

Edgar allan poe: narrative structure in "ligeia"



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Known for his fluxing descriptive and Gothic manner. Edgar Allan Poe does not look to develop any obvious narrative construction in his work. His short narratives are by and large identified with the gloomy, desolate, and horrifically flooring esthesiss they spark within the reader. Particularly in his short narrative, "Ligeia." Poe seems to hold done off with any kind of evident construction within the narrative. Rather, he portrays it as a mixture of slightly chronological events combined with the rolling ideas from the bizarre head of the storyteller. However, narrative construction lies beyond the simple plot line of secret plan and can be revealed within many other elements of a narrative. In "Ligeia." the elements of subject and repeat play an of import function in developing and keeping its narrative construction.

In peculiar, Poe seems to emphasize one interestingly perennial quotation mark, as it appears four times throughout the narrative. "Man doth not give him to the angels, nor unto decease absolutely, salvage merely through the failing of his lame will" (1. 1. 4. 7). From the continual accent of this citation, there arises a principle impression of a tenseness between the prevailing subjects of life and decease. Furthermore, this impression constitutes the anchor of the narrative from which all other recognizable subjects later branch from. The subjects of decease, guilt, life, and opium – the factor that inquiries the cogency of all – provide recognizable markers to the overruling subject of the tenseness between life and decease within "Ligeia."

The permeating subject of decease fills Poe's authorship and creates an omnipresent ambiance of dark apprehensiveness. The motion of the text endlessly alludes to the approaching decease of Ligeia. All the familiar

features of her individual (her wildly beaming eyes. her involvement in the narrator's studies...) bit by bit fade away in Poe's description of her unwellness. " And now those eyes shone less and less often upon the pages over which I pored. Ligeia grew ill" (5) . The decease of Ligeia renders her hubby wholly incapacitated and continually hankering for her. " Without Ligeia I was but as a kid fumbling benighted" (5) . This bootless desperation and wretchedness therefore sets the tone of indecision for the remainder of the narrative.

Furthermore. it besides adds to the construction of the narrative by confirming the life and decease tenseness. By juxtaposing this feeling of continual longing with the daze and sarcasm of the necromancing of Ligeia. the surprise stoping of the narrative is farther emphasized. This motive of illness and decease once more reappears as the Lady Rowena falls deathly sick. Typical of his cheerless manner. Poe creates a more awful and incurable illness for the 2nd married woman. " Her unwellnesss were [...] of dismaying character. and of more alarming return. withstanding alike the cognition and the great efforts of her physicians" (9) . Continuing to stress the horror and angst of decease. Poe describes the cadaver of Lady Rowena vividly.

[...] The lips became double shriveled and pinched up in the grim look of decease ; a abhorrent dankness and coldness overspread quickly the surface of the organic structure ; and all the usual strict stiffness instantly supervened. (11)

This slow anti-climactic decease continues to the keep hopes of the storyteller and the reader fluctuating. keeping the feeling of unresolve. The anxiousness exhibited within the indecision of decease therefore supports the structural subject of the tenseness between life and decease.

A more subtly conveyed subject. guilt. continues this tendency of malaise. This self-blame originates from the narrator's subconscious green-eyed monster of Ligeia's rational high quality. She maintains the leading in their matrimony. The storyteller evidently adores her and is highly cognizant of her rational strength over him. Proclaiming that she maintains unquestionable domination of cognition. the storyteller accidentally develops this green-eyed monster. " [...] The [rational] acquisitions of Ligeia were mammoth. were astounding" (4) . He seems to hide a little bitterness of her scholarly laterality. This becomes noticeable as he states that he renders himself a kid in comparing to her authorization. " [...] I was sufficiently cognizant of her infinite domination to vacate myself. with a child-like assurance. to her counsel [...] " (4) .

With a certain resentment. he subsequently repeats. " Have I of all time found Ligeia at mistake? " (4) It can even be implied that after the storyteller reaches the bounds of her cognition. he about wills her decease. Being so caught up with larning universes of information through her counsel. he is improbably defeated when he discovers a boundary to this freely give wisdom. From these implied feelings of green-eyed monster and letdown. he intelligibly feels unbelievable guilt and compunction after her decease. This could be one of the grounds he obsesses over her decease.

Because of these fortunes. the ensuing unsettled ambiance of tenseness reinforces the tenseness of Ligeia's decease.

Challenging the despondence of decease. the unmeasurable will of life finally overcomes decease. therefore interrupting the tenseness between the two. Ligeia provides the beginning for this will. Her battle with decease portrays her strength of character most efficaciously. The storyteller continually emphasizes her spirit with repeat of words. " Words are impotent to convey any merely thought of the ferocity of opposition with which she wrestled with the Shadow. [...] In the strength of her wild desire for life -for life —but for life [bold mine] - consolation and ground were likewise the extreme folly" (5) . As Ligeia repeats her celebrated quotation mark (" Man doth non give him to the angels. nor unto decease absolutely. salvage merely through the failing of his lame will" (7)) twice before deceasing. her resolute finding non to give herself to decease proves undeniable. Her repeat of this quotation mark could be thought to mean that she can merely decease if she resigns herself to be weak and lame - that she will return to life because her will to populate surpasses decease itself. It could besides be thought of as Ligeia's last petition to her hubby - stating him that if his will is strong plenty. he can convey her dorsum to life. Whether or non the storyteller understands what she says. he acts consequently.

Never does he bury Ligeia or halt thought of her. Feeling that he needs to make full the nothingness that Ligeia left. he rapidly marries the following available adult female. Lady Rowena. While comparing Ligeia to his 2nd married woman. nevertheless. he becomes farther embittered and his will for Ligeia to return to life becomes more overzealous. He admits of Rowena. " I

loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to adult male. My memory flew back [...] to Ligeia. the beloved the August. the beautiful. the entombed" (9) . At times. Ligeia's desire for life combines with his longing for her and the prognostication about becomes existent. " Now. so. did my spirit to the full and freely fire with more than all the fires of her ain. [...] as if [...] I could reconstruct her to the tract she had abandoned [...] upon the earth" (9) . Immediately after this line is mentioned. Lady Rowena becomes ill with a " sudden unwellness. " The storyteller. possibly unconsciously. seems to be tampering with the connexion between life and decease.

During Rowena's many fluctuations between life and decease. it becomes obvious that the narrator's ideas are commanding the province of his current married woman. As he concentrates on go toing her and watching her closely. she falls back into decease. As he reminisces about Ligeia. nevertheless. the cadaver becomes alive once more. One may surmise that Rowena has died yearss ago and the gleam that is Ligeia returns merely when the storyteller wills it. Ligeia's concluding transmutation into the life ends the novel with a knock. After all the narrator's plaint and longing for Ligeia to populate once more. his reaction is one more of horror than of felicity as he " shrieked aloud" (13) after his find. Possibly because of his guilty scruples. the storyteller responds with fright of her instead than love and he is eventually forced to come face to face with his guilt. Consequently. this will to suppress decease confronts the tensenesss between life and decease caput on and therefore shattering them.

The concluding major subject pervading the secret plan. opium usage. inquiries the cogency of the narrator's histories such as resuscitating the

dead. Not so elusive intimations to the narrator's opium usage fill the narrative. He admits legion times to holding used the drug and that it affects his head. After enduring the hurting and loss of losing his love. the storyteller resorts to opium to film over the crisp world of this anguish. " I had become a bounden slave in the trammels of opium. and my labours and my orders had taken a colouring from my dreams" (7) . Furthermore. when he describes seeing the shade of Ligeia and the beads of ruddy fluid in the vino. he inquiries his province of head several times. " But I was wild with the exhilaration of an immoderate does of opium [...] I considered [...] [the circumstance to] have been but the suggestion of a graphic imaginativeness. rendered morbidly active by the panic of the lady. by the opium [italics mine] . and by the hour" (10) .

Before his vision of the life Ligeia. there are at least three specific mentions to the storyteller holding used opium the page earlier. Consequently. his history is decidedly questionable. In add-on. the histories the cryptic " noises" and " visions" of Rowena can besides be questioned as it was common to give opium to those enduring from Tuberculosis (which is what was Rowena was hypothesized to hold) . The narrator's opium usage could be portion of the beginning of tenseness so prevailing in this narrative. Because of his changeless dream-like province. it is likely he creates tensenesss that are non at that place such as believing he can command the province of Ligeia (doing her decease. willing her dorsum to life...etc.) . Of class. it is besides possible that Ligeia ne'er did return to life and he had fallen into another opium dream. The legion opium mentions diffused

throughout “Ligeia” escalate the narrative construction by adding the component of uncertainty to the narrator’s history.

These major elements from “Ligeia.” death. guilt. life. and opium usage. straight reinforce the chief structural component keeping the narrative together. the life vs. death tenseness. All four complement each other every bit good – for without one. the other 1s would not be complete. Without the permeating subject of death. the will to get the better of death would not be as flooring. Without the recognition of the opium use. the narrative might be taken literally and merely pinned down as a phantasmagoric phantasy. With the cognition that the narrative is told through the brumous head covering of opium. nevertheless. the possibility exists that there exists no supernatural elements at all and merely a storyteller in a moony state-of-mind. Therefore. although “Ligeia” apparently lacks construction ab initio. its construction subsists within the interweaving of these four prevailing subjects.