Prolepsis through Poe's Narrators: The Prophetic Demise of the Obsessive Protagonist

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Abstract
Edgar Allan Poe was a pioneer of psychological fiction. His stories center around characters whose reliability is questionable and who are mentally troubled in some way. Poe crafted stories that invoke terror because their subject is the horror of the mind. While readers of other types of horror fiction can finish a story and step away from the monsters with little to no fear of being followed by them, readers of Poe cannot forget the tales they read so readily because the horror of the mind is ever present. Poe crafted such horrific stories because of the haunted palace of his mind, and death commonly appeared in the haunted palace of his mind because it pervaded his life. This thesis examines four of Edgar Allan Poe's stories - "Ligeia," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Tell Tale Heart," and "The Black Cat" - and draws comparisons between how Poe's narrators respond to situations and how Poe responded to situations. Because the narrators and Poe respond to situations similarly, the narrators' demises foreshadowed Poe's own demise.