



The Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson and His Critic Edgar Allan Poe

Jenny Beyen

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Seminar paper from the year 2010 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 3,0, RWTH Aachen University, language: English, abstract: The Transcendentalism was not an undisputable movement. It had numerous different influences and strong and sometimes even radical beliefs which did not only evoke sympathy and understanding. Especially Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the most important persons of this movement, was criticized for his ideas.¹ Some contemporary artists, like Edgar Allan Poe, even had cravings to murder some Transcendentalists² - although this statement probably has to be seen in regard to Poe's common irony. Poe and other authors used their work to express their distaste for Transcendentalism and tried to ridicule it, for example by exaggeration.³ In this term paper, I will answer the following question: What are the typical elements of Transcendentalism in Emerson's Poetry and how are they ridiculed by Edgar Allan Poe? To answer this question, I chose Emerson's poem „Give All To Love". In my analysis of the poem, I will show that it contains a lot of typical elements of Transcendentalism, which is the reason why I chose this particular poem of Emerson. The work of Poe I will use is his short-story „The Fall of the House of Usher". There are several works of Poe where he tries to ridicule Transcendentalism, but I chose this short-story since it is probably his most famous one. Concerning my secondary literature, I tried to find a mixture of classical references, like „Literary Transcendentalism" by Lawrence Buell, and of new and rather fresh internet-sources. To achieve a high level of reliability for my internet-sources, I almost only used homepages of American universities. With this mixture, I want to demonstrate that the topic of my term paper has been, and still is, relevant to literary studies. I will start with a chapter about the Transcendentalism in general, the role of Emerson and name some of the criticism of Transce

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