

Please address the following prompts in a Word or PDF document. Submit your completed materials (your five prompt responses plus your writing sample referenced in the fourth bullet point) to Director Dr. Joy Ladin at JoyLadin@gmail.com and Coordinator Gina Grimaldi at GinaMGrimaldi@gmail.com.

- **Tutoring in the Beren Writing Center involves active listening, when a tutor listens to her client and reflects back to the client her understanding of what the client has said. Describe a situation in which you've practiced active listening.**
- **Think about how it felt to be tutored during a past Beren Writing Center session. What do you remember? What was productive about your session? What do you wish happened that didn't happen? Based on your experience, what do you think is the most important quality in a writing tutor?**
- **Describe the process that you go through when you revise an academic essay. What are the questions you ask yourself? What are the kinds of things you find yourself working on as you move from one draft to the next?**
- **Submit an example of your own academic writing, along with a statement of what you would want to revise.**
- **Respond to the below Sample Student Essay, considering the following: based on what you see in the draft, describe the stage that the writer is at in her process (i.e., is she brainstorming or pre-writing? Is this a final draft? something in between?) What is something this writer has done well? What are the two most important things to work on in this paper and why? How would you go about talking about these issues with a student?**

Sample Student Essay

A malignant murderer: different levels of evil?

In Edgar Allen Poe's works "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Tell-Tale Heart", murder is in the air. Roderick Usher and the "Tell-Tale Heart's narrator display signs of mental disturbance, which leaves them with altered perceptions of reality and dysfunctional relationships with their loved ones who they ultimately murder. There are many similarities between the two stories, though the main area the reader compares and contrasts are the murders themselves. The reader is led to wonder, does Poe equate murder to evil, or the contrary? Poe depicts the murders quite differently between the two stories; in "The Tell-Tale Heart" the murder is clear-cut and simply evil, whereas in "The Fall of the House of Usher" the details of the murder seem more ambiguous and conflicted. By analyzing the murderers and

their reactions toward committing murder we can contrast the levels of evil and emotion conveyed by the murderer. Based on the motives and descriptions of the murders, Roderick Usher seems more sympathetic and emotionally based whereas the narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart” seems to have no qualms approaching his murder and revels in the actual act of killing. In comparison to “The Tell-Tale Heart”, Usher can be seen in a more favorable light and gains the readers’ sympathy. Through contrasting him to the narrator in “The Tell-Tale Heart” who enjoys his murder and completely lacks sympathy, Usher does not seem to be evil.

Poe centers the two short stories on main characters that are mentally disturbed individuals. In “The Fall of the House of Usher”, Roderick Usher is plagued with mental disease, as told to us through the eyes of a narrator. As the narrator is reunited with Usher after countless years apart, Usher woefully details the extent of his disease. “He entered at some length at the nature of his malady...a mere nervous affection...he suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses...” Usher seeks sympathy and comfort from his illness when he invites the narrator to come visit. Similarly in “The Tell-Tale Heart”, the narrator who doubles as the main character, clearly admits to the reader that he possesses a disease, and does so without shame, unlike Usher who seems almost embarrassed by his malady. In the opening of the “The Tell-Tale Heart”, the reader is told, “Why will you say I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses...”. The narrator very clearly and almost proudly informs the reader that he is diseased. This quote is located at the opening of the story and therefore sets the tone of the story to being eerie and possibly evil.

As well as being mentally disturbed, the antagonists have an additional similarity that they are engaged in dysfunctional relationships. These relationships ultimately end in murder. “Her disease would leave him (him the hopeless and frail)...she had steadily borne up against her malady...as her brother told me with inexpressive agitation”. The narrator is introduced to Usher’s sister Madeline in what seems to be strange circumstances. Usher displays an almost unhealthy attachment to his sister, claiming her death would destroy him. This dependent relationship leaves Usher tied to his sister to a not natural degree. In addition, “The Tell-Tale Heart” has one central relationship on the level of worker to master, or so it seems. The narrator shares a house with what appears to be a sweet old man “I loved the old man”. The narrator at the story’s opening shows no sign of anger toward the old man but as the story progresses he portrays otherwise.

Usher loves his sister very much, almost too much. The narrator depicts Usher’s plans to bury his sister. “One evening, having informed me that Lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse”. This gruesome request informs the reader that Usher did in fact attempt to kill his sister. How can Usher have done this to his sister whom he cared so deeply about? “The brother had been led to his resolution by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain

obtrusive inquiries on the part of her medical men..”. It seems based on this excerpt that Usher attempted to murder his sister out of pity. Additionally the narrator is quoted saying “I had no desire to oppose what I regarded at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural precaution. This leads the reader to begin to draw conclusions that what originally seemed like a murder may be an act of mercy killing.

As well in “The Tell-Tale Heart”, a murder takes place, though of a different nature. “It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain, but once conceived, it haunted me day and night”. The narrator admits that the idea of murdering the old man seemingly comes out of nowhere but quickly becomes a necessity to him. Though this concept is very close to the beginning of the story, the narrator seems to fixate on the concept. “Object there was none, passion there was none... for his gold I had no desire... I think it was his eye! He had the eye of a vulture... whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold. Whereas in “The Fall of the House of Usher”, Usher appears to kill his sister to take her out of her misery, the narrator here seems to commit cold-blooded murder. He admits that he had no real reason to kill the old man, not passion or greed. The narrator claims he desires to kill the old man on the premise that his eye scares him. On this concept alone an innocent old man is murdered.

Furthermore, though both stories contain murder, they are written in completely different ways. In “The Fall of the House of Usher”, the reader is left asking many questions about the details surrounding Lady Madeline’s death. Is she really dead? Was she buried alive and so on. This multitude of questions is never really answered, leaving the reader with an unsettled, confused feeling. On the contrast, the details of the murder in “The Tell-Tale heart” are clear-cut and uncomplicated. True, the murder is based on what the reader might feel is a ludicrous premise, they are not left wondering. The narrator is fearful of the old man’s eye and therefore kills him. Its simple, contains no ambiguities or unclear areas. The very way that the murders are written make the reader wonder why Poe chose to do so. Though this question is not directly answered, it leads into an additional query. Can Poe be showing us that murder can be an act that is not evil? By writing the murder in “The Fall of the House of Usher” in the drawn out, confusing way that it is, the reader is left with mixed feelings toward Usher, which may be partly because of the leftover questions. On the contrary in “The Tell-Tale Heart”, the murder is concise and simple and the narrator is seen in an evil light. Since the murders are written in such opposite methods, we as readers wonder, is Poe equating murder with evil?

Similarly, the reactions of the murderers while committing the treacherous act can be extremely revealing. As the reader analyzes the response of the murderers, the essence of their true character can be seen. “In an instant I dragged him to the floor and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done.” The murder in “The Tell-Tale Heart” takes place in a matter of words, written clearly and concisely. The narrator who commits the murder, seems to relish during and feel satisfied at the end of his murder. In contrast the murder in Usher is written with a completely different tone. “At the

request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements...". Usher asks for assistance in burying his sister by the narrator, thus proving he is not trying to keep her death a secret, nor is he ashamed of it. As previously mentioned, to Usher killing Madeline is an act of mercy. "And now...an observable change came over my friend. His ordinary manners had vanished. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal and objectless step". Usher is clearly haunted by the death of his sister, a stark contrast to the narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart" who has a satisfied feeling at the conclusion of his murderous act.

Additionally Usher gains the sympathy of the reader as opposed to the "The Tell-Tale Heart" narrator. When comparing the two responses to murder, it can be seen that Usher displays conflict towards killing his sister whereas the "The Tell-Tale Heart" narrator is more cold blooded and devoid of emotional attachment. "Yes he was stone, stone dead...his eye would trouble me no more. ...the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body...I dismembered the corpse...took up three planks...replaced the boards so cleverly, cunningly...a tub had caught it all ha! ha!" . The narrator in "The Tell-Tale Heart" explains in detail the act of murder itself but even more so the clean up work. The abundance of descriptions the narrator gives the reader appears to match that of a serial killer, taking pride in one's excellent killing job. The narrator repeatedly says how smart, clever and cunning he is, for having carried out the murder in such an efficient way. On the opposite end of the spectrum Usher is plagued with guilt and worry in the aftermath of Madeline's death. "The pallor of his countenance had assumed...". After his twin sister's death, it's as if a part of Usher is missing. He becomes paler and even more plagued by his mental illness. Being that Usher displays more emotion and regret in compassion to the cold, stone-hearted "The Tell-Tale Heart" narrator, he gains the reader's sympathy in the end. As for the "The Tell-Tale Heart" narrator, since he showed no emotion or remorse, he gains no sympathy and is seen in a unsympathetic view.

Finally, Usher in comparison to the narrator in "The Tell-Tale Heart" narrator, can be seen as not innocent, yet not evil individual. "I am mad?... am I mad?...madman". The narrator in "The Tell-Tale Heart" admits multiple times that he is mad and displays the same. At the stories conclusion, the reader can come to the firm belief that he is an evil individual. The word evil which can be translated as "profoundly malevolent", and after the narrator detailing his murder with pride in his work, the description is appropriate. "Her disease would leave him, him the hopeless and the frail". In comparison Usher portrays emotion and love toward his sister before her death and regret after the fact. The reader doesn't view him as totally innocent but rather with a degree of sympathy. The final inference of Usher that the reader makes, especially with comparing him to the narrator, is that he is not evil or purely bad in any sense.