

Short Assignment : Analysis (Due July 2)

Short Assignment : CRITICAL READING AND ANALYSIS

1. **650-750 words (double-spaced, 12-pt font in Times New Roman, in the default format of a Word document, with 2.54 cm margins on all sides).** *** Any assignment that is not within this word limit or does not conform to this format will not be accepted as having been submitted.

Answer the following question. This assignment asks you to follow a very specific series of steps, as a way of modelling the steps of analysis and argument, and to employ a very specific process: you are to analyze two short passages from Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" very closely and then to tie the conclusions of that analysis to the larger work in which they appear. This process asks you to analyze a narrowed element of the story in order to understand the operations of the larger, complex work.

The presentation of your analysis must follow a very specific structure:

1. an initial paragraph in which you introduce your two passages, situating your reader in the text and topic under discussion.
2. a second section, of as many paragraphs as you feel are necessary (no more than 2), in which you present your close reading of the two assigned passages. You are required to work closely with your primary text, contextualizing them to illustrate and prove your claims.
3. In a final paragraph, move outwards and tie the specific results of your analysis to the story to which the passages belong: what role do the passages play in the processes and problems of the story? How does your close reading of these passages inflect or transform your understanding of the story of which they are parts and the major themes or processes of the story?

One of the significant issues in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" is the relationship between observed reality and the possibility of strange or uncanny doubles or mirror images below or beyond the surface. Consider the following two passages: to what extent do they exemplify and/or clarify this issue in the text?

Passage 1: "I reigned in my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down -but with a shudder even more thrilling than before- upon the remodelled inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows."

Passage 2: "The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mocking of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death."

