

Fall of the house of usher analysis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Unquestionably, one of the most interesting aspects of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories is the use of a Doubling Motif. Edgar Allan Poe best presents this mirroring effect throughout the short story, "Fall of the House of Usher". Whether it is obvious or not, Poe is constantly symbolizing duality in many key elements throughout the short story.

One could easily note the correspondence between the house and the Usher family. Poe uses the word "house" metaphorically, but he is also describing a real house. For it is that house that ultimately determines the fate of the family. From the beginning, the description of the house with its "fungi overspread the whole exterior" and "a barely perceptible fissure" represents something not "right" with the family. The fungi represents the sickness within the family, while the fissure represents a crack within the family or a split in the twins.

Also, the narrator first witnesses the mansion as a "reflection in the tarn". The inversely symmetrical image of the house in the water represents the inversely symmetrical relationship between Roderick and Madeline. The isolation of Roderick's life from outer reality can be seen through the decayed trees and dank tarn that have not been cared for. In addition, the last line, "the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the 'House of Usher'", shows that when the family is over; the house is too. Another undoubtable use of the "doppelgänger" is represented through the twins: Roderick and Madeline.

"A striking similitude between the brother and the sister now first arrested my attention. . . Roderick represents a mental illness, or a 'Nervous

agitation”. He is all mind. While with Madeline, all descriptions of her focus on the body.

It’s made apparent that her weakness is physical sickness. Also, Roderick lives above (mind), while Madeline is entombed below (body). Poe wanted his readers to understand the dual nature of man. One side of man is reason, or the mind (Roderick), while the other is emotion, or the body (Madeline). While Madeline’s physical sickness is eating her away, Roderick’s mental condition worsens. “ Morbid acuteness of the senses.

Physically, Roderick and Madeline are twins, but psychologically they are also doubles because each lacks what the other has. Poe makes his readers think and feel in different ways. His writing is like staring at an optical illusion. Whether one is able to understand the message right away or not, the twist are all there. The correspondence between the house and the Usher family, and the Twins (Roderick and Madeline) are perfect examples of mirror images. Making this peice of literature one of the best pieces for displaying a Doubling Motif.