



The Afterlife of Edgar Allan Poe (Literary Criticism in Perspective)

By Scott Peeples

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Controversies abound in studies of Edgar Allan Poe. From the time of his death well into the twentieth century, partisans debated the issue of his character: was he an alcoholic? drug addict? pathological liar? necrophile? In the 1920s and 30s, psychoanalytic critics sought to divorce the study of Poe from Victorian moral concerns but in the process made scandalous claims by linking Poe's dream-like stories to his personality. The status of Poe's literary productions was similarly disputed; dismissed by the New Critics but championed by poets such as William Carlos Williams and Allen Tate. Recent scholars have debated the meaning and significance of Poe's representations of race, class, and gender, often returning to the character issue: how racist and misogynist was he, and how important are those questions to understanding his work? Finally, how have the seemingly countless plays, films, novels, comic books, and pop music experiments based on his image and works intertwined with academic study of Poe? This book examines these and other controversies, shedding light on broader issues of canon formation, the role of biography in literary study, and the importance of integrating various, even conflicting interpretations into one's own reading of a literary work. This book will be of great interest to Poe scholars, both those who have been a part of the literary battles described above and newcomers to the field who can use the book as a guide to the field of Poe studies, and to all those interested in Poe and his work. BR>

Winner of the Poe Studies Association's 2004 Patrick F. Quinn Award for a Distinguished Book of Poe Scholarship

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The Afterlife of Edgar Allan Poe (Literary Criticism in Perspective) By Scott Peeples Bibliography

- Rank: #577310 in Books
- Brand: Brand: BOYE6
- Published on: 2007-02-23
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .48" w x 5.98" l, .65 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 211 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

Peeples, president of the Poe Studies Association in the United States, chooses a perfect framework for a study of Poe. Poe did not really become the Poe we know until after his death. Peeples expertly examines responses to Poe's writings as well as his life in the century and a half since his death. His chapter on Poe's death, and the way it has been perceived, stands among the very best texts on the subject. --The Guardian

Poe is probably the US's most well-known and misunderstood author. This book helps readers see the forces contributing to his complexity. --Choice

If any study can achieve the goal of reaching all possible readers interested in knowing what has gone on in Poe studies, this one will do the job. --American Literature

About the Author

Scott Peeples is Associate Professor of English at the College of Charleston.

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