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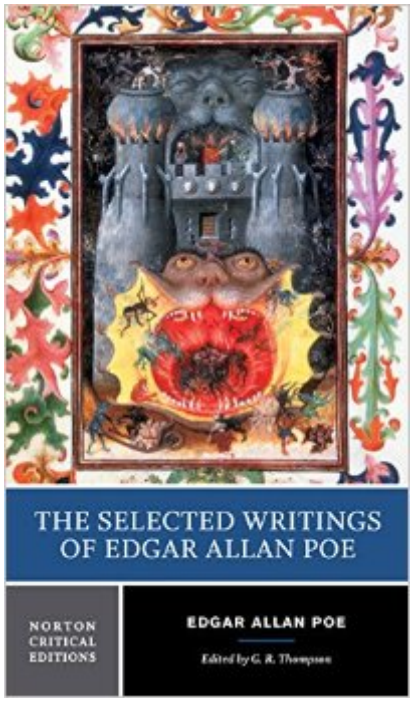
The Selected Writings Of Edgar Allan Poe (Norton Critical Editions)



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Synopsis

Edgar Allan Poeâ ™s works, with their gothic and often obsessive themes, have had a significant influence on American literature. In this Norton Critical Edition, G. R. Thompson has fully introduced, annotated, and edited each text. â œBackgrounds and Contextsâ • includes fifty-seven carefully chosen documents that illuminate Poeâ ™s prolific but short career, among them reviews, prefaces, and correspondence by Poe as well as thematic pieces dealing with Transcendentalism and alternative romanticism, sciences of the mind, sensation fiction, and the South and slavery. Fourteen judiciously selected critical essays address Poeâ ™s poetry, fiction, politics, and psychology. Contributors include Floyd Stovall, Robert C. McLean, Richard Wilbur, James W. Gargano, Joseph J. Moldenhauer, Paul John Eakin, Grace Farrell, Liahna Klenman Babener, Barton Levi St. Armand, Joseph N. Riddel, J. Gerald Kennedy, John Carlos Rowe, Terence Whalen, and John T. Irwin. A Selected Bibliography is also included.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you’re looking for a "complete" Poe, you have two sensible choices, the first being Thomas Ollive Mabbott’s 3 volume edition (richly annotated, and each of the works introduced with an account covering composition, publication, aesthetic aims and critical consensus), and the second the delightful and portable Library of America volume. I put "complete" in quotes because even these miss Poe’s "Eureka" and some of his own reviews and sketches. The market offers countless other "complete" Poes, often available in the remaindered section of book stores, but these two options

serve him (and you) best--if you want all his poems and tales.But if you want a selection, this Norton Critical Edition is your single best choice. It’s far from complete--30 poems, 35 stories, a novel and then a collection of letters and articles. But all your favorites are here, and they are also well annotated, which is not just scholarly fluff but a way of filling you in on all of Poe’s now obscure knowledge of pseudo-science, his views about slavery (an issue in The Narrative of Gordon Pym), theories of the mind, 18th century gothic precepts, etc etc. These things really preoccupied Poe and they inform his stories, and knowing about them honors his intentions while only increasing our appreciation for the tales and poems. People in a huff about footnotes can just skip them, and people who wish to know what Poe was drawing on--what often inspired the tales--can read them, and if you know about it already, more power to you. Anyway, these notes are really useful and pretty thorough, often including info about publication, alternate versions Poe later wrote, motives for writing it, plus of course all that now lost cultural context that Poe was so much a part of.

Purchased for a college course on great literature, this compilation of stories by Edgar Allan Poe features a nice compilation of popular and lesser-known works. Included in this set are poems, tales and sketches, backgrounds and contexts, and criticisms.The background and contexts section contains many fascinating letters and articles written by Poe. They bring the reader deeper into the mind of the author, which brings us closer to removing speculation through the observation of his thoughts.For example, does Poe believe in life after death? His stories, at times, seem to allude to this. Consider "The Facts of the Case of M. Valdemar", which Poe clearly presents evidence, in fiction, of the soul’s existence apart from the body. "Eureka", which he describes as an "essay on the material and spiritual universe", was written a year prior to his death. In it he postulates on the construct of the material universe and our placement in it. Poe writes existentialistically, leaving us, the reader, to speculate on the true nature of his beliefs.Suffice it to say, the totality of text included in this compilation is excellent and gives the reader more than a cross section of Poe’s body of work. It expands their understanding of Poe’s art and influence to existing fictional genres and the creation of new genres.For the course I’m currently taking, the scope is to reach beyond the classics many of us know. Many of these more popular stories have been created into Hollywood movies, thanks to actors such as Vincent Price. Included in this compilation are many wonderful, lesser-known fictional works. These are too often glossed over.

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