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[Life](#), [Death](#)



Fiction Analysis

Need a title

In his Gothic tales of horror, Edgar Allan Poe focuses on the literal and figurative elements of death. This may have to do with him watching his mother suffer with tuberculosis. From the fear of the descending pendulum of the Spanish Inquisition or the metaphorical aspects of the plague from the Red? Black Death, the end of life is a topic that thrills Poe, and it is used throughout his stories. One of the main features of Poe's fiction is that his settings are revolved around the fantasticthe fantastic, severed from practical reality. By combining the fantastic and the real in his settings, he instills his narrative spaces with symbolic importance, in ways that would foreshadow the writings of Faulkner, Kafka and Henry JamesO'Connor. In "The Fall of the House of Usher," it is the setting – the house itself – that is focused on the various elements of death, generating horror in the reader. Smoother transition; better yet, this should be used elsewhere since this discussion should be of the Usher houseWriting about Edgar Allan Poe, Harold Bloom asserts an " uncanny talent for exposing our common nightmares and hysteria lurking beneath our carefully structured lives" (7). Davidson refers to this style as a series of " explorations into the dark underside of human consciousness" (206). Poe accomplishes this by using settings that are with the Usher house: a place that is grotesque in theirits medieval and macabre elements but also turns even darker with the supernatural traits that he provides for themit. Even though the Usher house House of Usher is ornately decorated, it is a place that is remote and beyond the access of many, a trait that is shared with many of Poe's other

stories also appears in some of other Poe's tales, such as the dank basement-level torture chamber in "Pit and the Pendulum."

If you think about the setting of "The House of the Fall of Usher," as well as many of his other stories, the new worlds of Poe exist in places that are unknown and obscure in a foggy narrative present. At some point, way back in the mists of history the medieval atmosphere in the story makes a reader think about a time in the distant past; indeed, readers focus on the ideas and settings in which the stories take place. In this story, the narrator is unnamed and approaches a house that is in the middle of nowhere. The owner of the house, Roderick Usher, has written to the narrator to request his presence, but the owner and his twin sister are alone in the world, forming the end of a genetic line that has no other branches. When the narrator arrives, Roderick informs him that Madeline, his sister, has a mysterious disease that her doctors cannot comprehend, let alone cure. After her death, Roderick and the narrator inter her inside the vault beneath the house, so that her doctors cannot exhume her corpse for scientific purposes. As the next few days pass, Roderick gets increasingly uneasy. One night, the two of them spy Madeline, supposedly having escaped her final resting place. When she embraces Roderick, they fall dead together. The narrator flees the house in time to turn around, watch the building collapse and then crumble down to the land. There are quite a few elements of this story that qualify it for the genre of horror, but the description Poe lends to the corroded house is particularly horrible. The architecture and vision in this tale demonstrate Poe's ability as a teller of tales. As Woodson indicates, the layout of the setting in "The Fall of the House of Usher" is so

isolated that it “ allows Poe to remove all social questions and focus entirely on the mental dramas of his protagonists” (11 from where?). Throughout this story, there is a remote quality and an indefinite sense – the reader never learns just when or where the events occur as far as a setting goes, meaning that this tale could occur in any place. This makes the story applicable to readers in all times and contexts, taking it beyond the limits of the Gothic milieu. But it doesn't. For our purposes it takes place in the Usher house and so you should relate it to the analysis at hand.

This is where your discussion should begin. Transition from the introduction directly into the introduction of the house. When the story opens, it is a “ dull, dark and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens” (Poe 149). This sentence makes the mood within this story of the supernatural and death through its concise diction; the reference to autumn shows an attention to the coming season of despair and death. When the narrator approaches the house, he terms it “ the melancholy House of Usher” (Poe 149). He feels a “ sense of insufferable gloom” (Poe 149), and after this moment, his tone is foreboding and dark. One might mistake the melancholic, depressed and horrifying setting as a dream; indeed, the house itself could be described as surreal. From the outset, the reader has an awareness of elements of decay and death, creating the expectation of unusual and new possibilities; even the narrator is curious as to exactly “ how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up” (Poe 151). These expectations continue for the rest of the tale, as the narrator proceeds “ with an utter depression of soul” (Poe 149) to see such details as the “ vacant eye-like windows” and “ a few white

trunks of decayed trees” (Poe 149). Even though he attempts to look at the house through the eyes of reason, the place evokes within him an attentiveness to superstition: the house represents a “mystery all insoluble, [filled with]the shadowy fancies that [crowd] upon [him] as [he ponders]” (Poe 150). When so many references come from the same place, one or two citations are all you need in the paragraph.

At once, the narrator blends multiple senses – not only the standard five but also a sixth, with an awareness of realities that are too vague to enable description but still lurk behind what is apparent to the naked eye. The narrator believes that the house’s structure, as well as the surrounding image, contributes to the odd feelings that he has. He claims, “A mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scenewould be sufficient toannihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression” (Poe 150). This is why he returns to the grotesque, black tarn to look down at the house’s reflection. Even so, the house rocks him “with a shudder even more thrilling than before” (Poe 150). The narrator feels that the very skeleton of the house contains something supernatural; all around the house the narrator perceives an atmosphere that was “dull, sluggish, faintly discernible and leaden-hued” (Poe 151). The vapor suggests a supernatural element to the possession of the house, even extending to the bizarre. In fact, it may be the appearance that holds the house up; without it, the implication is that the house would have collapsed decades ago. The fact that the house collapses so soon after the death of the last two members of the Usher family, only serves to support that fact.

You go from the demise of the house back insideIt is not just the structure of

the house that gives the narrator a sense of horror; the interior of the house is particularly rotten, giving the reader an analog to the mind of Roderick Usher. When the narrator is inside the house, he reports the feeling of looking into a dark vault; not only is there tranquility, but there is also an element of the rotten; the narrator is reminded of “ old woodwork which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air” (Poe 151). When setting takes on the role of metaphor in addition to its mechanical role in creating a story, then it becomes a sort of imagery. When Poe describes the contradiction between the “ still perfect adaptation of parts and the crumbling condition of the individual stones” (Poe 151), it is clear that he is not just discussing the building, but also the crumbling soul of Roderick.

Reordering necessaryThe narrator points out a crack within the house’s structure that is almost beyond the capacity of the naked eye to see, but it zigzags down the front of the structure to the tarn’s waters. The symbolism of the crack is important, showing a split that runs through the building and the people who live in it. Clearly, the death of Roderick and Madeline Usher has already taken place, but this ghostly aura is still holding the house together and still allowing Roderick and Madeline to walk the earth.

However, the things that are happening to them are a clear sign that their hold on life is slipping. The trances into which Madeline slips and Roderick’s manic phases of making art as quickly as he can, are two signs that their end is coming. This is why Roderick is so loath to bury Madeline, because it will make the crack stand between them; this gap between the dead and the living is what will bring the house down to the ground. The fact that the

house collapses so soon after the death of the last two members of the Usher family, only serves to support that fact.

While the narrator is at the house, the mansion and the Ushers both go through that definite split. Roderick hints at a split in his mind in the letter he sends to the narrator. The plants and land around the house are devoid of any beauty and color, so that even from afar, the narrator has a sense of arriving at a place that lost its connection to the rest of the world years ago. There was much more detail in previous paragraphs and then these two are less discussed/fleshed out.

Poe's fixation with death takes on the form of an analysis of the fracture that must happen for life to end. With the Ushers, this fracture takes an extended amount of time, and their refusal to let go colors the entire world in which they live. This refusal stretches their mental capacities and even the limits of physical reality, limits with which Poe delights to play.

I am more interested in YOUR analysis than the thoughts of others in this draft. Their voices overshadow yours. I applaud your effort to research. But I was looking for your analysis after which you could use short sentences from your resources to back up your claims.

I think there are citations missing.

78 – let's discuss this paper

Works Cited

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