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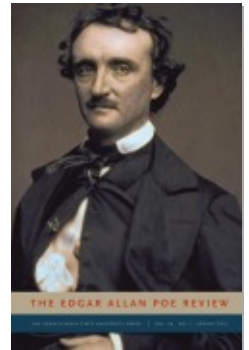
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## Letter to the Editor

Jonathan Murphy

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## Letter to the Editor

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I want to take the opportunity to apologize for the polemical tone in the introduction to my essay “The American Dream Elucidated by Edgar Allan Poe,” published in the Fall 2012 *EAPR*. This was a juvenile reaction to the ongoing discussion in Poe scholarship concerning the extent to which Poe’s racism corrupts his entire oeuvre. As we all know, this debate started with the infamous “Paulding-Drayton” review. As it turns out, Poe was not the author of this pro-slavery review. However, the debate in the Poe community continued, with each side charging the other of either being complicit in the cover-up, or as being rather brutally hostile to Poe, who, like many Americans at the time, including abolitionists, harbored an average racism. The debate resurfaced when John Carlos Rowe suggested that Poe was not merely racist but a “pro-slavery Southerner.” More recently, the scholars in *Romancing the Shadow: Poe and Race* have provided extensive evidence of Poe’s racist attitudes and sentiments. When I forced myself to reread *Romancing the Shadow* my eyes were opened to the horror of the historical scene. I can only thank those critics who treaded this ground before me and who have brought this difficult material to light. I hope my essay will make a modest contribution to the ongoing discussion, but really I just wanted to thank the critics who have so courageously confronted this material.

Sincerely,  
Jonathan Murphy