Character Analysis: The Fall Of The House Of Usher Essay, Research Paper

In Edgar Allan Poe?s, ?The Fall of the House of Usher,? the three characters are the unknown

narrator, the narrators old time friend Roderick Usher, and Roderick?s sister Madeline Usher.

The three characters are unique people with distinct characteristics,but they are tied together by

the same type of ?mental disorder?. They all suffer from insanity but they each respond to it

differently. Roderick and his sister seem to have a spiritual attatchment, and the narrator begins

to get sucked into it.

The narrator is called for help by his old time friend Roderick Usher. There is a split

feeling in the narrator?s mind between the rational and the supernatural. When he first arrives to

the house, he sees a face in the tarn, a split crack in the house and the double image of his own

face on the image of the house. Unlike Roderick, the narrator appears to be a man of common

sense. He seems to have a good heart in that he comes to help a friend from his boyhood. Being

educated and analytical, he observes that his friend Roderick has a mental disorder. The narrator

tries to find scientific explanations for what Roderick senses, but when he can?t find one, he

criticizes Roderick for his fantasies, and claims that Roderick is ?enchained by certain

superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenated?. The narrator tries his

hardest to help but he can?t because he doesn?t understand what is going on. The more he gets

involved, the closer he gets to being part of Roderick?s hysteria: ?Rationally Usher?s condition

terrified, it infected me….I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet uncertain degrees, the wild

influence of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.? As time went by Roderick?s

condition worsened and so did the narrators. When Roderick finally discovers that he

prematurely buried his sister Madeline, his condition reaches it?s peak , destroys him mentally,

and causes the narrator to leave the house in absolute terror.

Roderick Usher, the head of the house, is and educated man. He comes from a wealty

family and owns a huge house. He seemed to have once been an attractive man in the way the

narrator described him to be. However, his appearance deteriorated over time. When the

narrator finally saw Roderick, his appearance had completely altered. The narrator notes various

symptoms of insanity from Roderick?s behavior: ?in the manner of my friend I was struck with

an incoherence and inconsitency…habitual trepidancy, and excessive nervous agitation…His

action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous

indecision…to that….of a lost drunkard, or the erreclaimable eater of opium?. Roderick?s state

worsens throughout the story. He becomes increasingly restless and unstable, especially after the

burial of his sister.

Lady Madeline, twin sister of Roderick Usher, does not speack one word throughout the

story. When the narrator arrives to the House of Usher, she goes to her bed and goes into a dead

like coma state. The narrator helps bury her and put her away in a vault, but when she reappears,

he leaves the house. Lady Madeline seemed to be portrayed as the ghost of the house in the way

that she ?passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and without haveing noticed

his presence, disappeared?. Before the narrator had even arrived to the House of Usher, Lady

Madeline appeared to be completely overcome by mental disorder.

The three characters are shown to slowly adapt the same mental disease. They all seem

to suffer some degree of insantiy. Lady Madeline seems to accept the fact that she is insane and

continues her life with that knowledge. Roderick Usher appears to realize his mental state and

struggles very hard to hold on to his sanity. The narrator, who is slowly but surely contracting the

disease, wants to deny what he sees, hears, and senses. He, in the end, escapes from the illness

because he leaves the house.