Chapter – 1

INTRODUCTION

American literature is as great as British literature today and some of the American writers are world famous. Edgar Allan Poe is one of them. He was an American poet, short story writer, critic, journalist and innovator. He is considered as part of the American Romantic movement. He was best known for his tales of mystery and macabre. Poe was one of the earliest American practitioners of the short story and is considered the inventor of the detective fiction genre as well as science-fiction. He tried to write like a pioneer in many of these areas. He was an originator of Gothic writings, and facilitator of symbolism in European poetry. He also worked in surrealist trend. Yet Poe’s life was a tragedy and his life is not clear. Critics as well as readers do not have some clarifications about him. Certain of the faults lie with him. For example, his first biographer Rufus Griswold tampered correspondences entrusted to him when he wrote Poe’s Memoir.

Edgar Allan Poe’s Life and Works:

Edgar Allan Poe was born on 19th January 1809 in Baltimore, Maryland. Henry Arnold and Elizabeth Smith were Poe’s grandparents. Elizabeth Arnold joined Andrew’s Gothic melodrama The Mysteries in Boston in 1796 and went on acting in plays. This Elizabeth, a widow came to America in 1796 for a job in Boston theatre. She married Mr. Tubbs, not an actor. Then Tubbs planned to work in the theatre. Mrs. Tubbs was good at music. Then Mrs. Tubbs had a daughter with the same name Elizabeth, and was called Arnold (she was born to her mother’s former husband, Henry
Arnold). Elizabeth acted beautifully in the plays like *The Spoiled Child, The Prisoner, The Shipwreck,* and *Blue Beard.* One correspondent for a paper wrote “…Mrs. Tubbs always does well. Her vocal powers we believe are equal to any of her sex who have appeared in this country. But the powers of her daughter, Miss Arnold, astonish us. Add to these her youth, her beauty, her innocence and a character is composed which has not and perhaps will not again be found on any theatre.”¹

David Poe, Jr., the father of Edgar Allan Poe, had also begun his carrier in the theatre. Unlike Elizabeth Arnold however there was no theatre in his blood. Dismissing as without foundation the mythical tales which connect Edgar Allan Poe with noble families of Europe, it seems certain that his great-great grandfather was David Poe, a tenant farmer in Dring, in the parish of Kildallon and Country Cavan, Ireland, who died in 1742. David’s son, John Poe, emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1750 having married Jane McBride. After living for a time in Lancaster Country, Pennsylvania, John Poe moved to Baltimore, where he died in 1756. John’s eldest son David had been born in Ireland in 1742. He carried business of making spinning wheels and clock reels on Market Street in Baltimore from 1775. He was one of the “Whig Club” who in 1777, attacked William Goddard, the editor of the *Maryland Journal.* So well known were Major Poe’s services that became known to the public and he was known for many years as “General” Poe. He also took part in the defense of Baltimore in 1814 against the British attack. Arthur Hobson Quinn observes, “Whether the Irish strain in Edgar Poe was responsible for any imaginative quality would be difficult to establish. The Celtic flame in literature does, however, kindle into a mysticism which concerns itself with those dim regions in which the relations of man and the
supernatural are depicted. Symbolism, too, is the air which the Celt has always breathed and in symbolism Poe reveled. One Irish trait—of a more tangible quality—may more certainly be attributed to his Poe ancestry.”

David Poe, Jr., was born in 1784. He was therefore only nineteen when he made his debut on the stage of the Charleston theatre. Young David Poe acted in Shakespeare’s plays *Macbeth, Richard III* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. In 1804 David and Mr. Hopkins took roles in *Speed the Plough*. At the benefit of Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins, Poe played Lindorf and Mrs. Hopkins, Stella, the two leads in *Boaden’s Maid of Bristol*, while Hopkins was cast for Cranium. So David Poe went on playing roles in many places of different companies and Mr. Hopkins died in 1805. Quinn says, “Criticism, definite or implied, certain biographies of her son, connecting the interval that elapsed between the death of Charles Hopkins and the marriage of his window to David Poe, proves to be unwarranted. The conditions of theatrical life at that time made the lot of a widowed girl of eighteen difficult if not impossible and there need be no speculation concerning her acceptance of David Poe’s protection.”

Now twenty one month’s child Edgar was fatherless. On 8th December 1811 his mother Elizabeth, aged 24, also died of pneumonia, leaving behind three orphan children Henry, Edgar and Rosalie. Edgar was a month short of three years old. John Allan was a partner in the firm of Ellis and Allan, exporters of tobacco and general merchants. The Allans were childless and adopted Edgar as their son. The Allans well-treated the boy, of course, at times, annoying him. They took him to England and Scotland and Poe had a chance to attend school there for five years. Critics think Poe is unique among the great American writers of his generation in having spent a
portion of his childhood in England. This period of his life is important because for the first time we are able to trace a definite influence in his later fiction from the scenes in which he moved and thought and felt. Later Poe wrote about the beauty of Stoke Newington. It is said, “Romantic, medieval and gothic qualities were already dear to Poe when he entered manor house. In Poe’s great doppelganger story, ‘William Wilson,’ there is much heightened description of this manor house.”

Poe extended schooling for some more years. Bransby in later years observed that his parents spoilt him with too much pocket money and that the boy was intelligent, wayward and willful. So Poe was soon complained of ‘moral isolation.’ Edgar Poe had gained European qualities in his life and writing. These qualities are unlike those of his American contemporaries. Edgar had always felt that his origins gave him a distinction not entirely American. And also he had a sense of aristocratic superiority. As a school boy he had felt the taste for the refreshing chillness of Gothic and it remains with him for life from this moral isolation. On September 28, 1818, however, Allan, in writing to his uncle, says: “Edgar is growing wonderfully and enjoys a good reputation as both able and willing to receive instruction” and also he says “Edgar is in the country at school, he is a very fine boy and good scholar.”

Why John Allan did not legally adopt Edgar Poe has been made the subject of much discussion. It could hardly have been due to a doubt concerning the possible demand from General David Poe, to give up his grandson for a letter from Eliza Poe, David’s daughter makes clear both her interest in Edgar and her gratitude to Mrs. Allan. It may have been Allan’s prejudice against the child of strolling players, or may have been his doubt
as to the feeling of his uncle, William Galt. There were also the claims of Allan’s kindred in Scotland.

Arthur Hobson Quinn observes, “The years from six to eleven of a boy’s life are also those in which the conscience begins its activity. The finer the nature, keener will be the self-accusations, the more exaggerated the sense of guilt for the peccadilloes of childhood. It is just at that age that a boy needs the sympathetic understanding of a father and even more, that of a mother. It is not unreasonable to believe that Poe, looking back upon these days, should remember how little help was given him in this regard.”

Edgar’s school teacher in Richmond Joseph Clerk provides evidence that Poe was already interested in poetry. By the age of fourteen, he was assuming the traditional romantic postures associated with the poet’s image. His first known poetic lines are:

Last night with many cares and toils oppressed
Weary----- I laid me on a couch to rest —

Another early poem found in an 1822 Ellis and Allan file expresses painful love:

Oh feast my soul, revenge is sweet
Louisa, take my scorn;-  
Curs’d was the hour that saw us meet
The hour when we were born.

Poe continued his education at the University of Virginia and began writing poetry. Neither posture was likely to appease Poe’s foster-father but Mrs. Allan found satisfaction in the handsome boy’s romantic inclinations and she encouraged him. Interestingly Poe’s sister Rosalie living in
Richmond itself, was devoted to her clever and attractive brother. Egdar Poe had his own friends and one of them took him to his mother Jane Stannard. This beautiful lady inspired Poe to write ‘To Helen.’ Because of her illness Stannard died in 1824. Poe is said to have been haunted at Jane’s grave at night. He writes in his late teen:

I could not love except where death
Was mingling his with Beauty’s breath.⁹

And so with the death of Mrs Stanard and Sarah’s refusal to marry him, Poe got frustrated. His volume of poems *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, was published in the year 1831 in Baltimore. The poem ‘To Helen’ is being the best in the book. It originally appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Poe wrote years later to Mrs. Whitman, “The lines I had written, in my passionate boyhood, to the first, purely ideal love of my soul – to the Helen Stannard of whom I told you, flashed upon my recollection.”¹⁰ The theme of this poem is the beauty of a woman with whom Poe became acquainted when he was just 14. Beauty as Poe uses the word in the poem appears to refer to the woman’s soul as well as her body. The poem is spiritual rather. And he wrote a small volume of poems containing *Al Araaf*, published in 1827. It deals with a pair of star-crossed lovers, who dead on earth, lived in the space. This poem reveals a profound need to escape from earth-bound problems.

Poe continued his education and socialization. Any conception of Poe, however, as an abstracted and moody young poet would be quite incorrect. There is definite evidence that Poe was a natural leader in those activities in which a normal boy takes pleasure. There was, however, trouble brewing in the Allan household for Edgar Poe. Allan’s business affairs came to a crisis in 1822 when he made a personal assignment with permission to retain his
property. In 1824 his firm of Ellis and Allan was closed. Poe was not comfortable. He was on an insecure foundation in the Allan household, and probably was just beginning to realize it. There may have been another reason for the disturbance of Poe’s serenity. Just when he fell in love with Elmira Royster is, of course not known. In view of the romance that has grown up concerning Poe and the ‘Enchanted Garden,’ on Second Street it is best to let her speak for herself. But she married Shelton when she was seventeen; her heart was evidently not broken and in all probability, neither was Edgar Poe’s:

When Edgar Poe entered the University of Virginia on February 14, 1826, the University had had only one year of actual life. Notwithstanding Poe’s excellent scholastic record, John Allan refused to encourage him any further. There were debts also which he declined to pay. Certainly Poe seems to have enjoyed some phases of his university career. He took long walks in the neighborhood, which are reflected in ‘A Tale of the Ragged Mountains.’ This story begins, ‘During the fall of the year, 1827, while residing near Charlottesville, Virginia.’ The main plot of the story has no connection with the university, but Poe’s own wandering inspired the description of the hero, Bedloe, setting forth alone among the chain of wild and dreary hills that lie westward and southward of Charlottesville and are there dignified by the title of “The Tale of Ragged Mountains.” (1844). With the close of Poe’s term at the University of Virginia his regular education was over. The conditions of Poe’s life from his return from the University of Virginia in December 1826, until he left Richmond or Boston in March, 1827, are not clear. Critics think Edgar Allan Poe arrived at Boston, the city of his birth in April 1827. It was his first independent
venture, taken on impulse, and probably prompted by Boston’s reputation as a literary and publishing centre.

If Poe did make an attempt to follow his parent’s stage career, it was not a success. It must have been an unhappy boy who entered in the United States Army as a private soldier on May 26, 1827. That he was not entering upon this career from any liking for a soldier’s life is clear from the fact that he gave his name as ‘Edgar A. Perry,’ born in Boston, and his age as twenty two. On February 28, 1829, Francis Allan died, and Poe arrived at Richmond, on leave, the day after the funeral. John Allan must have relented sufficiently to send him some money. The death of the woman who was the chief bond between them must have resulted in some form of reconciliation. Under a Special Order No. 28, dated April 4, 1829, sergeant Major ‘Edgar A. Perry’ was discharged on April 15th.

Mrs. Maria Clemm, Poe’s father’s sister who was to play such a large part in his life, is also mentioned as not being of any assistance to him these years. Her daughter Virginia Eliza, was born on August 15 in 1822, and baptized November 5th was to marry Edgar Allan Poe later. Mrs. Clemm became a ‘Muddy,’ for Edgar Allan Poe. It is a childish word for mother, which also suggests a commitment to the low and mental tasks which were the entire life of this good woman. The sonnet of mother love was still to come and so was the marriage to Virginia. The ‘muddy’ is remembered in one of the last poems Poe was to write in ‘To My Mother’ and ‘The Sleeper.’ The poem says that the mother of the woman he loved is more important than his own mother. It was published in 1849 in Flag of Union. It has alternately been published as ‘Sonnet to My Mother.’ ‘The Sleeper’ is a lyric first published in 1831, then revised and republished in 1845. It is
written in couplets and triplets. ‘The Sleeper’ is one of the many Poe poems focusing on beautiful woman. Poe drafted and polished demonic image in his first great poems. As his days and evenings were filled by routine and the revolt against it, it was at night that he worked. This in Poe’s work shows a post-midnight atmosphere. In the nights at West Point, ‘To Helen,’ ‘Irene,’ ‘The Doomed City’ and the first ‘Lenore’ emerged and shone with themes of beautiful women and a motherly atmosphere. He shared his nights with ‘Israfel.’ ‘Lenore,’ a poem of twenty six lines in four stanzas reflects on the death of a young woman. It is a poem first published in 1831 as ‘A Paean.’ Poe revised and published the poem under the title ‘Lenore’ in 1843. ‘Lenore’ was made up to symbolize his wife Virginia. ‘For Annie’ is a poem published in 1849 in the journal *Flag of Union*. It was written for Nancy Richmond, who was a married woman. ‘Ligeia’ also a poem was published in 1845 in *Broadway Journal*. Another poem ‘The City in the Sea’ tells the story of a city ruled by death using common elements from Gothic elements.

‘A Dream Within A Dream’ uses the sea as a setting for a discussion of death and decay. ‘The Bells’ is a lyric that first appeared in 1849 in Sartain’s *Union Magazine of Literature and Art*. The theme of the poem is life and death and the death ultimately triumphs over life. ‘An Enigma’ is a riddle in a modified sonnet form, published in 1848. ‘The Raven’ is considered as Poe’s best poem. Critics call it the best poem in the English language. It was published in *New York Evening Mirror* in 1845 and received popular and critical acclaim. Poe exploits several themes that are found throughout creative works including the tragic death of a beautiful woman at young age. Here a beautiful woman’s death refers to Poe’s wife
Virginia. Poe was in the habit of taking long rambles in the neighborhood, especially to a rock overlooking the Hudson, known as 'Mount Tom.' One of the Brennan girls, later Mrs. James R.O’Beirne was a witness of his long hours of work, when she was permitted to sit in his room while he was composing ‘The Raven.’ Brennan house is the identical one described by the poet in ‘The Raven,’ and the arrangement of a plaster cast of Pallas, on a high shelf in front of a few smoky panes of glass, seem fanciful, notwithstanding Poe’s own statement about the plaster cast. Poe read the poem to Mrs. Brennan. There can be little doubt, however, ‘The Raven,’ was completed, if not begun, in the Brennan home.

Poe’s residence from December 1829, until May, 1830, is not fully clear. Poe left West Point on February 19, 1831. He was evidently ill with severe ear-trouble. He spent a miserable month in New York because of hunger and illness. He asked money from his foster-father but he did not get it. How Poe lived in New York is a mystery. At that time, The Philadelphia Saturday Courier had announced a short story competition with a prize of $100; for the time being Poe decided to apply himself totally to the problems of story-writing. In the garret of the Clemm house he wrote several stories which became the basis for his collection, ‘The Tales of the Folio Club’ but he failed to win the prize but this paper published his short story ‘Metzengerstein.’ His efforts in fiction were influenced by the fashion for Gothic tales. Poe did not know the German language and he later stated that ‘In many of my production of tales the terror is not of Germany but of the soul.’

Poe used opium because he had stomach irritation. In his Confessions of an Opium Eater he describes how the drug first increased his working
stamina and heightened his imaginative flights. Drug also masked hunger- 
warmed body. Opium was the drug of the Romantics as tuberculosis was 
their disease. Mrs. Allan and Edgar hated each other as if mortal enemies. 
Many of the calumnies against Poe as ingrate drinker, gambler and 
dishonorable beggar derived from the strong willed Mrs. Allan’s 
unconditional dislike and sharp tongue.

After his early attempts at poetry, Poe had turned his attention to 
prose. And after his brother Henry’s death, Poe made an earnest attempt to 
start his career as a writer. He chose a difficult thing in American literature. 
He was the first well-known American to try to live by writing alone. He had 
written two volumes of *Grotesque and Arabesque Tales* published in 1835. 
Mr. John Allan died and he did not mention the name of Edgar in his will. 
Edgar would never again need to compose a wheedling, pitiful, hopeful, 
begging letter to the merchant of Richmond. So Poe asked help from Mr. 
Kennedy to obtain a job as a school master.

In 1834 the premium offered for the best poem by proprietor of the 
*Baltimore Saturday Visitor* was awarded to him for Poe’s short story ‘MS 
Found in a Bottle.’ In 1835 he became editor of *Southern Literary 
Messenger* and he published nine stories. Behind Poe’s suicidal agony was 
the fear that Virginia, his little wife was declining in his absence, and would 
be lost to him forever like all the women he had ever loved. Soon he brought 
his family with him to Richmond. In 1844 Poe returned to New York and he 
became the editor of *The Mirror*. Then he joined *The Broadway Journal*. In 
March 1845, he delivered a lecture at Society Library on the American 
poets. He accepted invitation to deliver a poem before the members of the 
Boston Lyceum. In January 1846 *The Broadway Journal* collapsed. Poe
started to write lines of criticism entitled “The New York Literati” which were published in *Godey’s Lady’s Book*.

Poe admitted Northern Dispensary for medicine; because of severe winter, debts and bad cold. Then he completed his single long work, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* and several grotesque tales. In 1838 *Arthur Gordon Pym* was published. This novel is about shipwreck from horrible sufferings from famine. It is an adventurous story. Poe’s original grotesque story ‘The Devil in the Belfry’ was published in *Saturday Evening Chronicle* and the poem ‘The Haunted Palace’ first published in 1839 in *American Museum Magazine*.

When he was residing at Fordham, a little place on the railroad fourteen miles from New York, Poe’s wife died in 1848. That time he suffered from poverty and considerable mental disquietude. After Virginia’s death, Poe was too ill to leave Fordham. Many times, after the death of his beloved wife, he was found at the dead hour of a winter night, sitting beside her tomb almost frozen in the snow, where he had wandered from his bed weeping and wailing. Poe could live with the memory of her and their unspeakable emotions were idealized. She became the lost Ulalume, the romantic, eternally sleeping Annabel Lee from the fearful man eater of his opium dreams. His ‘Ulalume’ focuses on the narrator’s loss of a beautiful woman due to her death. It was appeared in the *American Review* in 1847. It explores the theme of the death of a beautiful woman. It was a simple ballad written in 1849 and Poe’s wife Virginia is often assumed to be the inspiration for ‘Annabel Lee.’
Mr. Poe wrote about seventy tales all of which appear as a faithful record of some peculiar phase of his own being and mental rapture, at the time of their composition. His tales reveal some of the freshest as well as loftiest emotions of his soul but one very dear to his heart. It contains the rudiments of many of his afterthoughts. The tale entitled ‘Shadow - A Parable’ is the development of his mental conception. The theme is truth revelation of his own lofty ideals of beauty.

‘How to Write Blackwood Article’ and ‘A Predicament’ were written in the year 1829. Poe published ‘Metzengerstein: A Tale’ in Imitation of the German.” The story was first published in the pages of Philadelphia Saturday Courier Magazine in 1832. The story follows the young Frederick the last long-standing Metzengerstein family who carries on a long standing feud with the Berlifitzing family. Metzengerstein follows many conventions of Gothic fiction and to some exaggerates those conventions. Poe intended the story to be taken seriously. Many elements like gloomy castle and the power of evil become common in Poe’s future writings, because the story follows an orphan raised in an aristocratic house-hold, an autobiographical connection with its author. Poe may have in fact intended “the story as a satire or burlesque of the genre purposely exaggerating the elements of the gothic to be humorous.”

‘The Duc De L’Omelette’ was a short story published in 1832. But the same year he published another short story ‘Bon-Bon.’ It is a comic story published in the Philadelphia Saturday Courier. Originally called ‘The Bargain Lost’ the story follows a man named Pierre Bon-Bon who believes himself a profound philosopher and his encounter with the devil. The humor of the story is based on the verbal interchange between the two which
satirize classical philosophers Plato and Aristotle. The devil reveals that he has eaten many of these philosophers, intriguing Bon-Bon. The story which received moderate praise was originally submitted by Poe as ‘The Bargain Lost’ and was an entry to a writing contest. None of the five stories he submitted won any prize.

‘MS. Found in a Bottle’ was published in 1833 in The Visiter. This story is a contest winner offered by weekly Baltimore Saturday Visiter. Kennedy was particularly supportive of Poe’s fledgling career and gave him work for the Visitor after the contest. The plot follows an unnamed narrator at the sea who finds himself in a series of harrowing circumstances. As he nears his own disastrous death while his ship drives ever southward, he writes an MS or manuscript telling of his adventure and he casts the bottle into the sea. Some critics say the story was meant as a satire of typical sea tales. ‘MS. Found in a Bottle’ is one of Poe’s sea tales, which includes ‘A Dream into the Maelstrom’ and ‘The Oblong Box.’ The horror comes from its scientific imagination, the description of a physical world, beyond the limits of human exploration.

‘The Assignation’ is a story published in 1834 in Southern Literary Messenger. First it is named ‘The Visionary’ and later called ‘The Assignation.’ It was first published in Godey’s Lady’s Book in January 1834. The story begins with a baby who accidentally slips from his mother’s hands from an upper window of the lofty structure into deep and dim canal. ‘The Assignation’ is an arabesque tale.

‘The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall’ was published in monthly magazine Southern Literary Massanger in 1835 and intended by
Poe to be a hoax. Two of the stories, ‘Berenice’ and ‘Morella’ at once challenge attention, not only because they both deal with the death of a woman, who has loved the narrator without his returning her love, but because they are both concerned with a more profound theme. According to critics, these are preliminary studies. “Morella” is on a higher plane and is a preliminary study for ‘Legeia,’ probably Poe’s greatest story. ‘Berenice’ is a horror story. It was first published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1835. It is said, “‘In ‘Bernice’ Poe was following the popular tradition of Gothic fiction, a genre well followed by American and British readers for several decades. Poe however made his Gothic stories more sophisticated, dramatizing terror by using more realistic images.” This story is one of Poe’s most violent. ‘King Pest’ is on the border line between the grotesque and arabesque there being a certain power in the description of the pestilence. It provides suspense, fear and supernatural elements.

In these days when Americans were pioneering in all directions, Poe like his chief rival Hawthorne was experimenting, too in his critical judgement upon the work of others. For this field there was needed a literary magazine and since no opening presented itself in Baltimore he turned naturally to Richmond where such a career seemed to await him. It was in the heat of Richmond summer that Poe returned to his early surroundings. His encouragement with the *Southern Literary Messenger* was tentative. It needs little power of imagination to understand why Poe was at this time desperately unhappy. There were before him in Richmond at every turn scenes which called up memories of happiness and of sorrows which only childhood can suffer and only youth can remember in their bitter intensity. Above all, he was lonely and he missed the womanly sympathy without
which he could never be quiet a man. His thoughts turned naturally back to Baltimore where that sympathy was always at his command. His grandmother, Mrs. David Poe had died on July 7, 1835, in the seventy-ninth year of her age. As he had followed her to grave from the Amity Street house, accompanied by Mrs. Clemm and Virginia, perhaps the uppermost thought in the minds of his aunt and himself was the question of their future. Mrs. Poe’s annual pension of two hundred and forty dollars died with her and Poe would have been more than callous if he had not felt anxious concerning their well-being. He was in constant correspondence with Mrs. Clemm, and sent her money, all he could spare. Then he received a letter from Mrs. Clemm in which she asked his advice concerning the offer of Neilson Poe to provide for Virginia’s education and support. Virginia was just thirteen, having been born on August 15, 1822, and Neilson Poe, who had married her half-sister, Josephine Clemm, and was her own second cousin, might well have felt that she was too young to marry Edgar. Evidently Mrs. Clemm arranged the marriage between Edgar and Virginia in order to keep the little family together. But a letter from Poe to Mrs. Clemm, written on August 29, 1835, which appears only for the first time in a biography, makes clear that Edgar Poe loved his little cousin not only with the affection of a brother, but also with the passionate devotion of a lover and a prospective husband. He had returned to Baltimore by September 22, 1835, when a license was taken out for his marriage to Virginia. Poe persuaded Mrs. Clemm to allow him to marry Virginia, and on the 2nd of September, 1835, they were married, at Old Christ Church.

Poe was endeavoring to aid Mrs. Clemm in her efforts, which were perennial, to obtain some help from her relatives. Since practically all the
many speculations concerning the relations of Poe and his ‘child wife’ have been written in ignorance of his letter of August 29, 1835, they can be discharged. Poe loved her and she adored him. Being fourteen, she was naturally immature, but that she remained so or that she very closely resembled Rosalie. His own answer to the criticism which his marriage created in Richmond and elsewhere is given in ‘Eleonora’ and ‘Annabel Lee.’ It is, incidentally, the only answer a gentleman could make. If Virginia was the prototype of Eleonora she was not the model for Morella or Berenice or Ligeia.

‘Morella’ is a short story published in Southern Literary Messenger in 1835. The story is about unnamed narrator who marries Morella, a woman who delves into ‘forbidden pages’ of mysticism. Allan Tate observes, “The narrator’s decision to name his daughter Morella implies subconscious desire for her death; just he had for her mother. Morella’s rebirth may be her becoming a vampire vengeance upon her husband.” While in ‘Eleonora’ Poe paid a tribute to the natural love of the wife who took care of him with a devotion. ‘Legeia’ depicts a marriage based on an intellectual kinship, which Virginia at sixteen could not yet have given him. Later on he was to seek that comradeship from a number of women. ‘Eleonora,’ is the idealized version of the theme of spiritual integrity, made concrete by its association with the death of a beautiful woman. In the ‘Morella’ and ‘Legeia’ the changes in the identity of the beautiful woman who is loved and lost are wrought in a mood of terror. But in ‘Eleonora’ the atmosphere is conceived in terms of peace and beauty.

‘Ligeia’ is an early short story, published in 1838. The story follows an unnamed narrator and his wife Legeia a beautiful and intelligent woman.
She falls ill, composes ‘The Conqueror Worm’ and quotes lines attributed to Joseph Glanvill shortly before dying. After her death, the narrator marries the lady Rowena. Soon Rowena begins to suffer fever. Her condition worsens. Few days later, she dies and her body is wrapped for burial.

‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ is considered Poe’s most famous work of fiction. This highly unsettling macabre work is considered as the masterpiece of American Gothic literature. Indeed, as in many of his tales, Poe borrows much from the Gothic tradition. The short story published in 1839 in *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine*, was slightly revised in 1840 for the collection *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. It contains within it the poem ‘The Hunted Palace.’ It depicts the allegorical disguise of the sin of the palace, and the decay of human soul.

‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ is considered the best example of Poe’s totality, where every element and detail is related and relevant. The story shows Poe’s ability to create an emotional tone in his work specially feelings of fear, doom and guilt. The reflection of the turn is described in the opening paragraph and a striking similitude between the brother and sister is mentioned when Madeline dies. Poe uses the theme of death and resurrection of a woman. There are various Gothic elements such as the decrepit castle, whose signs of decay reflect the mental condition of Usher, which is rapidly deteriorating.

‘The Man That Was Used up’ and ‘The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion’ are short stories, published in 1839 in *Burtons Gentleman’s Magazine*. ‘William Wilson’ is a short story published in *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1839, with a setting inspired by Poe’s years of
stay outside London. It is said, “The tale clearly explores the theme of the double. This second half haunts the protagonist leading him to insanity and also represents his own insanity.”

Poe wrote the story carefully. He wrote to Washington Irving asking for a word of endorsement. He called it ‘my best efforts.’ Irving responded, “it is managed in a highly picturesque style and the singular and mysterious interest is well sustained throughout.”

This story like all the annual or gift books, appeared early enough to secure the Christmas business. Carey and Hart published the Gift and its editor, Miss Eliza Leslie had reprinted Poe’s ‘Manuscript Found in a Bottle’ in that annual for 1836. These literary annuals or gifts books represented a very significant episode in American Literature. The judgment of time has agreed with Poe. The attempt to derive his work from German sources has not been very successful. The apparent resemblances between ‘William-Wilson’ and E.T.A. Hoffman’s ‘Elixiere des Teufels’ can be derived more easily from Irving’s account, already mentioned, and the victory of the monk over his insane double is quite different from the climax of ‘William Wilson.’

Poe’s only short story in Burton’s for 1840. ‘The Business Man’ was an amusing if unimportant satire on methods of obtaining money on false pretences. ‘The Business Man’ was published in 1845 in Broadway Journal. The story is about a factitious businessman boasting of his accomplishments. Mayers Jeffers says, “The story is a satire and it is often interpreted as a reflection of Poe’s strained relationship with his foster father John Allan, himself a successful business man.”

‘Why the Little Frenchman Wears His Head in a Sling’ was short story published in 1840. In the same year, another short story ‘The Man of the Crowd’ appeared. It was about a nameless narrator following a man
through a crowd in London. Poe popularly presents the story as a sort of mysticism. The setting of London in the tale is important. By 1840 London was the largest city in the world with a population of 750,000. Poe would have known London from the time he spent there as a boy with his foster family the Allans although he may have relied on the writing of Charles Dickens for details of London’s streets. In this story and others, “Poe associates modern cities with the growth of impersonal crime.”

‘A Descent into the Maelstrom’ is an adventure story, published in 1841. The story shares the detective and admiring sidekick genre. It is organized into a frame story where the outer frame is that of a mountain climb. The inner frame tells the main story. Poe’s choice of a frame structure for the story is interesting both because of its advantages and disadvantages. This story takes the theme of the fear of death from ‘MS Found in a Bottle’ and reverses it. ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue,’ is a detective story published in Graham Magazine in 1841. It has been claimed as the first detective story in the world. Poe referred to it as one of his ‘tales of ratiocinations.’ The story surrounds the baffling double murder of Madame Espanaye and her daughter in the Rue Morgue, a fictional street in Paris. Its theme was the exercise of ingenuity in detecting a murderer. The tale has an underlying metaphor, for the battle of brains vs. brawn. ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ establishes an urban theme which will be reused several times. Poe originally, titled the story “Murder in the Rue Trianon” but renamed it to better associate it with death.”

‘Never Bet Devil Your Head’ is a story first published in 1841 in Graham’s Magazine. A satirical tale, it pokes fun at the notion that all literature should have a moral. Never Bet the Devil Your Head’ is a clear
attack on Transcendentalism. Poe once wrote in a letter to Thomas Holley Chivers that he did not dislike transcendentalism, “only the pretenders and sophists among them” under the title that ‘Never Bet Devil Your Head: A Moral Tale.’

‘The Succession of Sundays’ was published on November 27, 1841, in the *Saturday Evening Post*. It is one of the Grotesques in which a crusty guardian permits two lovers to marry when ‘three Sundays come together in a week.’

Poe gave to *Graham’s* two fine stories during his final months with the magazine. ‘Life in Death,’ which later became ‘The Oval Portrait,’ appeared in April 1842. ‘The Masque of the Red Death,’ which was published in May, represents Poe at his height in that form of the arabesque in which he let his fancy create a mood of terror wrought out of the symbolism of color. The similarity of theme to Hawthorne’s ‘The Birth Mark’ which has to appear in *The Pioneer* in March 1843 is apparent, but Hawthorne’s treatment is so different that there can be no question of plagiarism. In ‘The Masque of the Red Death’ Poe adopted many conventions of traditional gothic fiction including the setting of a castle. The multiple single toned rooms may be representative of the human mind showing different personality types. It is likely that the disease was inspired by tuberculosis. It is said, “Since Poe’s wife Virginia was suffering from the disease at the time the story was written. Like the character of prince Prospero Poe tried to ignore the totality of disease.”

‘The Mystery of Marie Roget’ is a short story written in 1842. It appeared in *Snowden’s Ladies Companion* in three installments. This is the first murder mystery based on the details of a real crime. In the story Poe’s detective character Dupin and his sidekick unnamed narrator undertake the
unsolved murder of Marie Roget in Paris. The body of Roget, a perfume shop employee, is found in Seine River and the media take a keen interest in the mystery. Dupin uses newspaper reports to get into the mind of the murderer. ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’ is a story published in 1842. It appeared in the Gift for 1843. It is a remarkable study of the effect of terror upon a man imprisoned in a dungeon of the inquisition. It is said, “The traditional elements established in popularly horror tales at the time are followed, but critical reception has been mixed.”

The story starting with the opening line that suggest he is already suffering from death, anxiety and shortly thereafter when he loses consciousness upon receiving the death sentence. ‘The Oval Portrait’ is the first short story involving the disturbing circumstances surrounding a portrait in a chateau. Meyers Jeffry thinks, “Poe suggests in the tale that art can reveal the artist’s guilt or evil and that the artist feeds on and may even destroy the life he has modeled into art.”

‘The Gold-Bug’ was first published in The Dollar Newspaper, Philadelphia, in June 1843. This story won the grand prize and published in three installments. It was an instant success and was most popular. And it also helped increase Poe’s popularity as a writer. In July 1841, Poe published ‘A Few Words on Secret Writing’ and realizing the interest in the topic wrote ‘The Gold-Bug’ as one of the few peaces of literature to incorporate ciphers as part of the story. United States newspapers made ‘The Gold-Bug’ Poe’s most widely read short story during his life time. Daniel Stashower says, “His one lecture in Philadelphia after ‘The Gold-Bug’ was published and it drew such a large crowd that hundreds were turned away.”

As Poe wrote in a letter in 1848, it “made a great noise.” He would later compare the public success of ‘The Gold-Bug’ with ‘The Raven’ though he
admitted ‘The Bird beat the Bug.’ Thomas Holley Chivers admired Poe’s story ‘The Gold-Bug.’ The story is often compared with Poe’s ‘Tales of Ratiocination’ as an early form of detective fiction. Poe became aware of the public’s interest in secret writing in 1840 and asked readers to challenge his skill as a code breaker. The story makes use of Sullivan’s Island. This island remained a vivid memory in Poe’s mind. The travelers across the ocean in ‘The Balloon-Hoax’ land on the beach. In ‘The Oblong Box,’ Charleston is simply a place from which to depart. But it was not the city of Charleston; it was rather the surroundings of Fort Moultrie and the shadows of the dense woods of South Carolina that stamped their impression upon Poe.

According to Arthur Hobson Quinn, “‘The Black Cat’ appeared in the United States Saturday Post in 1843. It is one of the most powerful of Poe’s stories, and the horror stops short of the wavering line of disgust.” Poe constructed the story in such a way that the events of the tale remain somewhat ambiguous. In the story the nameless narrator begins his horrifying tale by informing his readers that he is about to relate a series of mere household events. ‘The Black Cat’ is even more closely related to ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’ than to ‘The Pit and the Pendulum.’ Again the preservation of the tone makes the tale a complete unity. As the story begins, the narrator is in jail awaiting his execution, which will occur on the following day for the brutal number of his wife.

‘The Tell-Tale Heart’ is a horror story. It was published in 1843, which Lowell welcomed for The Pioneer in January. In one sense, a companion piece to ‘The Pit and Pendulum,’ it is also a study of terror, but this time it is related, partially, in terms of the memory of terror. ‘Diddling’ was published in 1843. It is considered as one of the exact sciences.
According to John Teresch, “the story is an early form of science-fiction specifically responding to the emerging technology of hot air balloons.”

‘The Purloined Letter’ is the third of Poe’s three detective stories featuring the fictional Auguste Dupin, the other two being ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ and ‘The Mystery of Marie Roget.’ These stories are considered to be important early forerunners of the modern detective story. Whalen Terena says, “The story was adapted as Sherlock Holmes episode in 1980.”

‘The Premature Burial’ is a horror story on the theme of being buried alive. It was published in 1844 in The Philadelphia Dollar Newspaper. Fear of being buried alive was common in this period and Poe was taking advantage of the public interest. In this story the first person unnamed narrator describes his struggle with attacks of the singular disorder which physicians have agreed to term catalepsy, a condition where he randomly falls into a death like trance. This leads to his fear of being buried alive. The narrator of the story is living a hollow life. He has avoided reality through his catalepsy but also through his fantasies, visions, and on session with death. Aril Selley thinks, “he does however reform but only after his greatest fear has been realized.”

‘The Literary Life of Thingum Bob Esq,’ as a short story was published in 1844. At the same year, another story ‘Thou Art the Man’ was published. It is an early experiment in detective fiction genre which Poe invented and called rationation. According to Daniel Hoffman, “This story is presented humorously, satirizing the rural country town and making a caricature of its residents.” The story can be considered a burlesque of Poe’s own tales of rationative. “The story is also considered lesser than
Poe’s previous detective stories because the amateur detective’s obsession with exposing the murder eliminates most of the mystery.”

‘A Tale of the Ragged Mountains’ is a story set in Virginia. It was first published in *Godey’s Lady’s Book* in 1844. ‘A Tale of the Ragged Mountains’ heightened scientific theories of Poe’s day, engages with British imperial history and forecasts contemporary interest in psychoactive drugs, the transmigration of the soul, and the dynamics of the doctor-patient relationship. ‘The Spectacle’ is one of Poe’s comic tales, published in 1844. Poe seems to be addressing the concept of ‘love’ at first sight. ‘The Oblong Box’ is a story published in 1844 in *Godey’s Magazine* and *Lady’s Book*. It is about voyage and a mysterious box.

Poe published stories during 1845. He depended for his market on *Godey’s* and *Graham’s* or on the rival political monthlies, the *American Review* and the *Democratic Review*. ‘The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade’ continued the famous story of the Arabian Nights, with a deft ironic touch. And ‘The Power of Words’ is a poem far above these satires in merit, clever as they are. Poe faced in this story the problems of creation and took the position that God creates the beginning. The story speaks of radio waves.

One of the most interesting of Poe’s stories, both for itself and because of its explanation of his own nature, is ‘The Imp of the Perverse.’ The story begins as an essay rather than as a work of fiction. It was first published in 1845 in *Graham’s Magazine*. It discusses the narrator’s self-destructive impulse embodied as the Imp of the Perverse. ‘The Facts in the Case of M Valdemar’ is a short story about a mesmerist, who puts a man in a
suspended hypnotic state at the moment of death. At the time of this story’s publication Poe’s wife Virginia had been suffering from tuberculosis for four years. Poe’s extreme detail in ‘The Facts in the Case of Valdemar’ may have been based on Virginia’s actual suffering.

‘The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether’ is the comic short story published in 1845 in *Graham’s Magazine*. At the time, this story was written care for the insane was a political issue. People were calling for asylum reform at a time when the mentally ill were treated like prisoners. John Clemen observes, “It is during a time when an increased acquittal due to the insanity defense was being criticized for allowing criminals to avoid punishments.”

Probably no one else would have thought of mesmerizing a man about to die and preserving his life for seven months, with the result that upon being released from the trance he falls at once into the state of putrescence to which he would have advanced had there been no hypnotism.

‘Some Words with a Mummy’ was published in *American Review: A Whig Journal* in April 1845. It is a satire and criticism of the popularity of mummies and science that was occurring at the time. This is a satire of two things. First popular interest in Egyptology and mummies. Poe is clearly poking fun at Egyptmania in the story. He also criticizes modern science.

Poe left the staff of the *Mirror* because he saw in a new journal a better opportunity. While still on the *Mirror’s* staff he had become a welcome contributor to the *Broadway Journal*. This weekly had been founded in January, 1845, by Charles Briggs, as editor, and John Bisco as publisher. *The Evening Mirror* of February 27, 1845, announced Poe’s lecture on the ‘Poets and Poetry of America,’ for February 28th, and promised the audience ‘fine carving from the critical blade of Mr. Poe.’
‘The Cask of Amontillado’ is a story published in 1846 in *Godey’s Lady’s Book*. The story is set in a nameless Italian city in an unspecified year and concerns the deadly revenge taken by the narrator on a friend whom he claims has insulted him. Like several of Poe’s stories and in keeping with the nineteenth century fascination with the subject the narrative revolves around a person -- a person being buried alive. It is a powerful tale of revenge in which the interest lies in the implacable nature of the narrator.

The year 1845 was a memorable one in Poe’s life. He published most famous tales and poems like ‘The Raven’ in Wilky and Putnam. These tales are ‘The Gold-Bug,’ ‘The Black Cat,’ ‘The Fall of the House of Usher,’ ‘A Descent into the Maelstrom,’ ‘Mesmeric Revelation’ and other Dupin stories. This established the popular fiction image of Poe.

The year 1846 saw little of Poe’s creative writing. ‘The Sphinx’, a story was published in Arthur’s *Ladies Magazine*. The story recounts the writer’s experience while visiting relatives in New York on the banks of the Hudson. In *Graham's Magazine* for April, 1846, appeared one of Poe’s major critical articles, his ‘Philosophy of Composition’ in which he purported to describe the composition of ‘The Raven.’

Virginia died on January 30, 1847, in the tiny bedroom on the first floor. She was clad in the fine linen sheets which gave Mrs. Clemm such comfort, and buried in the vault belonging to the Valentines, the owners of the cottage. Years later Virginia’s body was taken to Baltimore and rests now beside her husband. But as ‘Ulalume’ tells us, her love, entrenched in his memory, guarded him even against himself.
Poe collapsed, as was natural, after the prolonged effort to meet his daily anxiety. Mrs. Clemm and Mrs. Shew took care of him. Poe like any nervous patient had his ups and downs. That Poe was still capable of writing vigorous English is revealed in a letter to Horace Greeley on February 21, 1847. Among those who had helped the family in their distress was Mrs. Jane Ermina Locke, a poetess of Lowell, Massachusetts, who sent Poe verses and some financial assistance. In the same month ‘The Domain of Arnheim’ appeared in the *Columbian Magazine*. Poe revised and continued ‘The Landscape Garden’ of 1842, by describing the voyagers of Ellison in search of most suitable spot on which to build his paradise of natural beauty. Poe’s most important publication of 1847 was ‘Ulalume’ one of his original and powerful publications the *American Review*. If Poe temporarily lost his grip on life, he had not lost his power to express a great theme in verse of haunting and inevitable phrases.

As the new year of 1848 opened, Poe grew better in health, revived his plan for a magazine, and began new projects. During 1847 Poe had been working steadily upon ‘Eureka,’ his prose poem dealing with the universe. He read it as a public lecture on February 3, 1848, at the Society Library in New York before a small audience, the weather being unpleasant. ‘Eureka’ was in press early in June *Putnam* having generously made Poe an advance payment of fourteen dollars. Since ‘Eureka’ was to a certain extent of climax of Poe’s creative achievement, to which he had developed so much time and efforts, it is for great importance in his biography. An analysis of it will decide whether Poe’s mind was weakening during these last years or whether it was clear, active and still creative. For the true life of Poe lay in the mind of Poe.
Poe had been working during 1846 and 1847 on a critical account of American Literature. ‘The Bells’ was rewritten at least three times before it reached the form in which it finally appeared in *Sartain’s Magazine* in November 1849. ‘Landor’s Cottage’ came back to him, however and the article on Criticism was not published until after his death.

‘Hop-Frog’ is a short story published in 1849 and it was about taking revenge on the king and his cabinet for striking his friend and fellow dwarf Trippetta. He dresses them as orangutans for a masquerade. In front of the king’s guests, Hop-Frog murders them all by setting their costumes on fire before escaping with Trippetta. The tale written towards the end of Poe’s life was somewhat autobiographical. Like Hop Frog, Poe was bothered by those who urged him to drink despite a single glass of wine making him drunk. ‘Hop Frog’ is not a powerful story, but it illustrates in a striking manner, Pie’s method of writing fiction.

‘The Landscape Garden’ Poe’s most memorable observation on landscape design is to be found in a work about a fantasy landscape, titled ‘The Domain of Arnheim.’ It was published in 1850. Poe also wrote short stories like ‘Von Kempeleu and His Discovery,’ ‘Mesmeric Revelation,’ ‘The Island of the Fay,’ ‘Mystification,’ ‘X-ing a Paragrab,’ ‘The Angel of the Odd,’ ‘Mellonta Tauta’ ‘Loss of Breath,’ ‘A Tale of Jerusalem,’ ‘The Quacks of Helicon – Satire,’ ‘Astoria’ and ‘Landor’s Cottage.’

*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* is the only novel written by Poe. It was published in the year 1838. The work relates various adventures and misadventures including shipwreck, mutiny and cannibalism.
‘The Poetic Principles’ is an essay by Poe, published in 1850. It is a work of literary criticism. Poe scholars have suggested that “The Poetic Principle” was inspired in part by the critical failure of his two early poems Al Aaraaf and Tamerlane after which he never wrote a long poem. It is said, “From this experience Poe surprised that long poems are unable to sustain a proper mood and there inherently flawed.” Critics have suggested that this theory was written so that Poe could justify why Al Aaraaf and Tamerlane were unpopular. Poe said to his editor: “I find myself entirely myself—dreadfully sick and depressed but still myself. I seem to have just awakened from horrible dream in which all was confusion and suffering----- I really believe that I have been mad but indeed I have had abundant reason to be so.”

Poe was invited for a lecture on the Boston Lyceum and he recited AL Aaraaf and The Raven. His fame was at its height and American public always hungry for celebrities would have been glad to find one in him.

Poe’s end was a tragedy. Poe left New York for Virginia and arrived in Baltimore in 1849. He gave his trunk to a porter, went to tavern, where he met some of his vile associates, drunk freely, lay out all night. Toward 3 O’ clock in the morning of Sunday, October 7th 1849, Poe weakened and seemed to rest. About five O’ clock he breathed a short prayer, ‘God help my poor soul!’ then the ‘fever called living was conquered at last’ and the poet who had seen farthest into the dim region uttered, ‘out of space, out of time.’ He went on his last journey, alone at the early age of 38.

The duality of Poe’s nature will be apparent to anyone who has closely studied his life. The bitter things he said concerning his life, the bitter things he said concerning his enemies were often true, and therefore
hurt more. Poe had inherited from his father a tendency to instability due to liquor, which was a family failing. Poe was not a drug addict, however.

Poe was a great genius. Arthur Hobson Quinn thinks the America in which he could find no adequate reward treasures every word he wrote, and in every city in which he lived, except the city of his birth stands a lasting memorial to his. He has become a world artist and through the translations of his writings he speaks today to every civilized country. He had won this wide recognition by no persistent clamor of a cult, but by the royal right of preeminence. For today, nearly a hundred years since his death, Poe remains not only the one American, but also the one writer in the English language, who was at once foremost in criticism and supreme in fiction and poetry.
References:


