaeism, furnished here by a cast made up of good characters who assist the maiden and of evil characters who tempt and threaten her. The good characters, the angels, put in their first appearance in lines 23-24, where they "whisper'd her from Heaven, / To loose ... or to reef the sail of her "shallop"; thus, they function as a kind of mission control advising the maiden on the trim of her craft as it makes its "way" to its "home" in "yonder skies," a "way" or course illuminated by the pearl of "Truth." But the maiden is beset by two distinct bands of hostile beings. The first, the "false, evil spirits" of lines 37-72, represent a moral threat to the maiden by tempting her first with "costly lure" and then with "rank," "power," and "pleasures free" in their effort to bribe her into surrendering her "white pearl" of "Truth." But they fail. The second hostile band is the "dark-wind demons" ... representing a physical threat to the maiden by trying her courage through a violent storm. But she prevails again.... In the midst of this "blinding storm," an "angel" finally leaves heaven to join the maiden on her frail vessel ... (note that the angels of lines 23-24 had only whispered advice from heaven). Guided through the dark storm by the light of the pearl on the maiden's shallop, this angel "Flew down the fairy helm to take, / And steer the boat aright," piloting the vessel to its "designated port." Here ... the maiden passes from storm and temptation to heavenly peace with her "Innocence" intact. But nowhere in her allegory does Mrs. Osgood burden her reader (identified as "my pure and simple child") with those disturbing ambiguities of devilish angels that people the paranoid world of "Annabel Lee." As Jones and Ljungquist point out, there can be no doubt of Poe's "exposure" to Mrs. Osgood's "The Life-Voyage," but this fact, even when coupled with the parallel occurrence of the phrase "sounding sea," does not justify swelling still further the ranks of "probable" sources of Poe's poem.

Source: John E. Reilly, "Mrs. Osgood's 'The Life Voyage' and 'Annabel Lee,'" in *Poe Studies,* Vol. 17, No. 1, June, 1984, p. 23.

Critical Essay #4

In this essay, Jones and Ljungquist argue that Frances Sergent Osgood's "The Life-Voyage" served as the model for Poe's "Annabel Lee. "

In Poe's contacts with literary ladies of his time, no relationship stimulated more controversy than that with the poet, Frances Sargent Osgood. For the literary biographer, suspicions of adultery and charges of moral impropriety had to be balanced against Virginia Poe's apparent fondness for Mrs. Osgood. Citing the many innocuous but fashionable literary flirtations of the era, Arthur Hob-son Quinn delicately dubbed the relationship "a literary courtship" in which Poe found a convenient outlet for his amatory poems. Expressing doubt that Poe was ever seriously infatuated, Sidney P. Moss has claimed that Mrs. Osgood clearly took the initiative in the flirtation. Adopting a more speculative stance, John Evangelist Walsh has put forth the theory that Poe was the father of Mrs. Osgood's child, Fanny Fay. It is more likely that Poe's relationship to Mrs. Osgood was an injudicious but innocent involvement, but as Edward Wagenkneckt has noted, the Poe-Osgood relationship does not lend itself to clear distinctions between fact and fiction: "Nowhere in Poe's story is it more difficult to disentangle truth from falsehood than there." In spite of Thomas Ollive Mabbott's careful annotations of Poe's poems dedicated to Mrs. Osgood, biographical speculation has exceeded the study of literary indebtedness that may have existed. Of particular interest are Mrs. Osgood's comments on "Annabel Lee," in which she stridently claimed that Virginia Poe, "the only woman Poe ever loved," was the sole possible subject of the poem. Mab-bott, calling her comments "ingenious and poetic," added: "her motives were certainly complicated. She wanted to minimize the importance of all the women in Poe's life save Virginia Poe and herself." Mrs. Osgood clearly showed special knowledge of "Annabel Lee." She explained the problematical reference to "high-born kinsmen" as *"kindred* angels" of God who took away the speaker's lost love. Her gloss has generally been accepted by early and later commentators on Poe. Mrs. Osgood's insights transcended self-concern as well as defensiveness about Virginia's reputation. Her remarks were further complicated by her authorship of a poem, entitled "The Life-Voyage," which probably served as a model for "Annabel Lee."

The sources of "Annabel Lee" have received fairly rigorous attention. Perhaps more in the realm of legend than fact is a newspaper obituary mentioning an infant named Annabel Lee. A possible literary source, "The Mourner," displays many similarities to "Annabel Lee," but the date of its appearance in the Charleston, South Carolina, *Courier* (1807) makes Poe's knowledge of it doubtful. Another literary lady, Sarah Helen Whitman, provided a possible model with her "Stanzas for Music," printed in the *American Metropolitan Magazine* of February 1849. Poe claimed to have written "Annabel Lee" in May 1849; thus the publication date of "Stanzas for Music" and Poe's relationship to Mrs. Whitman make likely his exposure to her poem. Other literary ladies vied for favor in the "Annabel Lee" contest. Elmira Shelton and Annie Richmond have both been mentioned as candidates, but a more notable claimant was Stella Lewis. Mrs. Lewis' claim, reported at third or fourth hand, triggered Mrs. Osgood's outburst, which should be quoted at length:

I believe that she [Virginia] was the only woman he ever loved; and this is evidenced by the exquisite pathos of the little poem, lately written, called Annabel Lee, of which she was the subject, and which is by far the most natural, simple, tender and touchingly beautiful of all his songs. I have heard that it was intended to illustrate a late love affair of the author; but they who believe this, have in their dullness, evidently misunderstood or missed the beautiful meaning latent in the most lovely of all its verses - where he says,

A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling My beautiful Annabel Lee, So that her *high-born kinsmen* came, And bore her away from me.

There seems a strange and almost profane disregard of the sacred purity and spiritual tenderness of this delicious ballad, in thus overlooking the allusion to the *kindred angels* of the Heavenly *Father* of the lost and loved and unforgotten wife.

In large measure because of Mrs. Osgood's comments, Virginia's role as a source of inspiration for "Annabel Lee" has received more serious attention than other rival claims.

But Mrs. Osgood's involvement with "Annabel Lee" goes further than her explicit comments indicate. Poe reviewed at length her *Poems* (1846), which contains the following ballad, from which we quote the first two stanzas:

"The Life-Voyage"

Once in the olden time there dwelt

Beside the sounding sea.

A little maid - her garb was coarse.

Her spirit pure and free.

Her parents were an humble twain.

And poor as poor could be;

Yet gaily sang the guileless child.

Beside the sounding sea.

The most outstanding phrase that this poem shares with "Annabel Lee" is in the second stanza. There Osgood uses the alliterative "sounding sea," an epithet that appeared in the first version of "Annabel Lee." It has generally been agreed that Poe's final phrasing ("In her tomb by the side of the sea") was a mistake to achieve metrical regularity. This change from "In her tomb by the sounding sea," according to one authority, was unfortunate, "since it marred the concluding line, widely regarded as one of the great

lines of English verse." In any case, "The Life-Voyage" is the probable source for Poe's phrase "sounding sea."

Other parallels exist between the two poems. Both "The Life-Voyage" and "Annabel Lee" are ballads that begin in fairytale fashion beside the sea. Osgood's "Once in the olden time" is far more conventional than Poe's roughly anapestic "many and many a year ago." Both poems present a fair maiden of "bright eyes" who is envied by the angels in heaven. In "The Life-Voyage," the angels come down from heaven to win her prized pearl. Roughly conforming to Osgood's published remarks on "Annabel Lee," these angels eventually usher her safely to heaven; they act almost as kinsmen of God or the Heavenly Father. In "Annabel Lee," "the angels, not half so happy in Heaven, / Went envying her and me." It is noteworthy, that, in both poems, these angels are later transformed into demons that threaten the figure of female beauty. The transformation from angels to demons is occasioned by the announcement of death. In Osgood's poem, "A stillness of death" is attended by "dark wind-demons," which attack the pearl maiden. In "Annabel Lee," after wind brings death to his beloved, the speaker is locked in a never-ending conflict between "the angels in Heaven above" and "the demons down under the sea." This theme of angelic-demonic ambivalence appealed to Poe, not only in "Annabel Lee," but also in "The Raven" where the student initially believes that the raven is sent by the angels of the lost Lenore. While Poe is infinitely more successful in approximating the sound of the ocean's ebb and flow, both poets attempt onomatopoetic effects associated with oceanic rhythms. While the theme of adolescent love is absent from "The Life-Voyage," it contains a theme that appealed to Poe as well as other American Romantics. This is the "Voyage of Life" theme, which attempted to "telescope" the human cycle from infancy to death in a single work of literature. The Hudson River painter Thomas Cole employed this theme in his pictorial series "The Voyage of Life." And Poe, in "The Domain of Arnheim," projected the theme of life-voyage in his narrator's trip down a winding stream. Thus, because of Poe's predilection for this theme, Osgood's treatment in her poem would have been congenial to him.

Poe's review of Osgood's 1846 volume makes his exposure to "The Life-Voyage" clear. Subsequent reviews and printings of the poem suggest that his memory may have been refreshed at a time close to his claimed date of composition for "Annabel Lee." Furthermore, the possibility of mutual or reciprocal influence between "Annabel Lee" and "The Life-Voyage" should not be discounted. Mrs. Osgood's comments on "Annabel Lee" reflect a knowledge of the poem that exceeded any of her contemporaries. Rather uncharacteristically of Poe, he circulated a manuscript of "Annabel Lee" more widely than any of his other poems, sending a copy to Rufus Griswold, Mrs. Osgood's literary executor, in June 1849. By the same token, Poe may have seen a draft of "The Life-Voyage" independently of its publication. Such interchange is not unlikely in view of the Poe-esque titles among Osgood's poems: "Ermengarde's Awakening," "Lenore," and "Leonor." Another poem on a theme similar to that of "The Life-Voyage" is "The Spirit's Voyage," an elegy on the death of a child which echoes Poe's most famous refrain:

No more! - ah! never, never more! Her precious feet will tread. Like light, our dwelling's coral floor, By young affection led.

As if in reciprocation for these poetic efforts that bring to mind his characters, themes, and vocabulary, Poe wrote a series of poems to Mrs. Os-good. He also lauded her poetry in his reviews, showing particular fondness for a dramatic poem *Elfrida* in which the hero is a king named Edgar. The literary relationship reached its conclusion with her elegiac tribute to Poe, "The Hand That Swept the Sounding Lyre." In all this give-and-take, the connection between "The Life-Voyage" and "Annabel Lee" may have had the most fruitful and significant literary consequences.

In any case, examination of internal parallels alone would seem to make "The Life-Voyage" a probable model for Poe's final poem. In view of Mrs. Osgood's personal and literary relationship extending from 1845 to 1849, "The Life-Voyage" merits inclusion in any survey of the provenance of "Annabel Lee."

Source: Buford Jones and Kent Ljungquist, "Poe, Mrs. Os-good, and 'Annabel Lee,'" in *Studies in the American Renaissance,* edited by Joel Myerson, University Press of Virginia, 1983, pp. 275-80.

Critical Essay #5

In this brief essay, Empric delves into the psychological factors driving the poem's narrator.

The child's vision of reality is, in relation to the larger proportions and understanding of the adult mind, a vision of the grotesque. Time, for example, exists for the child as a present in which, somehow, past and future are simply amalgamated rather than sequential, separate entities. The narrator in "Annabel Lee" says he was a child when he knew and loved his child-bride. From the subsequent workings of his mind, the narrator's perspective seems to have changed little since that time. He has remained a child, because of inability or unwillingness to change, and this frozen perspective is lent a peculiar strength by the characteristic and simple cadences of the ballad form. The narrator tells his story until stanza three, when, in an attempt to account for the disproportion of his feelings of loss, he creates a child's explanation for these feelings: the vision of the angel-murderers. As simple as it appears among the lulling rhythms of the poem, the vision is grotesque. To justify the loss, to find some cause proportionate to the effect he has experienced, the narrator must temper his idea of the seraphic with the demonic. He confirms his rationalization of angel-murder by re-asserting it and lending it the weight of common knowledge in stanza four. The final stanzas represent the conflation of time into the ever-present faithfulness and the nightly ceremonial act whereby the narrator tries to overcome the fact of separation he has earlier tried to explain. And the conventionally macabre "sepulchre" and "tomb," given rhythmic emphasis in stanza six, transform, in context, into the blessed place of union for the lovers, among the soothing, familiar elements of nature. It is toward this unconscious wholeness in nature, in sleep, in death, that the distraught consciousness of the child mind strives through the simple narrative poem.

Source: Julienne H. Empric, "A Note on 'Annabel Lee,'" in *Poe Studies,* Vol. 6, No. 1, June, 1973, p. 26.

Adaptations

Dover Press Audio Thrift Classics has produced *Listen and Read Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" and other Favorite Poems* (1998) as a book and audio cassette.

Marianne Faithful renders "Annabel Lee" on the audio compact disk *Closed On Account of Rabies: Poems and Tales of Edgar Allan Poe* (1997) by UNI/Polygram.

Arts and Entertainment Network has produced the videocassette *Biography: Edgar Allan Poe* (1996).

Educational Insights, Inc., has produced the book and audio cassette *The Best of Poe* (1999).

Caedmon (publisher) presents *Poems and Tales of Edgar Allan Poe* (1955) on audio cassette with Basil Rathbone.

Michael Cain renders "Annabel Lee" on the audio cassette *The Silver Lining: The World's Most Distinguished Actors Read Their Favorite Poems* (1995) forBMP, Ltd.

Guidance Associates presents the videocassette, filmstrip and teacher's guide *Edgar Allan Poe and the Literature of Melancholy* (1980).

Monterey Home Video has produced the video-cassette *Edgar Allan Poe: Architect of Dreams* (1995).

A&E Home Video has produced the videocassette *The Mystery of Edgar Allan Poe* (1999).

GRJ Productions has produced the 16mm film

Poe: A Visit With the Author (1968).

Topics for Further Study

In this poem, Poe places an ideal love in "a kingdom by the sea." Write a poem in which you give a location to be the site of a perfect love would it be rural, urban, mountainous, coastal? Write about what you think it would be like to have a loved one buried at that place that you associate with living, vibrant love.

At the time this poem was written, 1849, America was still an expanding country, with conflicting opinions between the North and South over whether newly formed states should allow slavery. By contrast, "Annabel Lee" takes place in a well-established social structure, a kingdom. Explain what you think nostalgia might have been like for Americans at that time, both for those who were part of the established order and those who were expanding the frontier.

Like much of Poe's poetry, "Annabel Lee" has an easily recognizable rhythm. Set this poem to music, using either original instrumentation or melodies sampled from other songs.

Research the seven stages of death as described by psychologist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. Explain which of these stages the narrator of the poem is undergoing at each point in the poem.

Compare and Contrast

1849: Two months after "Annabel Lee" was published, Edgar Allan Poe was found in a tavern in Baltimore, muttering incoherently. He was admitted to the hospital, where he died four days later.

Today: Despite the claims of earlier biographers who wrote that Poe had been on a self-destructive drinking binge, modern historians guess that his condition probably had a physiological cause, such as a stroke.

1849: The discovery of gold in California the year before sparked a "Gold Rush" to that territory. Seventy-seven thousand people, dubbed "'49ers," rushed to California that year, traveling across unpopulated plains and the Rocky Mountains. California mines yielded $450,000,000 in gold.

Today: California is the most populous state in the union, with over ten million more people than the next most populous, New York.

1849: The safety pin was invented by Walter Hunt, also known for inventing the sewing machine and the paper disposable shirt collar. To pay off some debts, he sold the rights to the safety pin for $400.

1942: A Swiss manufacturer invented Velcro, a device used to fasten two strips of cloth together without the use of pins.

Today: Safety pins are still available, but are seldom used anymore.

1849: Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery and began her career with the Underground Railroad, the secret organization that helped slaves escape to freedom in Canada. She went on to make nearly twenty trips between the North and South, freeing 300 slaves.

Today: Harriet Tubman is recognized as an American hero.

1849: The first talk of secession came from the Southern states, in response to President Zachary Taylor's decision to let Californians vote for whether they wanted slavery in their state when it was admitted into the union. Hardcore supporters of slavery thought this was a betrayal of the Missouri Compromise, which decreed that slavery should be allowed anywhere below thirty-six degrees latitude.

1860: The South did secede from the United States, provoking the Civil War.

Today: The United States is a prosperous and fairly harmonious country, with no powerful separatist movements.

1849: The Women's Rights movement was on the rise in America: the first Women's Rights Convention was held in Seneca, New York, in 1848, with the first national convention held in 1850.

Today: After strong advances in the 1960s and 1970s, the Women's Rights movement has suffered a great drop in popular support. Some of its detractors say that it favors women at the expense of equality. Others feel that the movement has become irrelevant.

What Do I Read Next?

The poems by Poe that are most often associated with this one are "Lenore" and "To Helen," which are also about the deaths of young women. All of his works can be found in the Library of America's superior collection *Edgar Allen Poe: Poetry and Tales,* published in 1984.

Poe is considered the first serious literary critic in America. His ideas about art are evident in his nonfiction prose, collected in a different Library of America volume entitled *Edgar Allan Poe, Essays and Reviews: Theory of Poetry, Reviews of British and Continental Authors, Reviews of American Authors and American Literature.*

Tundra Books has a hardcover book-length edition of this poem, released in 1987. *Annabel Lee* has text by Edgar Allan Poe and watercolors by award-winning children's book artist Gilles Tibo. It is usually cataloged with children's books.

One of the best biographies of Poe available is Kenneth Silverman's *Edgar Allan Poe: Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance,* published in 1992 by Harper Perennial. This book is not only richly detailed, but it tells an engrossing tale of the poet's life.

John Evangelist Walsh concentrates on the four days leading up to Poe's death (which was two days before "Annabel Lee" was published) in his brief 1998 book *Midnight Dreary: The Mysterious Death of Edgar Allan Poe.* Poe's whereabouts for those days and the exact circumstances of his death have always been matters of controversy, and Walsh is meticulous in gathering evidence about what might have really happened.

Daniel Hoffman's 1998 analysis of the poet, entitled *Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe,* has been received with some controversy: readers generally respect his intellectual approach but find fault with the conclusions he draws about Poe's work.

Poe is considered to be a primary influence on the French Symbolist school, that came a generation after him. Charles Baudelaire, in particular, did much to save Poe from obscurity with his translations and reviews. The most notable collection of French Symbolist poetry is Baude-laire's *Les Fleurs Du Mal (Flowers of Evil),* which is available with commentary from Cambridge University Press series Landmarks in World Literature.

Further Study

Buranelli, Vincent, *Edgar Allan Poe,* 2nd ed., Boston:

Twayne Publishers, 1977.

Buranelli's concise book briefly discusses each of the author's works of poetry, prose and criticism, providing a good general sense of context but not much depth.

Carlson, Eric W., ed., *The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe: Selected Criticism Since 1829,* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1969.

This book contains essays of critics ranging from Poe's early publications through to the 1960s. Some of the most important literary figures of the last two hundred years are represented here: Baudelaire, Swinburne, Henry James, Dostoevski, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Richard Wilbur, and many more. Of particular interest is the obituary published by the Reverend Rufus Griswold using the pseudonym "Ludwig": the slanderous lies told in this article haunted Poe's literary reputation for years.

Dayan, Joan, "Amorous Bondage: Poe, Ladies and Slaves," in *The American Face of Edgar Allan Poe,* edited by Shawn Rosenheim and Stephen Rachman, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp. 179-209.

This scholarly essay draws the connection between the institution of slavery in the South, where Poe lived, and his treatment of female characters in his love poetry.

Fletcher, Richard M, *The Stylistic Development of Edgar Allan Poe,* The Hague: Mouton & Co. Publishers, 1973.

This book attempts to understand Poe's stories and his poems together: in particular, it pairs "Annabel Lee" with the short story "Hop-Frog."

Murray, David, " 'A Strange Sound, as of a Harp-string Broken': The Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe," in *Edgar Allan Poe: The Design of Order,* edited by A. Robert Lee, Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1987.

This essay questions Poe's reputation as a late figure in the Romantic movement and a forerunner of the Symbolist movement.

Porte, Joel, *The Romance in America: Studies in Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville and James,* Middletown, CT:Wesleyan University Press, 1969.

One of the clearest and most understandable works to put Poe into proper context among other figures who are not always thought of as his peers.

Stampp, Kenneth M., *America in 1857,* New York:Oxford University Press, 1990.

This book gives a good overview of the social situation in America two years before this poem was published, in the year that Poe's wife, who is presumed to be the model for Annabel Lee, died.

Thomas, Dwight, and David K. Jackson, *The Poe Log: A Documentary Life of Edgar Allan Poe, 1809-1849,* New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1987.

With an almost day-by-day breakdown of events in and related to Poe's life from birth to death, this is an indispensable guide for anyone interested in doing research on the poet.

Bibliography

Hammond, J. R., *An Edgar Allan Poe Companion,* Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1981.

Kennedy, J. Gerald, *Poe, Death, and the Life of Writing,* Yale University Press, 1987.

Poe, Edgar Allan, *Edgar Allan Poe: Poetry, Tales, and Se-lectedEssays,* edited by Patrick F. Quinn and G. R. Thompson, Library of America College Editions, 1996.

Powys, John Cowper, "Edgar Allan Poe," in *Visions and Revisions: A Book of Literary Devotions,* G. Arnold Shaw, 1915, pp. 263-277.

Quinn, Arthur Hobson, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography,* JohnsHopkins University Press, 1988.

Rice, C. Duncan, *The Rise and Fall of Black Slavery,* Evanston, IL: Harper and Rowe, Publishers, 1975.

Saintsbury, George, "Edgar Allan Poe," in *Prefaces and Essays,* edited by Oliver Elton, Macmillan & Co., 1933, pp. 314-23.

Stovall, Floyd, *Edgar Poe the Poet: Essays New and Old on the Man and His Work,* University Press of Virginia, 1969, 273 p.

Wilbur, Richard, "Poe and the Art of Suggestion," in *The University of Mississippi Studies in English,* Vol. III, 1982, pp. 1-13, reprinted in *Critical Essays on Edgar Allan Poe,* edited by Eric W. Carlson, G. K. Hall and Company, 1987, pp. 160-171.

BOOKRAGS

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Poetry for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

©1997-2002; ©2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc.

Gale and Design® and Thomson Learning™ are trademarks used herein under license.

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any

form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

For permission to use material from this product, submit your request via Web at http://www.gale-edit.com/permissions, or you may download our Permissions Request form and submit your request by fax or mail to:

Permissions Department
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

Permissions Hotline:
248-699-8006 or 800-877-4253, ext. 8006
Fax: 248-699-8074 or 800-762-4058

Since this page cannot legibly accommodate all copyright notices, the acknowledgments constitute an extension of the copyright notice.

While every effort has been made to secure permission to reprint material and to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, The Gale Group, Inc. does not guarantee the accuracy of the data contained herein. The Gale Group, Inc. accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Poetry for Students (PfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, PfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of PfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of PfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in PfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by PfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

PfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Poetry for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Poetry for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Poetry for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from PfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from PfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Poetry for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Poetry for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Poetry for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535