

# Discussion Five

Read Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (pdf of the text is in Files).

a.) Make a simple list of 5-10 symbols from the story.

b.) Select the symbol at the top of your list and explain how effectively Poe uses this symbol in the story (one paragraph).

A.) 1. The House of Usher symbolizes decay, gloom, and the decline of the Usher family.

2. The tarn symbolizes the darkness and mystery surrounding the Usher estate.

3. Roderick Usher symbolizes the decay of both physical and mental health, as well as the decline of the Usher lineage.

4. The atmosphere symbolizes the oppressive and suffocating aura of gloom and despair.

5. The Gothic architecture symbolizes the antiquity and foreboding nature of the Usher mansion

B.) The house itself in the story becomes a character, embodying the deteriorating state of the Usher family, at the same time serving as a manifestation of their declining fortunes. Its oppressive atmosphere, described as "melancholy" and "insufferable," sets the tone for the entire story. As stated in the story "The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation." It does a very good job of symbolizing the decay and gloom of the house very well.