

Poe and his symbolisms

Literature



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Luis R. F. Cuebas Alberty 10 Nov. 20 Edgar Allan Poe The history of American literature is composed of many literary movements, of which one of the most important is the dark romantics. Edgar Allan Poe is considered to be the head of this Dark Romantic movement, and while even though today his literature is considered archaic or antiquated, his stories and poems have thrived up to the modern ages, and for this he was considered as a master in creating dark settings and placing symbols that were incisive and purposefully fear-inducing. As a dark romantic writer, Poe has been regarded to be on top with his eloquent stories and has become one of the most iconic and celebrated figures of American literature due to his use of literary elements that cater to the imagination of readers, such as intra-personal and personal conflicts, dark and macabre settings, among others.

Poe has created numerous literary works, one of the most well-known and considered to be a masterpiece is *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Due to the nature of Poe's style in using dark, gloomy settings and placing incisive and purposefully fear-inducing symbols, the story comes out as one of the most exemplified portrayals of contemporary Gothic and dark, romantic works of fiction. Despite the whole narrative being mostly seen in the eyes of the narrator, Poe has been successful in capturing the emotions and mental state of the characters in the story. The vivid and detailed descriptions were able to create a "dark, dull and soundless" setting for the story, and these somber details have the distinctness that characterized Poe as a dark romantic.

The whole story is seen through the eyes of the unnamed narrator, who received a letter from his childhood friend, Roderick Usher and implored his visitation to his homestead (Poe 81). Upon reaching the House of Usher, the <https://assignbuster.com/poe-and-his-symbolisms/>

narrator is given a sense of foreboding as he described the state of the building, of which he notices an intimidating crack from the ceiling to the lower floor of the building (83). This large crack as well as the deteriorating state of the mansion is one of the strongest elements of the story, which symbolized the demise of the Usher Mansion and the end of the Usher family, with Roderick and his twin sister Madeline as the end of the ancestral lineage.

Throughout the story, Poe uses other different symbols within the settings to project the insular lifestyle of the Usher twins. For example, Roderick's incorrigible fear could not be swayed by the narrator's attempts of distraction by encouraging him to read, paint or play his guitar. Madeline, on the other hand has been living with her brother Roderick for so long, she resembled him so much even after death. Meanwhile, Roderick's fear drove him to bury his sister alive during her inert state after suffering a seizure. Near the end of the story, the fear itself became personified upon Madeline rising up from the dead and killing her brother, thus ending both of their sufferings.

Roderick's life was not just full of sufferings, but of uniformity as well, and was fully described by the narrator. He was really censorious when it came to light entering the mansion. This was exemplified by his hampered physical and mental health state, which were symbolized by his aversion to the sun's luminous body entering the mansion, the prevalent smell of the spring flowers and bland food, and the combinations of these things enforced his hypochondriac and claustrophobic lifestyle (Poe 85). The Usher Mansion windows were located close to the ceiling, which intimated the narrator, and these structures were built in an imposing manner that makes anyone feel

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like being imprisoned. The windows also reflect on the physical imprisonment of Roderick and Madeline inside the House of Usher due to their poor physical and mental health state. In a way, the house itself symbolizes the trapped state of the Usher twins in them living in their own lives for so long., and deteriorating along with the house in the process. The last symbolism used in the story is the use of an antithesis as shown by the characters. The narrator believes Roderick alleviate his internal emotions by playing music. When he sat down with Roderick and listened, he saw the aesthetic way of how he Roderick plays the guitar and how he is transported by the music. However, at the same time the music seemed like a death chant for both Madeline and Roderick Usher. This setting was an antithesis in some way because Roderick who is an advocate and supporter of the music and art world lives his life alone and as an introverted person, thus symbolizing the contrasts between what he thinks and does.

Poe became famous for scaring his readers by utilizing underground crypts, haunted mansions, murder and utilizing his over the top melodramatic style. Despite these things, there are also poetic moments as represented by his conclusion “ the deep and dark tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the “ House of Usher” (Poe 93). The symbolism all throughout the story distinguishes the transcendental movements and the negativity, while the horrific and dark scenes distinguish Edgar Allan Poe as a dark romantic. Such use of imagery as well as the use of symbolisms throughout his story presents his feelings and way of thinking as what he is: a writer with a passion for writing dark romantic literature.

Work Cited

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