

Analyzing “The Cask Of Amontillado” And “The Tell-Tale Heart” By Edgar Allan Poe

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When it comes to working by Allan Poe, one can anticipate a thrilling reading experience from his artistic expression of terror and human horror. Edgar employs a different assortment of critical tools to illustrate the natural world and human activities in a very graphic and blunt manner. When considering “[The Cask of Amontillado](#)” and “The Tell-Tale Heart,” the writer revolves adequately around the theme of torture and death. He vividly describes the disfiguring of some of his characters and sufficiently describes murder.

On these two accounts,, Poe selectively develops characters by balancing between specific themes and setting a standard mood that appeals to the reader’s curiosity. In both accounts, the persona of the narrator displays psychopathic tendencies, which serve to enrich the graphic theme. Reading through the two accounts, one can deduce that the narrator is deriving pleasure from the description of the horrifying events (Gargano, 177). The writer’s obsession with death is brought forward in the two accounts. In the Cask of Amontillado, the character Fortunato is lured to the basement by the narrating persona, where he is confined by a brick wall to die slowly with no chance of escape. Similarly the Tell-Tale Heart, the old man suffers a great deal of pain before dying as planned out by the narrator.

It’s not only the depiction of death that sets these two accounts apart but the keenness to detail that the writer employs to develop the deaths of these two characters. The writer’s sentiments towards the two personalities from the two accounts are seen in how he articulates their ends. In the Cask of Amontillado, the narrator loathed the character. He felt that he had done him wrong, and as such, his death is torturous and slow to feed the desires of the narrator. In his description, he takes pride in the way he planned out the death of Fortunato; “You should have seen how wisely I proceeded – with what caution – with what foresight...” “Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in!”

For the account of the old man, the narrator had no malice towards him and demonstrated a sense of fondness towards the old man. He cannot bring himself to kill him for an entire week, and when he does, he makes sure that the death is fast and without sensationalized torture. His crooked eye, however, disgusted him and was the reason why the narrator suffocates him under the bed. The mental instability is depicted in the two accounts. The justification for murdering the two is entirely irrational. When featuring the theme of monstrosity in the two stories the erratic tendencies of the narrator show his inhumane nature. For an individual that seems to have shared a bond with, taking their life would be for a more substantial reason. The fast murder without the involvement of unnecessary pain does not compensate for the brutality employed when killing Fortunato in the other

account. The narrator is fueling his taste and needs to take life without sentimental considerations.

He takes his time to plan out the death of Fortunato by following him around and ambushing him when he is most vulnerable. For the old man, the narrator has conflicted feelings and observes the man through the night while engaging him in the daytime. The fact that in his moment of truth, he chooses to kill the old man anyway on the pretext of the expression in his eye points to his monstrous nature. In the Cask of Amontillado, he enjoys killing the given character and seals the basement with a concrete wall. In the Tell-Tale Heart, he also disposes of the remains of the old man in a way that no one will trace them. He has mastered his art and takes all the necessary considerations to cover his bases. In the two accounts, the antagonist carries the day with a special focus on bad, outdoing the notions of goodness, unlike the storyline of many literal accounts presented today.

“The Cask of Amontillado” and “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Poe try to depict the utility of love and hate in guiding the actions or consequences of relations between characters. Poe, unlike many writers, attempts to illustrate the complexity of the two sentiments. This is with respect to human psychology, as depicted in both of the accounts. The narrator portrays egomaniac tendencies with an exaggerated adulation towards himself that leads him to have deep seated hate for those he views to contradict his beliefs (Shen, 321). This is mainly the foundation for his gothic appeal to terror, deriving a sense of accomplishment in systematically planning and taking the lives of his victims. The writer of the two literal accounts does not create an imbalance between the two sentiments but uses them hand in hand to derive the twisted nature of his actions. For instance, the narrator at times professes love for himself and is balanced, but when he feels self-contempt, he vents out such emotions by taking them out on somebody. In The Tell-Tale Heart, he tries to alienate his conflicting emotions by eviscerating the part of the old man he likes from the repulsive eye he hates. This is after attesting how much love and affection he felt towards the old man.

The depictions of mental and emotional instability in mind behind the two accounts work to bring out the barbaric and crude demeanour of a murderer. The theme of monstrosity is adequately developed by the well-researched plot depicting human experience devoid of rationality and emotion.

Works Cited

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Shen, Dan. “Edgar Allan Poe’s Aesthetic Theory, the Insanity Debate, and the Ethically Oriented Dynamics of “The Tell-Tale Heart””. *NINETEEN CENT LIT* 63.3 (2008): 321-345.