

The fall of the house of usher test questions essay



The Fall of the House of Usher Critical Reading Questions (page 310) 3. (a) In the description of the exterior of the house, the words that suggest the presence of decay in the structure of the house are words such as “discoloration,” “minute fungi overspread the whole exterior,” “extraordinary dilapidation.” One sentence that really makes the presence of decay clear is, “No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. (b) There are many ways in which the description of the house foreshadows the ending of the story. One of these ways is how characters cannot move and act freely in the house because of its structure, so it assumes a grotesque character of its own, which is the Gothic intelligence that controls the fate of the people living there. The author creates confusion between living and inanimate objects by using the physical house of Usher to symbolize the genetic family line of the Ushers.

Not only does the narrator get trapped inside the house of Usher, the reader learns that this confinement describes the biological fate of the Usher family. The peasantry confuses the mansion with the family because the physical structure has effectively dictated the genetic patterns of the family. 4. (a) The descriptive details of the interior of the house that suggest the narrator has entered a realm that is very different from the ordinary world are details such as the narrator felt that inside the house he “breathed an atmosphere of sorrow,” and that there was “irredeemable gloom that hung over and pervaded all. These details foreshadow that the things that will happen inside the mansion are going to be much more sorrowful and gloomy than

things that could ever happen in the ordinary world. (b) The details in Usher's appearance that suggest he has been cut off from the outside world for many years are described while comparing him to the boy that the narrator remembers from his childhood. Usher had a " ghastly pallor of the skin," his " silken hair had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity. " (c) The ways in which the appearance of the interior of the house are related to Usher's appearance and to the condition of his mind are shown in how the author uses the word " house" metaphorically, as he compares the house and Usher, yet he also describes a real house. The inside of the house is very dark and gloomy, and I think that Usher's appearance is also dark and gloomy.

I think that if someone, like the narrator, would see the interior of the house they would be fearful of it because of its depressing and creepy look, and I think that the mind of Usher is depressing and fearful due to his mental illness. 5. (a) The beliefs about the " sentience" of matter that Usher expresses to the narrator are that he believes his house to be sentience because of the arrangement of the masonry and the vegetation surrounding it.

Usher shares his theory with the narrator of " the sentience of all vegetable things. " (b) Usher's beliefs and fears are borne out by the final events of the story because for him, fear itself is worse than whatever you actually fear. In fact, fear is responsible for at least one of the deaths in the story. I think this story can be interpreted to show that fear of some dreaded occurrence

actually manifests it in reality. I think since Usher feared his death, he brought about his death. 6. a) The significance of the detail that the narrator finds himself becoming affected by Usher's condition is important because this shows that maybe Usher's condition really isn't all in his head and his illness is not as bad as it may seem since the narrator, who is of sound mind, finds himself experiencing the same things Usher does. This detail is also significant because it could show that the house played a part in how Usher is mentally ill and how it affects not only every family member who lives in the house, but anyone who decides to enter the house also. b) Based on the story, I believe the narrator is a reliable witness of the events he describes. The narrator insists repeatedly that all attempts to accurately describe the weird happenings of the House of Usher are futile. Examples of this in the story are when the narrator says " an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be restated. " The narrator also says, " I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me. Lastly, the narrator says, " I lack words to express the full extent, or the earnest abandon of his persuasion. " The author renders his story even more horrifying, and even more bizarre, by claiming that it is even scarier than it sounds in his story and whatever the narrator says was going on was worse than it sounds. The Raven Critical Reading Questions (page 317) 4. (a) The relationship between the Raven's shadow and the speaker's soul at the end of the poem is the speaker believes his soul is cursed by the Raven's presence.

It is because of this relationship that the reader is able to conclude that the speaker will never rise above his depression over Lenore, and his ability to be reasonable will always be overshadowed by his thoughts of Lenore's death. His "soul" will "nevermore" feel happiness. (b) In my opinion, what I think the Raven finally came to represent was sorrow and never-ending remembrance. The presence of the Raven, along with its continuous taunting, symbolizes the reader's struggle to free himself of the mental anguish of losing a loved one.

I think the Raven also represents how death is one of the only ways to be free of memories and remembrance of others. After You Read (page 318) 1. Gothic Element| House of Usher| Raven| Setting| The story begins at dusk on an autumn day in an earlier time period. The place is a forbidden mansion in the countryside. The mansion is covered by fungus, and is encircled by a small lake. A bridge provides access to the mansion. Both the inside and outside of the mansion are very gloomy and have parts that are decaying due to old age. The setting in the beginning of the poem is described as a bleak December night, around midnight, in a chamber of a house. The chamber is described so it sounds as if it is a richly furnished prison. | Violence| The violence that occurs in this story happens towards the end when Madeline breaks out from the tomb. Madeline throws herself at Usher and after "violent" agony; he dies along with his sister. Then the entire house cracks in two and sinks into the dark, dank pool that lies before it.

The violence in this story adds to the supernatural tone and mood of the overall writing. | The violence in this poem is not necessarily physical violence but takes place mentally. Throughout the poem, the speaker is

violently tormented mentally, and slowly loses his sanity throughout the poem. The Raven is the one who is causing the violence, but that is only because the speaker is reading too much into what the bird is saying and what the bird represents. | Characterization| The narrator describes Roderick's appearance to explain how he is changing emotionally.

Through the narrator, Poe uses direct characterization to tell how the Usher family is weird, creepy, isolated, old, wealthy, and indistinguishable from their weird, creepy, isolated, old, wealthy mansion. | The narrator is a man who is mourning over his beloved " Lenore. " He slowly loses his sanity as a mysterious raven enters his chamber. The raven may only be a figment of the narrator's imagination but more importantly, it is a symbol of the narrator's grief as well as the wisdom that the narrator gains through their exchange. | The Supernatural| The mansion is the main supernatural element in this story.

Roderick's fears manifest themselves through his family estate. One interpretation of the story is that Roderick's madness does seem to be the cause of truly supernatural events. Another interpretation is that Roderick really is just mentally insane and there is not as much of a supernatural element as it seems. It is not clear how much of what happens in the story can be blamed on the supernatural. Most of the supernatural occurrences, I believe, are related to the house. | The Raven is what causes this story to have such a supernatural element.

The raven is a natural element, but the fact it talks and utters only the word " nevermore" begins to create a supernatural element. What adds even

more to the supernatural element is that the word “ nevermore” is used to answer the speaker’s questions. These questions have to deal with life and death, and more importantly, an afterlife. The speaker reads into the Raven’s response of “ nevermore” as an answer these supernatural questions. | 2. The elements of the description of the house, Madeline’s entombment, and the storm all contribute to the single effect of a sense of terror because