**Outline**

TOPIC: Question- Why did Poe’s work gain so much attention at the time and how did this have a lasting impact on the evolution of science fiction?

Introduction:

1. Give background/summary on the hoax itself
2. Give background on aeronautic space discoveries and the society’s fascination
3. Give background on Poe’s literary works- how they covered Satire, Hoax, Science fiction, literature

Thesis: As an established writer, Poe successfully gained influence over the general public and science community because he integrated real facts with false ones to appeal to his audience’s pre-existing fascination with new aeronautic discoveries. The realistic style of the “Balloon Hoax” ensures it was meant to deceive readers at the time at which it was published, however, when it became apparent that the story was fictional, readers could considered it as one of the first works of science fiction—as it had a lasting impact on other prominent writers in the genre.

Body Paragraphs:

1. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, new aeronautic discoveries were constantly developing as scientists raced to succeed in flight, so Poe used this fascination to his advantage by inventing a ground breaking story far ahead of previous discoveries.
   * Poe appealed to his target audience, the general public, and there was a large amount of popularity and attention surrounding hot air balloons in the mid 1850’s.
     + Close reading on the introduction-- “THE GREAT problem is at length solved! The air, as well as the earth and the ocean, has been subdued by science and will become a common and convenient highway for mankind.”
     + *Taking flight* by Richard Hallion– quote on the popularity and craze over balloon flight
       - *“*hundreds of thousands of people had seen balloons fly” and “as the British historian Walter Raleigh wrote, ‘society went balloon mad’” (Hallion 57).
       - “Ballooning and the balloonists dominated all conversation” (Hallion 58).
     + *Flight and Flying* by David Baker🡪 show hype over ballooning
       - “1809 Andre Jacques Gaernerin decorated a giant hydrogen balloon…and set it loose from the gates of Notre Dame. The balloon was a wonder to behold and completely stole the show as it drifted into the night sky” (8)
   * Poe knew many other scientists at the time were trying to fly across the Atlantic based on the most recent discoveries leading up to 1850, so he knew this would be the newest discovery. He did this on purpose to make sure it drew the most attention from his audience since no other scientist had reached this point yet.
     + Close readingon the text “Two very decided failures…”
     + *Flight and Flying* by David Baker (Page 7-8)
     + *Taking Flight* by Hallion (Page 53)
     + "Balloons." *Dictionary of American History* by DeSyon
2. Address integration of real science into the fictional aspects🡪 research on the real people he uses as characters or mentions briefly (Monck Mason and sir Cayley) and analysis of the real text and similarities to this the hoax.
   * Poe utilizes the same names as previously famous balloonists such as Sir George Cayley and Charles Green. Since these people were already making ground-breaking discoveries at the time, it was all the more convincing that they were the ones involved in this most recent flight.
     + Close reading on text of “The particulars furnished below may be relied on as authentic and accurate in every respect, as, with a slight exception, they are copied verbatim from the joint diaries of Mr. Monck Mason and Mr. Harrison Ainsworth” or “Arrival at Sullivan’s Island near Charlestown, S.C. of Mr. Mason, Mr. Robert Holland, Mr. Henson, Mr. Harrison Ainsworth and four others, in the Steering Balloon”
     + *Flight and Flying* by David Baker (Page 7-8)
       - Sir George Cayley in 1804, “1809. Charles Green 1821, 1836
       - “1836 November, the first long distance flight made from England began when a hydrogen balloon…carried Charles Green…. Robert Holland, member of Parliament and Monck Mason”
   * Not only does Poe mention their names in the story, he stylistically writes like them in their reports previously published. He also adds first person “journal entries” from the scientists on the trip, which makes it even more convincing.
     + Poe’s “Balloon Hoax” by Harold Scudder provides a side by side analysis of Monck Mason’s Account.
       - “Not only does Poe get his immediate inspiration for a tale of transatlantic flight from Monck Mason’s narrative, but he makes him the author of the *Journal* of the ‘Balloon Hoax’ and takes from his account of the Weilburg voyage so many details as to make his own story” (Scudder 182).
       - “Monck’s Account: ‘…the permission of the escape of gas from the valve; but in loss of gas, is a proportional loss of ascending power; so that in a comparatively brief period, the best constructed balloon must exhaust its resources’. Poe’s: ‘…or to control its ascent by proportionate discharge of gas;’” (Scudder 183).
     + Close reading some of the journal entries included in the hoax.
3. At the time at which it was published, Poe’s “Balloon Hoax” could be perceived as a hoax because he purposely intended to deceive his audience.
   * Poe writes the “Balloon Hoax” stylistically like a news report with many scientific details in order to be convincing and realistic.
     + Close reading on some of the reporter style writing.
       - “Astounding news by express, via Norfolk!”
       - “The Great problem is at length solved!”
       - “a detailed account of this most extraordinary voyage, which was performed between Saturday, the 6th instant, at 11AM and 2PM on Tuesday, the 9th instant”
     + "Return to Reality" By Buranelli.
       - “He used science to give an air of authenticity to his romances. His insinuation of mathematical and physical facts was so skillful that ‘The Balloon Hoax’ was read as a real history of a real event” (Buranelli 54).
       - “He enjoyed fooling his readers with things like ‘The Balloon Hoax,’ where he concealed his fiction under the pretense of journalistic reporting about a supposed trans-Atlantic flight of aeronauts” (Buranelli 43).
4. Although it was meant to deceive at the time, Poe’s piece could still be later classified as science fiction since it had many implications on the future of this genre.
   * Poe was one of the first to include real facts and probable data into his fictional stories, which are staple signs of any piece of science fiction.
     + Science Fiction Encyclopedia of Science and Religion by Herzfeld
       - “Science fiction is the genre of stories and film in which a significant element of the plot depends on the laws of mathematics and the physical sciences, or on the use of technology as currently known or as developed in a credible way” (776)
       - “Most science fiction plots…posit the use of new technology”
     + "Betting Your Head, Getting Ahead" by Peeples was published in 1988, so looking back he could see the impact it had on science fiction.
       - “It attracted a good deal of attention but apparently few believers” (Peeples 117)
       - “Poe was even reported to have revealed the hoax himself to a crowd outside the publisher’s door on the day of its distribution (Peeples 117).
       - “Poe’s attempt to make plausible the seemingly impossible…. [falls] squarely within the tradition of science fiction” (Peeples 117)
       - “ A hoax can be a warning not to believe everything one reads, but it is also an invitation to believe, either because today’s fiction could be tomorrow’s headline” (118)
5. Although some say Poe never had any influences on science fiction because his story was meant to just be a hoax, the only reason he isn’t credited for being a major figure in the evolution of science fiction was because his work came much before other major figures.
   * Poe didn’t mean for his work to be science fiction and it had no impact
     + "Poe, Edgar Allan (1809-1849)" by Bleiler
       - “Poe was not a great innovator or pattern creator in science fiction” (602)
       - “He was a writer, a few of whose stories, in retrospect, can be uncomfortably squeezed, with crumpling and edges sticking out, into the genre we now call science fiction”(603)
       - “the evolution of science fiction would have been much the same had Poe never written these stories”
   * However Poe had a lasting impact on future writers such as Jules Verne and his work falls under many characteristics of a work of science fiction.
     + Close reading on science jargon used in the text and specific logistics.
     + Science Fiction Encyclopedia of Science and Religion by Herzfeld
     + Jules Verne by Smith
       - Jules Verne was considered a “father of science fiction”
       - “There seemed no limit to what might be achieved, and Verne knew the art of creating a thrill by extending the bounds of the possible without ever quite lapsing into fantastic implausibility” (1057)
       - “1863 Five Weeks in a Balloon” was published only 13 years after the “Balloon Hoax”
       - “The influence on Verne of Edgar Allan Poe is taken as a clue to an uneasy Romantic imagination that seeks what are essentially eternal spiritual values in natural phenomena, despite all the modern scientific trappings” (1057)