



Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy

By Jeffrey Meyers

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A biography of the creator of the horror and detective genres in fiction chronicles his life of wealth and poverty, fame and obscurity, his fevered imagination, and his paranoiac despair.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Meyers (Joseph Conrad) focuses on the ways the works of poet and short story writer Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) influenced many other great writers, including Hawthorne, Fitzgerald, Nabokov and Baudelaire. Hailed in France as the inventor of the modern detective and psychological novel and of symbolist poetry, he is remembered in his own country chiefly for his macabre tales ("The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Fall of the House of Usher") and his poem "The Raven." Meyers documents Poe's short and unhappy life, effectively describing his chaotic childhood (he was raised by a foster father who would later disown him) and his tragic adult life (he struggled to write while suffering from alcoholism, poverty and the death of his young wife Virginia in 1847 from consumption). Meyers's sympathetic and readable treatment highlights Poe's considerable stylistic achievements. Illustrations not seen by PW.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Fast upon the heels of Kenneth Silverman and his splendid Edgar A. Poe (1991), Meyers (Joseph Conrad, 1991, etc.) fashions an even greater success with the same material. The strength of Meyers's approach is that it focuses on Poe's life and character, and examines his writings in historical, rather than literary, terms. This isn't a book of criticism, or even a critical biography--and, as such, it's free of the theoretical constructions so often imposed by academics upon their subjects. Poe, Meyers emphasizes, was a mess of complications and perversity--a brilliant crank, a genteel necrophile, a plagiarist and hack who stole from his inferiors and starved while his editors grew fat-- and Meyers is able to show the depth of his insanity and genius by means of a clear and straightforward narrative of events and personalities too poignant to support much interpretation. Poe's own correspondence is drawn on to supply a vivid portrait of his brutal domestic life--the constant uprootings, the continual pleas for aid, the excruciation of his wife's slow death--and the endless (and frequently absurd) controversies that Poe carried on in print are excerpted at length. The testimonial accounts of Poe given by many of his contemporaries are remarkable for their concurrences, and constitute some of the best material in this very rich work. The notes are extensive and helpful. Vivid and haunting: a great success. -- Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

Poe haunts the upper mind as an exalted and radiant justification of logic; and the unconscious as an obsession. Jeffrey Meyers shows us how, why, and where these things go, and are going. God help us. But for Poe, we never would have known. (James Dickey, Poet and Author of *Deliverance*)

Vivid and haunting: a great success. (Kirkus Reviews)

Admirably executed. Meyers, untempted by psychoanalytic theories, conveys Poe's acrimonious, often absurd literary travails and canvasses his reputation and influence. Meyers' book pitches Poe as the 'prototypical self-destructive American writer.' Meyers insists on reading Poe as more than the sum of his bereavements. (*Times Literary Supplement*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jeremy Smith:

Information is provisions for individuals to get better life, information nowadays can get by anyone at everywhere. The information can be a understanding or any news even restricted. What people must be consider if those information which is within the former life are challenging be find than now could be taking seriously which one would work to believe or which one the particular resource are convinced. If you receive the unstable resource then you get it as your main information you will have huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen in you if you take Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy as your daily resource information.

Jaime Howell:

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