



**The significance of 'the letter' in Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Purloined Letter" with regard to the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida**

*Claudia Effenberger*

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Seminar paper from the year 2005 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 2,0, University of Cologne (Englisches Seminar II), course: American Mysteries - Detective Fiction in the U.S., 7 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: Only the one, who looks for wisdom, but does not declare to be the one who has already found it can call himself a wise man. - Especially in our present world this quote from Seneca, who lived at the beginning of the first century, is more and more proven to be true. Most of all the field of religion is affected by these words. Long time the church declared to know the absolute and unmistakable truth of our world. But today our science-stamped knowledge more and more disproves many dogmas spread by the church. Yet, religion is not the only field where this quote can be employed. Also in our daily activities and lives, people who overestimate their knowledge and capabilities normally never reach their aims. This does not always has to do with arrogance. Sometimes people simply think that what they know and do has to be right or perfect because it is what 'the mass' would think or do. But in most cases it is better to think before acting, to be different from the mass, especially to think different to achieve things, the mass would not be able to achieve. No quote would be more appropriate for Edgar Allen Poe's story The Purloined Letter, than that from Seneca.. Only the Detective Dupin, who is looking for the truth is able to find it, because he does not underestimate the gifts of his enemy. He does not think of himself to be a wise man but he thinks himself to be clever. And this is a gift which is sometimes more important than being wise. Poe constructs his hard-boiled detective story round just one very crucial object - a letter. A letter that influences the people possessing it, using it. This document can be regarded as the main actor in the story. For this reason this paper 's aim is t

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