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"E.A. Poe; the fall of the masque"

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This dissertation is a study of Edgar Allan Poe's "The fall of the house of Usher" and "The masque of the red death", as representative tales of the Gothic and, by extension, of the fantastic mode. It has two axes: one is a survey of critical theories on the fantastic and its main manifestation, the Gothic, in an attempt to distinguish the constituents of the mode and to apply them to a reading of Poe's tales. The other axis is centred on one of these constituents, an esoteric substratum which underlies both texts and is fundamental to Poe's metaphysics as expressed in his aesthetics. Finally, the specular construction of the texts is examined, as well as the use of intertextuality and the ideological questions projected in terms of a theory of knowledge.