

Vampirism in the fall of the house of usher

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Vampirism in “ The Fall of the House of Usher” The theme of vampirism occurs several times throughout “ The Fall of the House of Usher” written by Edgar Allen Poe. He shows this theme through many actions of the characters and his use of diction. The three main paths of discovering the vampire theme is to closely examine three important instruments within the story. The three instruments used include Roderick Usher, Madeline Usher, and the House that the two live in.

Roderick Usher is used by Poe to demonstrate the vampire theme in two ways. In the launch of the short story, Roderick is described with both physical and mental strangeness. His physical being is characterized as “ terribly altered” (152), having a Hebrew nose, and with a ghoulish color of skin. These descriptions do not give an array of a normal human being. Edgar Allen Poe even writes that the narrator “ couldn’t connect it’s arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity” (152). There is obviously something wrong with Roderick physically to where he did not look like a human.

These physical alterations are symbolisms for a vampire figure. Hebrew noses are known to be rather large and pointed downward, giving us the imagery of Dracula, a widely known vampire, who is described as ghoulish looking and with a long, pointed nose. This facial feature, along with the pale albino-like skin color can give us the mental image of a vampire. Although Roderick’s physical features are important examples of the vampire theme, his mental unstableness is of more importance to this theme.

His thoughts and views of things that happen make the idea of vampirism more evident. Roderick mentions that there is an extreme sense of terror and superstition apparent in the house, in the events that were happening, and in ones soon to happen. He is filled with hysteria along with nervous agitation and a mental disorder. When Roderick mentions that “ sooner or later (he will) abandon life and reason all together” (153), he suggests that his life will soon come to an end.

His life coming to an end could mean that he will die, but looking through the vampire lens, it could mean that he would soon become immortal (abandoning reason). Madeline Usher, Roderick’s sister, is a very important example of the vampire theme in this story as well. Although she is seldom seen, only 3 times, she is a very important part of the plot and of the vampire theme in “ The Fall of the House of Usher. ” Throughout the story she is secretly referred to as the terror described by Roderick and the narrator.

When the narrator watches Madeline disappear in her retreat, he is filled with a state of mental numbness, hinting that she was a terrorizing scene. Ironically, the period of the most vampiristic quality is when Madeline dies. When she dies, the two men, Roderick and the narrator, put her in a coffin and then in a locked away donjon (dungeon). The importance of this part, is that the two guys not only put her in the coffin, but they screw the lid on and lock the large door to the tomb as if to keep her from escaping.

If she were dead, she wouldn’t try to escape, so why bolt everything up? Only if they were burying the undead (hint) would they feel the need to secure everything to where she could not get out. Another way that Madeline

is an example of vampirism is when she comes back alive, which we later find out she was never dead, she escapes the coffin and tomb and comes forth to the two men and she " bore him (Roderick) to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated" (161).

In the vampiristic view of this particular scene, it could be suggested that the terrors Roderick spoke of were of Madeline being a vampire and of her hunt to make himself a vampire as well. This might be the reason that Roderick invites his friend, the narrator, to come visit. Roderick probably thought that they two could defeat Madeline and overcome the terror that would ultimately consume Roderick. One last validation that makes " The Fall of the House of Usher" have a vampiristic theme is the fact that the house itself has a vampire feel to it as well.

The structure is defined as gothic, large, and lofty. When images of a vampire-inhabited house, one thinks of a large, dark, spooky place. Not only does the house have an appearance of a vampire, it has the power to suck the life out of people as well (metaphorically speaking). At the very beginning when the author is first describing the house, he already has a sense of uneasiness about himself. He states that there is a " utterdepressionof the soul" (149) and does not feel at ease anymore.

After entering the house and staying with Roderick for a few days, it becomes apparent that the narrator is getting more and more apprehension to the house and its inhabitants. Staying in the house with Roderick affected his mental awareness to a lot of things. He begins to hear the same noises that Roderick has heard and becomes very engulfed with terror, just as his friend Roderick is. The house is a symbol for vampirism because it sucks the

normality of the narrator's thoughts and feelings out and inserted those of Roderick's.

The vampiristic theme in "The Fall of the House of Usher" is a very easy one to pick out, one just has to read the story in a different way than before. To a person reading it plainly, they might not catch the little things that could hint to vampirism. For example, the blood-red moon described at the end could just be the color of the moon on a random night, but for a person reading the story in a vampiristic viewpoint, they can see that blood-red includes the word "blood" which is the main focus in vampirism. Vampires suck blood.