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English 103

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Cask of Amontillado Outline

1. In the short story “The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe the genre that can be defined in it would be under gothic literature.
   1. In this particular story the main character is set out to obtain revenge on a fellow “friend”.
   2. The approach that this story takes on would be by looking at the theme of revenge/betrayal, as well as the Italian culture, taking a closer look at the main character's mind and examine the journey said character takes.
2. From a Historical point of view the reader can take note of the time period it takes place in given why the catacombs were in use and how Italian culture was back then.
   1. The story takes place during the Mardi Gras season of parties and all sorts of events that take place.
   2. Mardi Gras is very popular in the European regions of the world and has been celebrated for many years.
      1. Back in the 1850s people would be able to identify the different types of wine that they would have.
         1. Montresor is speaking to Fortunato about the amontillado and how he could not wait for him to show up so he bought it because he thought he was going to miss out on a bargain.
         2. During the Mardi Gras season they have a few people that are able to identify wines and Fortunato was one of them and he did have a type of competitor which was Luchesi.
         3. Since this was Mardi Gras anything could be done and the chances of getting caught would be slim since everyone is out and about doing their own thing
      2. Mardi Gras is known for all the chaos and eventful parties that it has during this season.
   3. Edgar Allan Poe brings the culture as a main part in the story since it includes a lot of the rich history behind Italian culture.
      1. One can see the setting and time period in which it takes place and how the use of a catacomb is in the scene.
         1. Montresor takes Fortunato down to his family's catacomb area where tombs lie beneath the house.
         2. Back in this time it was normal for families to have their loved ones stowed away under their house in a room full of caskets and reserved spots until they die
         3. ​Putting the family in the cemetery at the time was considered to be bad, because it is a lonely cemetery where the family members of that loved one would not have easy contact space where if something bad happened then it would be terrible.
      2. As one can take this and see that Mardi Gras was highly participated and that the people of Italy would take it upon themselves to honor their family name.
   4. The meaning of the words are not put into simple out layed text for someone who is to read it now but one can see that the Italian culture back then was different than the rest.
   5. Now that Montresor has brought Fortunato into his home and gone to a place where he knows no one will be able to hear him then will he go through with his plans.
      1. By bringing Fortunato to “test” the amontillado and down into the catacomb, this is the way that Montresor leads Fortunato into his painful death.
         1. Montresor brought Fortunato into the catacomb area which was not questionable since he believed that the amontillado was down there and that he was helping out a fellow friend.
         2. Fortunato was making Montresor seem like he was lucky that he called him up and not Luchesi since he is the best at identifying the wines.
         3. Montresor has his plan going smoothly, however, he feels a sort of contemplation but disregards it and goes upon killing him.
      2. At last Montresor gives Fortunato one last chance to save himself but eventually Montresor must go on with his deed and gets him drunk enough to brick Fortunato up to a painful death.
   6. Montresor had a carefully planned revenge scheme in order to keep everything a secret for such a long time until he finally after fifty years came clean to a priest as his confession.
   7. In the end, the revenge Montresor had planned out for Fortunato is completed and Fortunato will lie in Montresor's family catacomb for eternity.
3. From a Marxist standpoint the power struggle of social classes was demonstrated in Poe’s “Cask of Amontillado”.
   1. Edgar Allan Poe was born in 1809 so most of the setting for his works take place around that time frame.
   2. Poe started off writing his stories and poems with themes that were not very common with other writers; however, he had such a way of making his audience like the characters that would normally not be likeable.
      1. In 1827, Poe became a private in the army and was sent out to Fort Independence on Castle Island in Boston Harbor.
         1. This is where the idea was spurred for the writing of “The Cask of Amontillado”.
         2. Once Poe gained all the information that he needed was then when he would rewrite it as his own with a twist of a dark mood.
      2. During his time in the army Poe had learned about two men, Lieutenant Robert F. Massie and Captain Green along with the officers, and once Poe created his story one could examine the two stories alike.
   3. Upon hearing the story of the two men who had gone up against in a duel connections between the main characters in “Cask of Amontillado” can be seen.
      1. Green would soon challenge the “cheat” Massie into a duel of sword fighting and to the disadvantage of Massie, Captain Green was very skilled in that category.
         1. Green could be connected as Poe’s character Fortunato because they are both arrogant and think highly of themselves.
         2. As seen here Fortunato is insulting his opponent Luchesi and throughout the whole story he puts his own judgement on Luchesi saying that he will always be greater than him.
         3. Captain Green would suffer a painful death such as the death that Fortunato was given to by Montresor.
      2. The way these officers planned to get revenge was to get Green drunk with wine to the point where they got him down to a dungeon-like area and found a place to put and cement block him in. Taking a look into Poe’s story the connection can be made to where the character Montresor resembles the officers who got revenge on Captain Green.
   4. By setting up Captain Green’s death the officers did that in order to avenge Massie’s death at an unfair duel, and the connection it can be made to Poe’s story is Montresor killed Fortunato in order to avenge his family name and keep its honor. Poe was told to never repeat this story; however, years later “The Cask of Amontillado” was written with a change of setting and characters.
   5. The story is similar but does have the changes that Poe needed to make and here we see the characters dealing with struggle, even though they are both of a high-class society.
      1. Montresor has the weight of honoring his family name when Fortunato goes about insulting him.
         1. Montresor is like the character that appears to not be the most intelligent and everyone just pushes him along until the reader can actually see how he actually lives.
         2. Fortunato was baffled when he met this other side of Montresor so Poe being the genius, he is created this to persuade the reader into thinking killing Fortunato was for the best
         3. By Poe making Fortunato come off as the stuck up rich guy who is conceited; this opens up the reader to have a sense of hatred towards him.
      2. Back then in even know in most European countries a person's family name and history when they are of the high class society has great value to them.
   6. That is why when Fortunato disgraced Montresor he felt as if he had to protect and honor the family name.
   7. Poe did an extraordinary job with setting up the original story to being his own and adding the mix of class struggle into it.
4. A Psychoanalytical point of view shows us that Montresor did not want to kill Fortunato.
   1. In the beginning of the short story Montresor is ready to honor his family name and has a well thought out plan on how everything will go down.
   2. As the story progressed the reader can notice that Montresor deep down did not want to kill Fortunato and that he felt tho it was necessary.
      1. As discussed in the passage before that back then in European countries the families would have a deep connection to their what is now called, a “coat of arms” meaning a type of bestowment upon said family.
         1. Since Fortunato was picking fun and commenting on Montresor not knowing what Montresor actually had in possession, this lead to Montresor going on with his style of revenge.
      2. If Fortunato was not so arrogant towards Montresor then Montresor would have no need or desire in gaining this revenge.
   3. The play of betrayal comes in since in a way Montresor feels as if he is betraying someone no matter what he decides to do.
      1. If he does not take his family's name to honor it by pulling this revenge scheme on Fortunato then he betrays his coat of arms; however, if he murders Fortunato he will now committed a crime against someone he does not really want to kill.
         1. Throughout the story Montresor is seen having second thoughts upon actually completing the task.
      2. What this says here is that if Fortunato was just a bit smarter to escape then maybe Montresor would not feel the same way that he did fifty years after the crime.
   4. Montresor slips out small sentences but catches himself so that it is not noted that he actually cares about what happens with Fortunato.
      1. There is one part where he yells at Fortunato to yell out for help yet Fortunato too intoxicated and short minded did not catch on.
         1. Another part in the story Montresor speaks of his heart growing sick and thus one can say it was due to the act he was about to commit; but that as it may be, he goes on to correct himself and speak of the catacombs.
      2. Montresors many slip ups and even so a confession brings up that he needed to find some sort of peace in order for him to rest easy but he was one might say late since he had committed the crime fifty years prior to his confession.
   5. Revenge and betrayal are messy when it comes to family over foe and in Montresor's case guarding his family name was what pushed him to betray his fellow friend.
   6. The Psychoanalytical portion of a perspective concludes that Montresor did not want to murder Fortunato and that in the back of his mind he was having many withdrawals but did little to stop himself.
5. The Myth perspective shows us the quest that Montresor goes through while planning Fortunato's death.
   1. The story connected to the real version in the reader's opinion may or may not be connected to a mythical perspective based on the route that is seen.
   2. In a way Montresor is like the hero of his own story taking on a call to action, quest if you will to honor his family name.
      1. Fortunato being the arrogant rich man he is takes it upon himself to make Montresor feel like he is lower than him.
         1. Montresor is the hero in this case since he is going out to plan revenge on someone who has given offense to his family name.
      2. As stated before the viewpoint of the reader is different from each individual and considering if this is a call to action would be based on their input.
   3. The quest that Montresor has to go on during the story is figure out how to get Fortunato alone in a secluded area where no one will see or hear them.
      1. This is Mardi Gras where there are tons of events and drinking going on.
         1. Montresor took this action in order to keep his family name safe, in order to show Fortunato that he should not belittle his family.
      2. Montresor took Fortunato away from the Mardi Gras events and into the catacomb area where the second half of the story takes place.
   4. The quest was Montresor's call to adventure and he indeed did fulfill it by the end guilty conscious or not it was done.
   5. As mentioned the refusal to call is when the main character does not was to take on the journey or task for a brief moment in the story.
      1. There has been evidence that Montresor had his doubts and did slightly find ways to cover it up.
         1. Montresor had his ways of getting Fortunato down to the catacombs but he also had his way of trying to get Fortunato to save himself.
      2. Poe created this story between two characters and one of them being the “hero” being Montresor took it upon himself to go on this journey.
   6. The refusal to the call was Montresor’s way of not honoring his family name but in the end he does complete the task.
   7. A myth perspective shows the journey that Montresor takes to fulfill a deed that honors his family.
6. As one can conclude the story ends in a failed revenge as told by the main character.
   1. Looking at the text and reviewing the time that it was written in one would notice how it differs from the modern day in Italian culture. Edgar Allan Poe created this story based off real life events with just the right amount of twist to make it his own dark chilling tale.
   2. Conclusively, Edgar Allan Poe’s short story can show just how sadistic a human's nature may be once provoked just enough.