

# Unreliable Narration in Poe's 'The Fall of the House of Usher' - The Narrative Creation of Horror

Kirsten Hinzpeter

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Seminar paper from the year 2009 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,3, University of Hamburg (Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik), language: English, abstract: Edgar Allen Poe is certainly one of the most famous writers of Gothic fiction of the nineteenth century. His tales are known for dark settings and characters with diseased or deluded minds. Moreover, in Poe's fiction it is often the case that "the boundaries between reality, illusion and madness remain unresolved". These are undoubtedly factors that contribute to the terror created in his works. However, are those to be considered the prime reasons for the terror in Poe's fiction? There are other factors which are not as easily detected but which might still be the chief reasons and can be related to the above mentioned ones, such as the unreliability of the narrator. In order to further examine this thesis "The Fall of the House of Usher", one of his most widely known short stories, will be looked at in the following with regard to the question whether the terror is caused by the unreliability of the narrator or whether there are other reasons mainly responsible for it. However, prior to dealing with this question a definition of unreliable narration will be given and the narrator of "The Fall of the House of Usher" will be examined concerning his reliability.



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