

The oval portrait

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Astrid Agerskov Pedersen - 3. b - Skive Gymnasium og HF! Engelsk A -
Aï→, evering 1 (iï→ction) - The Oval Portrait d. 6/9-2012 The Oval Portrait,
by Edgar Allan Poe The short story " The Oval Portrait" is written by Edgar
Allan Poe. It is a gothic novel because of particular elements of gothic
reference. It describes the two different passions of a married couple. The
husband requests that the wife let him paint her, and in obeying him she
loses her love. As the painting iï→nishes, both her health and spirits give up
slowly, but yet she continues to sit for him. It discusses the tension between
romance and art. It is a story about passion, life, art, death, romance and
murder. The setting and the plot are shrouded in mystery all the way
through, which help to establish the Gothic mood in which the story occurs.
The whole atmosphere of the story is iï→lled with mystery and suspense,
which surrounds the other gothic elements. The deserted castle is a classic
background for a Gothic story. It is described as an old castle with lots of
decorations, tapestries and strange architecture. Though abandoned, the
castle is still lavishly furnished and full of exquisite paintings. Edgar Allan Poe
set a very gloomy atmosphere with his use of speciï→c words in the story.
When describing places and moods in " The Oval Portrait" he uses the words
such as bizarre, sumptuously and arabesque. The use of these adjectives,
along with the detailed description of the decorations in the room and the
castle it self, set the tone and indicate to the reader that something powerful
is about to happen further along. Also the old book with the story about the
room and the painting is a kind of ancient prophecy which is a very normal
and strong element in a gothic story. The maiden in the painting is both " the
woman of distress" and " the woman threatened by a powerful, impulsive,

tyrannical male" in this gothic-story, because she suffers under the painter's love and passion for art, and is deeply threatened but also conquered by the painter. The story is told by a first person narrator that is homodiegetic. It is debatable whether the narrator is reliable or unreliable, but it is most likely an unreliable narrator. It is said in the text that the narrator is in a "desperately wounded condition" and in an "incipient delirium" which could hint that the narrator is unreliable and confused. The story is chronological and the event stretch out over several hours in the night. The narrator does not explain where or how he was wounded, which leaves us wondering though out the story. And as in the story "The Tell-Tale heart" by Edgar Allan Poe, there is no closure on what happens to Astrid Agerskov Pedersen - 3. b - Skive Gymnasium og HF! Engelsk A - Aften, evering 1 (fiction) - The Oval Portrait d. 6/9-2012 the narrator after the conclusion. This leaves a longing for more knowledge about both the painting and its' story but also the narrator. The portrait's subject is full of love and life when she marries the painter, but as the guide book says, "The tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sat beside him. "1 He has created a copy of his wife, but both cannot subsist without defeating the other. It is a given that the artist loves his wife, but he seems to have a deeper love for his art. In the short story the time when the subject of the painting and the artist wedded is described as evil. "He, passionate, studious, austere, and having already a bride in his Art; she a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee. " 2 The painter was already in love with his art before he met the maiden. Sadly, she fell in love with him anyways. The maiden is very beautiful, but her beauty fades away

during the making of the portrait. In the story, it is made clear that art is not simply an occupation of his, but more like an actual woman who rivals with the wife for the painter's attention. In the end, his passion increase and as the painting is nearly completed, the painting finally robs her of her life. " .. and crying with a loud voice, ' This is indeed Life itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved: - She was dead! "3 The story puts up a contrast between life and death, which shows clearly when the painter says the words " This is indeed Life itself", even though the subject of the painting sadly had passed in the progress. The painting is very life-like, which comes from the life-power of the now dead wife. The painting both makes her live forever and takes her life. This could be a metaphor of eternal love and maybe even eternal life. It is a story that takes up the themes eternity and mortality. The painter gets a combined piece of what he loves most in the world in the end - which is a combination of his love for his wife and his love for art and painting. In the story " The Oval Portrait" it is obvious that the gothic elements play a big role in especially the settings but also the plot in it self. It is a story that takes up the the differences and indifferences between life and death but also love and art. In the story, the 1 2 3 p. 2, bottom p. 2, middle p. 3, bottom 2 Astrid Agerskov Pedersen - 3. b - Skive Gymnasium og HF! Engelsk A - Aiv, evering 1 (i-ction) - The Oval Portrait d. 6/9-2012 painting is a symbol of the mortality of love and immortality of art. " The Oval Portrait" is a clear example of how gothic elements and a gothic setting can set the mood of an entire story. 3