

The black cat by e. poe

Linguistics, English



Like the characters of his gloomy novels, Edgar Allan Poe lived a life, which could not be called happy. He suffered from chronic poverty, as his living only depended upon the pen. Moreover, his eleven-year-old marriage ended unexpectedly, because of his wife's early death at age of 24. After her death, the world became gloomy for him. A friend said about him, " the loss of his wife was a sad blow to him. He did not seem to care, after she was gone, whether he lived an hour, a day, a week or a year; she was his all." Poe described Virginia Clemm Poe as a wife whom he loved as no man ever loved before. Virginia served as a pattern and embodiment of love in Poe's several novels such as Annabel Lee, The Raven, and Ligeia. Poes one-time employer George Rex Graham said about their relationship: " His love for his wife was a sort of rapturous worship of the spirit of beauty." I believe that his devotional love is inherent in a good marriage. After her death, he tried to have a comfortable life with a poet, Sarah Helen Whitman. However, their relationship ended, because of Poe's serious alcoholism. Such behavior was a result of the sorrow he felt after Virginia's death.

Edgar Allan Poe was one of the representatives of Gothic literature. Gothic art was predominant in the Romantic era, thus Poe's writings were affected by Romanticism. Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that praised imagination over reason, emotions over logic, and intuition over science-making way. It rejected the rational and intellectual, and Allan Poe emphasized that didactic and intellectual elements were absent in his work.

The Black Cat is an example of Gothic literature work. The black cat's time and setting is obscure and vague, and it creates an uncanny atmosphere.

The beginning of this story is ordinary and friendly, and narrator's childhood sounds loving. However, happy introduction foreshadows the horrendous ending in Gothic literature. Moreover, there are many Gothic images in the novel. For example, cat's figure imprinted on the wall brings grotesque illusion. Disturbing vision of cat to the protagonist is a kind of foreshadowing of coming event. He tries to ignore superstition and offer a reasonable and scientific explanation. As the narrator's extreme hatred and rage to the cat cannot be explained logically, I suppose that cat is a supernatural object, and symbolizes his tortured conscience.

Humanity's fear and fascination is unknown in Gothic literature. Narrator in The Black Cat commits acts of savagery for no reason. Notwithstanding that he suffered from alcoholism, it was not the only reason of his mental abnormality. He is not capable to make reasonable judgments, as his emotions such as rage, wrath, abhorrence and antipathy captured him. A series of violent acts led to the destruction of his own personality. At the end of his life he could not be considered a rational human being any more.