

Poe's the cask of amontillado



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The Cask of Amontillado: A Literary Review 7 February 2007 Thesis: " The Cask of Amontillado" is an ultimate tale of revenge which explores how pride can overwhelm a person causing him to pervasively obtain the revenge he believes he and his family is worthy of as well as how pride can become the ultimate instrument for a person's death.

Poe's " The Cask of Amontillado" is recognized as one of his most well-known literary contributions because of its intricate and complicated plot of murder. The story relates Montresor's clever plan of murdering his unsuspecting victim Fortunato as his reasonable revenge for the insults he received. " The Cask of Amontillado" is an ultimate tale of revenge which explores how pride can overwhelm a person causing him to pervasively obtain the revenge he believes he and his family is worthy of as well as how pride can become the ultimate instrument for a person's death. Through his artistic skill of combining various literary techniques, Poe portrays why a person overwhelmed with pride is in a grave danger. It should be noted that pride solely controlled the actions of the main characters, Montresor and Fortunato.

The pride of Montresor has become his main motivation in plotting his horrific revenge. The opening statement of the story justifies this: " The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge." Even though the story fails to clearly identify how Montresor was insulted by Fortunato, it becomes apparent that the former regards himself very highly enough for his pride to be severely hurt and stung because of this. This pride motivated him not only to punish but " punish with impunity." Thus, Montresor states, that he should not " fail to make himself felt to him as such to him who has done him wrong." The

murderer is overwhelmed by his self-righteousness, justifying even a horrible crime like murder.

Montresor's murder of Fortunato can also be interpreted as his quest of redeeming the pride of his great family. He believes that the insult he has received from Fortunato is defamation not just to him to his whole family. Thus, he intended to live up to the Montresor family's motto of "Nemo mi impune lacessit" which can be translated as "No one insults me without paying dearly" even if this means killing the person who hurt him. The image in the arm of Montresor, "a huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent whose fangs are imbedded in the heel" further emphasizes his pride and intolerance losing face.

The unsuspecting victim, Fortunato, is just as overtaken with pride as his murderer since he is ready to put his life at stake just to prove his skill in wine tasting. In the story, Fortunato is highly admired and respected because of his "connoisseurship in wine." Thus, he is quite offended when Montresor said that he would approach Luchresi instead. Whatever it may cost, Fortunato is determined to uphold his pride and dignity of being a "true virtuoso in spirit." Because of this pride, he is tricked into going to Montresor's palazzo. It is also this pride which blinds him to his obviously perilous situation. Fortunato ignores his deep coughs and never even bothers to ask the rationale of the Amontillado being placed in the family's tomb. Like Montresor, he is overcome with the pride of proving himself.

"The Cask of Amontillado" is a portrayal of how pride ruins an individual. In the case of Montresor, his pride robs him the capacity to forgive a friend who has wronged him. Instead, this pride becomes the sole motivation for his revenge and even the justification for his crime. On the other hand, it is also

Fortunato's pride which lured him to death.

Works Cited

Edgar Allan Poe. " The Cask of Amontillado." 1846. February 7, 2007