



The Significance of Names in Selected Short Stories by Edgar Allan Poe

Bastian Immanuel Wefes

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Seminar paper from the year 2012 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 1,0, University of Wuppertal (Fachbereich Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaften), course: Short Stories of the American Renaissance, language: English, abstract: Looking at the representation of Edgar Allan Poe in the works of literary scholars reveals an ambivalent positioning. While some celebrate him as one of the most ingenious writers in America, if not in the world, others reject him for the fact that they consider him racist, sexist, elitist and anti-democratic. However, both sides are - in one way or the other - fascinated by Poe and his works, who has thus become one of the most discussed American authors. This paper will examine a specific part of Poe's manifold bibliography, namely a selection of short stories, and work out how names are used to establish, convey or support a certain attitude or underlying meaning. Yet the objects of investigation are not necessarily solely names of the characters, since Poe has also assigned certain names to, for instance, buildings (in *The Fall of the House of Usher*) or beverages (in *The Cask of Amontillado*), which are not less important to the respective stories than the characters' names and are therefore to be taken into consideration as well. In order to assume a certain theoretical background, this paper will start with a brief description of the general way in which Edgar Allan Poe wrote (and intended to write) literary texts in order to help to estimate which relevance should be assigned to specific details (names). A second theoretical section deals with the overall function of names in literature. What follows is the analytic part of this paper, namely the analysis of the significance of certain names in four of Poe's short stories. The analysis will start with *The Fall of the House of Usher* as both one of the most famous and one of the most controversially discussed of Poe's tales and deal with the way how

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