
Gero Guttzeit. *The Figures of Edgar Allan Poe: Authorship, Antebellum Literature, and Transatlantic Rhetoric.* Anglia Book Series 56. Berlin/Boston: DeGruyter, 2017, 256 pp., 99.95€.

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This study represents a remarkable achievement in research on Edgar Allan Poe, an author who is generally admired as an innovator but controversially discussed and monopolized by different schools of thought and criticism. With its focus on rhetoric as a pervasive creative force in Poe's work it opens a view on a hitherto neglected aspect of this author. Guttzeit claims that the problem of Poe "cannot be fully understood, let alone solved, without rhetoric" (223). Rather than subsuming Poe under the heads of dark Romanticism or Pre-Modernism, he locates "his writings in the historical situation of the transatlantic continuum of the British-American New Rhetoric" (12). In advance it can be said that his whole book provides convincing proof of this assertion. Well-grounded in classical rhetoric and yet open to new theoretical approaches and creative in the utilization of practically all the elements of the system of rhetoric, it makes us understand and appreciate Poe in an entirely new way. And what is most important, rhetoric is here looked at as an essential part of culture, which is in this case the culture of the antebellum period. This culture was, as Guttzeit claims, strongly influenced by the British, especially the Scottish, tradition of rhetoric, a tradition which was still cultivated in America, when in Europe the death bell of rhetoric had been sounded. It is difficult to do justice to Guttzeit's compact, multi-faceted and insightful book. I will first say what the book aims at and what theoretical and methodological foundations it provides for reaching