The Cask Of Amontillado Through A Psychological Perspective

One could look at Edgar Allan Poe's many stories and see that they reflect some aspects of his personal life. When examining The Cask of Amontillado, the connections between Poe's life and Fortunato are seen through alcoholism, the fear of being buried alive, and his death. Alcoholism is defined as a very serious case of alcohol abuse, which one can observe when looking at Fortunato's character. Montresor gets him drunk to the point where he is unable to realize what is going on. "The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc." (Poe 6)

One could suggest that this may represent a part of Poe's life that he is not proud of. Some believe that he is addicted since he has numerous drunken sprees throughout his life. In the 18th and 19th centuries, many people had developed the fear of being buried alive (taphophobia). In the story, Montresor traps Fortunato in the catacombs where he is left to die. "I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in." (Poe 10)

The idea of being buried alive is what makes the story so frightening. Since this fear is very common, Poe uses it to make his stories more horrifying and intensify the fear of his readers, which is why it reoccurs in his other works. Events before his death, people have claimed to show up at a tavern in Baltimore. Although there is something odd about the situation: according to Dr. Joseph Snodgrass, he found Edgar Allen Poe wearing clothes that were not his and completely drunk. This is similar to when Montresor meets Fortunato, who at the time is drunk and dressed like a fool. "He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking… he had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head surmounted by the conical cap and bells." (Poe 3)

Seeing the similarities between these two situations, one may think that this could be a foreshadowing of his mysterious death. Alcoholism, the concept of being buried alive and references to Poe's death are things that can be observed in his short stories; which can be used when analyzing The Cask of Amontillado through a psychological perspective.

Works Cited

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