
The Impact Of Edgar Allan Poe On American Culture

"Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night" (Edgar Allan Poe). Poe was born in Boston on January 19th, 1809. In the biography *Poe: His Life and Legacy* by Jeffrey Meyers, he explains how Poe's birth caused his family some financial turmoil, as they were already struggling in the small city and Poe's father did not want to ask his family members for money. Poe grew up in a very unstable family environment and experienced a lot of hardships even as a child. Meyers also describes how he struggled to make a living by working, but because of his superior education from years at university he gained substantial respect and power in the army. The army "alleviated his poverty" by providing for his basic needs, but "by leaving university" and "abandoning law for the stage" he followed the footsteps of his father and fell into the lower class. During his time in the army he began to pursue his passion for poetry and writing, and he eventually left to face the challenges of the artist lifestyle (Meyers, 1992). Over the course of his life, he channeled his difficult past and ongoing misfortunes to create many stories which are still studied and appreciated today. Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most influential writers of the 19th century, and his works continue to have an impact on American culture.

Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19th, 1809, in Boston Massachusetts. In Meyers biography *Edgar Allan Poe: His life & legacy*, he explains how "Edgars birth sparked a financial crisis and emotional upheaval in the Poe family" (1992). Poe's family was not wealthy, so Poe experienced a lot of hardships during his childhood as well as in adulthood. According to the web page *Edgar Allan Poe*, Poe initially attended the University of Virginia and was very successful, especially in Latin and French, but due to arguments over debts Poe had built up during the school year he had to leave university (2018). According to Philip Beidler in the article "Poet at the Point...", "Poe's military experience was uniformed and official, including nearly two years of service in the ranks of the U.S. Army artillery" (2014). Poe's education gave him more authority and prestige because he had come to the military from university. During military service Poe also spent time pursuing his passion for literature, and his time in the military inspired major elements of many of his well known works. The same source details Poe's attendance of the military academy West Point (2014). Beidler explains "At 21, Poe was older than most cadets" and because of his former military experience "he [did not] like the cadet-style discipline and drill" (2014). In his second semester, Poe not only experienced difficulty at school, he also experienced conflict with his guardian and benefactor, Allan, which ended in Poe being disowned. Beidler describes how Poe's counter threat was "to get himself thrown out the academy" which he easily accomplished by neglecting his duties and skipping classes, so he was kicked out of West Point through a court-martial (2014). After leaving West Point Poe moved in with his impoverished Aunt and began to focus more directly on his writing. The web article *Edgar Allan Poe* notes how he had trouble finding work in New York because of the Panic of 1837, so he moved to Philadelphia (2018). In the 1840s, Poe experienced a lot of success and loss in both his work and personal life, and the tragedy in his own life greatly affected his writing.

Over the course of his life, Poe wrote over 100 short stories and poems, many of which are well known and studied today. In his article "Poet at the Point..." Philip Beidler states "His years of military life, 1827 to 1831, also turn out to be some of the most crucial in Poe's literary life"

(2014). During his time in the military, Poe wrote multiple poems and prepared volumes of poetry for Publication (2014). Beidler explains how his service also “became the source of one of his most distinctive atmospheric tales and the most widely known use of his military travel as a setting for literature: 'The Gold Bug'” (2014). After leaving the military and moving from New York to Philadelphia experienced success in his pursuit of writing. The web article Edgar Allan Poe explains “Some of his most famous stories were written in Philadelphia, including the “Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” “The Mask of the Red Death,” (2018). The same source states he moved back to New York in 1844, and there he achieved his greatest accomplishments by writing “The Raven” and owning his own literary journal (2018). Poe experienced a bevy of failures and ultimately an early death, but he produced many outstanding works during his short and difficult lifetime.

One of Poe’s most famous works was his poem “The Raven”. The web article The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe: Theme and Analysis explains how Poe “uses Repetition, Alliteration, Internal Rhyme, and Onomatopoeia to discuss a man mourning the death of his love and he is soon troubled by a raven” (2017). The same source explains “The Raven isn’t a symbol of a lost maiden but a symbol of death and has always been a symbol of death” (2017). The dark and troubling tone of the poem was likely influenced by Poe’s troubled personal life. In “Advice from the crypt” Stevens states “When working on 'The Raven' Poe said, he made careful decisions about matters such as length and versification before actually writing a single word” (2012). The Raven became one of Poe’s most famous poems, and because of its intelligent use of literary devices it is regularly studied in schools today. Poe’s other notable works also include his short stories.

“The Murders in the Rue Morgue” is a very well known and influential short story written by Poe. In his biography Poe: His Life and Legacy Meyers describes the main character Auguste Dupin as “Poe’s most interesting fictional character” and explains how he is unique by “[solving] problems by means of pure disembodied intellect” (1992). Dupin is described as a man “in full control of his rational faculties” and one who “[exercised] great ingenuity in detecting the murder” (1992). A web page titled “Edgar Allan Poe Invents the Modern Detective Story” explains how “Although mysteries were not a new literary form, Poe was the first to introduce a character who solved the mystery by analyzing the facts of the case” (2017). Poe reinvented the idea of a detective story, and used his own intelligence to develop characters clever enough to solve codes and mysteries using logic and complex reasoning. The same source also addresses how in “Murders in the Rue Morgue,” Poe outlined elements future writers would adapt and develop further” (2017). For example, “Sir Arthur Conan Doyle popularized the detective story when he created Sherlock Holmes, a character with peculiarities similar to Poe’s Dupin” (2017). Poe’s Dupin may not be as well known as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes, but Dupin is significant for becoming the inspiration for the character of the famous modern detective. Poe’s works not only influenced other past works, but also the works and culture of today.

Many of Poe’s famous works are common knowledge in America, so their influence can often be seen in today’s culture. In the periodical “Advice from the crypt” Steven introduces Poe as “One of the earliest authors (some would say the creator) of both detective stories and horror stories, and as the writer of some of the most haunting poems in the language” (2012). Poe’s series of stories about fictional detective Auguste Dupin inspired Arthur Conan Doyle’s famous Sherlock Holmes and gave inspiration the first “modern detective” stories. Poe not only inspired the mystery genre with his detective stories, his melancholy and macabre poems and short

stories still fascinate people to this day. In his magazine article "Pop Culture's Undying Edgar Allan Poe Obsession" Steve Meslow gives examples of Poe's ongoing influence such as the movie "The Raven" starring John Cusack, Poe's appearance in the Batman comic books, the recreation of "The Raven" in a "The Simpsons" episode, and many more (2012). Meslow explains people are obsessed with Poe's works because "His best-known stories are laden with macabre, feverish imagery that pops off the screen" and "his works are old enough to be in the public domain, so any filmmaker can adapt any of his stories for free" (2012). Countless people have made allusions to and recreations and readings of Poe's works because their lasting influence fascinates people to this day. Even though he lived 200 years ago, Poe's influence is still clearly seen in today's culture.

Edgar Allan Poe was one of the most influential writers of the 19th century, and the impact of his works is still seen today. Poe was a literary pioneer of his time, using his difficult life experiences to inspire his unique works and style. He introduced many new perspectives, techniques and characteristics to storytelling and used them to create fascinatingly twisted or clever stories people still appreciate today. From brilliant detectives to grotesque horror, Poe's writing paved the way for future writers and entertains the imaginations of those who read his work. Poe's life of discomfort and misfortune all contributed to his melancholy and macabre style that remains influential and thoroughly appreciated today.

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