



Edgar Allen Poe: A Phenomenological View (Princeton Legacy Library)

David Halliburton

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By attempting to suspend moral, ideological, or psychological assumptions, a phenomenological interpretation of literature hopes to reach "the things themselves," the essential phenomena of being, space, and time, as they are constituted, by consciousness, in words. Although there has been a tradition of phenomenological criticism in Europe for the last twenty years, David Halliburton is the first to write a general study of an American author from this particular point of view.

The book begins with a methodological chapter that sets out the assumptions and procedures of the approach. This is followed by analyses of Poe's major works, exploring such special problems as Poe's treatment of the material world, including technology; the interrelation of body and consciousness; poetic voice; attitudes toward women; and the will to affirmation, plenitude, and unity. The center of interest is neither Poe's biography nor environment but always the meaning of Poe's words. Because these works are shaped by a single imagination and because they are experienced in time, as a process, each work has its own "way of going." The aim of the interpretation is to find this way and go along with it; to live each work dynamically, as it "happens," while tracing its interaction with other works.

Originally published in 1973.

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