



Setting Analysis of Short Story The Fall of the House of Usher

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Abstrak.

"The Fall of the House of Usher" is a short story written by Edgar Allan Poe. Poe was a famous American writer, born on January 19, 1809, and died on October 7 1849 at the age of 40. He was well-known for his dark, gruesome depictions of emotionally haunted characters. The fall of the House of Usher was released to the public in 1839 in Burton's Gentleman's Magazine. And, just like many of his works, this short story is not an exception to his collection of Gothic tales illustrating themes such as insanity, family, isolation, and supernaturals. The story tells a tale of Roderick Usher who requested the narrator to come for a visit to the old Usher's House, the narrator was a childhood friend of Roderick and has not seen him for a long time, and the Usher have grown sick and believed that his time would be soon. This study focuses on analyzing one of the key aspects in literature, which is settings. How does the setting affect the characters in the story, and does it affects the story told? The method used in this qualitative research is the descriptive method, which went through several stages including research design, data collection, and data analysis.

Keywords: Analysis; Setting; Short; Story

INTRODUCTION

Edgar Allan Poe was a famous American writer, poet, editor, and literary critic. He was well-known for his literary work such as poetry and short stories, but unlike most literature work, Poe has a certain tone and themes that he presents in his stories, which are mysteries and macabre. He was also known as one of the most extreme of the American Romantics.

Poe's work has brought a great influence on the world of literature, especially in cosmology and cryptography. His work has been referenced in many pop culture media, literature, music, films, and television. His writing style, genre, and theme have such a characteristic that could only be met in his works, perhaps that is one of the reasons why his work managed to surpass the test of time and remain relevant even until this day and age. Where there is a limitless list of literature people could choose from. Lowell (1844) said that Poe had written some of the things that are best among its kind, but the hearth is somehow all squeezed out of his mind. Contrary to the fact that Poe is known as a famous romantic, other romantics affirmed garden setting, but in Poe's work, most of them do not include any gardens. No love stories, no pastoral "good place" Poe is on the other end of the spectrum.

He was a romantic in his view that a rational mind is limited to obtaining metaphysical knowledge. He believed that in seeking the truth, the terror, and the beauty of the absolute reality, reason must be excluded or transcended by intuitive imagination,

leading one to fall into madness, decay and death, therefore he was a Gothic. The dedication of the seeker, especially the poet, is tragic in a Gothic universe. One of his works that might be a great representative of Poe's work is "The Fall of the House of Usher", which was released in 1839 in Burton's Gentleman's Magazine. This short story is one of his classic works that is dominated by macabre, suspense, supernatural elements, and gothic melancholy. The story follows the events that will soon to the fall of Usher's House, as he first got invited to visit his old friend Roderick Usher while he was slowly losing his sanity and enduring a mysterious illness that he claimed to passed down from his family. One of the key aspects of literature that stands out in the story is the setting, the House of Usher, as it was the place where the story place. Poe managed to get the reader to feel the atmosphere of the house using his words, the narrator described the house as "fearful", "dark", "gloomy" and "frightening". it does not end only just as words, but as feelings that readers may experience by reading this short story. Due to the rotting trees, murky pods, tiny fractures in the walls, and the disintegration of the stones, it appears that the house has an awful atmosphere. Usher's family has not been as successful as other families in the story, which makes Only one family member continues to exist from one generation to the next.

As stated by Abeer Al-Mahdawi (2019), the depiction of place in stories present a live sense of the scene that the author made to evoke a certain mood for the story. In many of Poe's work, he managed to grip the audience with the imagery of what the surrounding in the story is like. The ability to immerse the audience into a fictional world made by words is miraculous. To analyze a literary work is to identify the separate parts that make it up, to determine the relationship among the parts, and to discover the relation of the parts to the whole (Kenney, 1966:5). as this short story is the greater subject for literary analysis. The setting of the story affects the character in it, it also affects the reader's perception of what and how the surrounding of the event is like.

In this study, the writer would try to present an analysis of the setting from the fictional work by Edgar Allan Poe titled "The Fall of the House of Usher" in order to pinpoint how the setting affects both the fictional character in the story as well as the reader, and also how the setting contributes to the theme of this story.

1. Problem Formulation

- a. How is the setting of the story presented?
- b. How is the setting affect the character in the story?

2. Research Purpose

- a. To understand the setting in the story
- b. To understand the correlation between the settings and the character in the story

3. Benefit of Research

- a. It helps expand the knowledge of how to understand a short story from key aspects of literature
- b. The result of this research could help other researchers that would analyze similar topics as this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Wikipedia, Anybody of written work can be deemed literature, but the term is also used more precisely to refer to writings that are specifically regarded as works of art, particularly prose fiction, drama, and poetry. The concept has been broadened to encompass oral literature in recent centuries, most of which has been transcribed. In addition to functioning as a means of conserving knowledge and providing enjoyment, literature can also serve social, psychological, spiritual, or political purposes.

Literature is defined as "the entirety of written expression with the caveat that not every written work may be designated as literature in the more literal sense of the word," according to Klarer (1998). As a result, the definitions frequently incorporate additional adjectives like "aesthetic" or "artistic." Edgar Allan Poe himself described the short story, in his essay "The Philosophy of Composition" as a fictional piece of prose that is less than 100 pages long. It should be read in one sitting, taking between one and two hours. A short narrative in modern fiction can be between 1,000 and 20,000 words long.

A novel can cover several plots and subjects with a range of significant characters, whereas a short story often concentrates on one plot, one main character (with a few lesser characters), and one central theme. This is because of the shorter length. Additionally, experimenting, or employing unusual prose styles or literary strategies to communicate the story, is more suited to short stories. Such unusual approaches or techniques might become tiresome and plain irritating in a novel, but they might be effective in a short story.

Important components that form the story itself are covered in short stories. Each of these components plays a part in the story's plausibility. Themes, plots, settings, characters, and points of view are among them (Anderson: 1993 as cited in Hansyar: 2005)

According to Klarer (1998:15), a plot is the logical interaction of a text's numerous thematic parts that results in a modification of the initial circumstance as it is presented at the beginning of the story. The plot is also defined as a conflict between two individuals, two groups of individuals, or two concepts in an individual's head (Junaid 2006:9). he also added that plot is a chain of events that has phases to tell the story.

A character in a story is a person or other being. The distinction between a "real" and "fictional" character may be made depending on whether the character is wholly imaginary or is based on a real-life person. According to Klarer (1998:17), a flat character is a persona in the literature that is dominated by a single character and is known as such, whereas a round character is a persona with more complicated and distinct qualities. Since a short narrative only depicts the crucial period in the life of the main character, flat characters frequently appear in them.

According to Anderson (1993), referenced in Hansyar (2005), the point of view refers to the person who is narrating the story, whose eyes the reader's eyes are using to perceive the story. The author chooses the point of view to highlight a certain character. Setting can be defined as the time and location of a tale. It is "the natural and artificial scenery or atmosphere in which people in fiction live and move," according to Edgar V. Roberts. ¹ Whereas mood or atmosphere refers to the reader's emotional reaction to the setting of a story. However, since one depends on the other, setting and atmosphere are typically regarded as being similar concepts for discussion's sake. Setting without mood and atmosphere results in a lack of emotional connection, whereas just mood and atmosphere with no clear location leave the reader perplexed.

A short story's central idea or premise is known as its theme. The overarching idea or central insight of a work of fiction is referred to as its theme. This is the fundamental notion or underlying meaning that the author is aiming to convey. The theme of the short tale, which could be the author's viewpoint on a certain issue or point of view, usually draws attention to the point the author is making and may be highlighted through the use of various figures of speech.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

In this research, the writer used qualitative term methodology by describing the setting in “The Fall of the House of Usher” short story and then outlining the connection between the data analysis with the method and research questions.

2. Data Collection

The data for this research was collected by reading carefully the short story “The Fall of the House of Usher”, marking words used to describe the time, place, and situation in the story.

3. Data Analysis

The analysis would be done by examining the Data, which are words that describe the place, time, and situation then analyzing what sort of image was presented from these words, as well as the effect it has on the character in the story and the reader. This research focused on the setting of the story which was the Usher’s house and its surrounding.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

“It was a dark and soundless day near the end of the year, and clouds were hanging low in the heavens. All day I had been riding on horseback through country with little life or beauty; and in the early evening I came within view of the House of Usher.”

Right of the bat, a couple of the very first sentences in the writing set a gloomy mood for the rest of the story. The narrator described the situation nearing the end of the year as dark and soundless, it is a contradiction of what people might have suggested at first when they heard the word end of the year, it is usually related to party, celebration, and noises, but in this case it is a direct opposite, there is no lights and colors, there is no sound could be heard of people around. It gives a sense of dread because of the strange contradiction of the time and the situation the narrator described.

According to Al-Mahdawi (2019), he stated in his research that Poe thought that the best art resided in a domain that was distinct from our own, and that in order to establish this realm, ambiguity and vagueness were required to distance the reader from the mundane and draw him toward the ideal and the beautiful.

Perhaps that explain the contradiction of what was expected in the end of the year and the reality that Poe created in this story, it alienate the reader by making our expectation way off from what is happening in the story.

The narrator also stated that he “had been riding on horseback through country with little life or beauty; and in the early evening I came within view of the House of Usher” this illustrate that the House of Usher is located far away from civilization. It is located in a remote place that people had to go miles and miles to reach. This convey the feeling of isolation. The family residence is in a faraway spot someplace in a forest in a foreign nation. As a result, there is a feeling of remoteness and indefiniteness. The location of the story doesn't really matter as long as it's far away from the reader's normal surroundings.

This isolation definitely take a toll on the residence of the house, especially mentally. As isolation would made many individual lose their track of reality slowly, There are links between physical and mental wellness. Sleep deprivation to weakened immune system are only a few of the negative health effects of social isolation. Higher rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide are linked to loneliness.

The remoteness, indefiniteness and isolation made a perfect formula for a horror to be taken place. Being away from civilization means that there would be no help from the outside words. Human is a social being, and it is public knowledge that we have to interact with someone in order to stay alive, being in a complete isolation like the character in the story is, would shift that idea,

a person in isolation would have to fulfill the need of socializing with something else, and since there is no one else around, it leads to them in a downward spiral of self fulfilling, they become self absorbed and slowly lose in touch with reality. Perhaps this setting is what creates the reason why Roderick Usher summoned his old friend, it is for him to finally fulfill a common human need to socialize, to talk to someone and perhaps bring himself back to the root of reality. "I do not know how it was — but, with my first sight of the building, a sense of heavy sadness filled my spirit. I looked at the scene before me — at the house itself — at the ground around it — at the cold stone walls of the building — at its empty eye-like windows — and at a few dead trees — I looked at this scene, I say, with a complete sadness of soul which was no healthy, earthly feeling. There was a coldness, a sickening of the heart, in which I could discover nothing to lighten the weight I felt. What was it, I asked myself, what was it that was so fearful, so frightening in my view of the House of Usher? This was a question to which I could find no answer."

The quotation above further elaborate the feeling the narrator had when he first saw the house from the outside, it brought him a sense of "heavy sadness". The narrator alludes to the structure as "the melancholy House of Usher" as he approaches it and describes his sentiments as "a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit,". He then speaks in a gloomy and ominous tone. There are dark, melancholy, and frequently terrifying circumstances that, thanks to Poe's deft description, can be mistaken for a dream. The mansion itself also contributes to the surrealistic feel of the surroundings. The reader anticipates some fresh and uncommon possibilities since they can sense death and decay from the very beginning, just like the narrator who "wondered to see how strange were the imaginations which everyday images were conjuring up."

There is also somewhat of the personification put into the house of Usher, the narrator stated that the house has an empty eye-like window and it present somewhat of a human emotion, a sadness, a melancholy, as if the house was alive and tried to convey the feeling of it.

“... about the whole mansion and domain
there hung an atmosphere peculiar to
themselves and their immediate vicinity –
an atmosphere which had no affinity with
the air of heaven, but which had reeked up
from the decayed trees, and the grey wall,
and the silent tarn, in the form of an inelastic vapor or gas
– dull, sluggish, faintly
discernible, and leaden-hued. “

The narrator proceeds to describe his surroundings by talking about the "environment" surrounding the house and tarn. This vivid visual suggests that the house and its surrounds may truly have supernatural traits and an odd and bizarre existence, and that the house is likely being kept standing by some exceptional power because, if not, it would have collapsed to the ground long ago. From a distance, the house appears to be an ordinary stable, but as the narrator draws closer, it becomes clear that it is decaying, especially inside. Both the initial perception and the subsequent discoveries apply to Usher's mind, which is on the verge of collapsing.

“The room I came into was very large and high. The windows were high, and pointed at the top, and so far above the black floor that they were quite out of reach. Only a little light, red in color, made its way through the glass, and served to lighten the nearer and larger objects. My eyes, however, tried and failed to see into the far, high corners of the room. Dark coverings hung upon the walls. The many chairs and tables had been used for a long, long time. Books lay around

the room, but could give it no sense of life. I felt sadness hanging over everything. No escape from this deep cold gloom seemed possible."

This description gives a claustrophobic sense, it felt like the house was trapping the narrator inside of it, and leaving him little to no escape, it seems like the house was alive and engulfing him. He claims that everything he encounters calls for the same "vague" sentiments he had earlier while he was outside the estate. As a result, the interior is just as airless, depressing, and unpleasant as the exterior atmosphere. The furniture is "profuse, comfortless, old, and frayed," and the entire interior is deteriorating. The location had a "air of thick, profound, and irredeemable melancholy draped over and permeating all," and even the "Many books and musical instruments... failed to give any energy."

Al-Mahdawi (2019) suggested in his research that Poe uses his "climate of grief" to evoke two main effects: the reader gets the impression that a terrifying catastrophe is going to happen, and the narrator starts to doubt whether the home has any ominous supernatural powers. Later, when he says, "I attempted to think that most, if not all, of what I felt, was due to the baffling influence of the dismal furniture of the room..." he explains his own superstition.

The narrator's mental equilibrium is undoubtedly being thrown off by his new surroundings, and after encountering In speaking with Roderick, he grows increasingly certain that the scene and The strange behavior and the environment within and outside the home are the character traits of its population. believes that the narrative "relates to the overall Roderick Usher's breakdown and "the evil tarn that so horrifies the narrator" contributes actively to Usher's demise in the opening scene. The tarn is dark evokes images of emptiness (grey sedge) and decay (rotting trees). This depicts the deterioration and breakdown of Usher's own psyche, and as a result becoming "the terrors he had expected" victims.

As the narrator pays close attention to both descriptions and notices unsettling parallels between Roderick and the mansion, the coupling between the two is maintained. Usher describes the impact that the structure of the gray walls and turrets, as well as the dim tarn into which they all looked down, have had on him when he reveals that he hasn't left the mansion in a long time: "an effect which the physique of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at last, brought upon the morale of his existence."

Later, the conversation between the narrator and Usher turns to "the sentience of all vegetable creatures." Usher laments to the narrator that the house has come to life as a result of the placement of the stones, and that the moss and fungi growing on the stones have experienced the same thing. His illness, sadness, and the slow decline of his sister are all attributed, in his opinion, to the effect of the grimness of the house itself. He even compares the inanimate items to persons in that they have feelings and thoughts.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" told a story of Roderick Usher who lived in his house isolated from people, trapped in a claustrophobic place, and slowly deteriorating. The setting of the house could be interpreted as a reflection of Usher's Condition and also as what may causes the condition.

The setting of The Fall of the House of Usher was purposefully chosen to be distant, just like many of Poe's stories. It provides as a setting for terrifying events. When the nameless narrator first enters the House of Usher until the conclusion of the narrative He flees in dread, and the entire narrative is contained within the dark chambers on a dreary fall day, where every object and sound is attenuated to Roderick Usher's overly polished and overly developed sensitivity.

The narrative also excellently illustrates Poe's compositional rule, which stipulates that every element in a story must work together to create a single, cohesive impact. It is clear that Poe has chosen the eerie and ghostly atmosphere of "the grim phantasm FAER") for his primary effect to be achieved in this story. To achieve this, Poe emphasizes the physical aspects of the various structures, including description of the house from the outside and from the inside as well as its surroundings. Because of this, every phrase, picture, and description used in the story is chosen with the intention of making the reader and the narrator feel utter terror and fear.

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