

# The cask of amontillado essay sample

Literature



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Through the chosen texts a greater understanding of the crime fiction genre has been achieved. The four authors are all writing in different time periods which is reflected in the content of their respective text. Although, the four texts are all a part of the crime fiction genre, each has different qualities making the genre seem very broad. The genre has been through an evolution since its beginnings in which the conventions of the genre have changed to reflect the social values at the time.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's writing is a reflection of the social attitudes and values of time he lived. It is a product of an English environment in the Industrial Revolution and his work often had a capacity to focus on Science and technology. The case of the Lady Sannox was published in 1894, in England. The story is about a famed surgeon Douglas Stone who is having an affair with Lady Sannox. One night a mysterious Turk asks him to attend his wife, who has cut her lip on a poisoned dagger. The Turk insists that amputation offers the only hope of recovery. Anxious to pocket the proffered gold, and impatient to get to his mistress, Stone dismisses his professional misgivings. He excises the lower lip of the veiled, drugged woman-only to find that he was tricked into disfiguring Lady Sannox herself. Lord Sannox (disguised as the "Turk") thus gains his revenge with his wife morally chastised and Stone's career meaningless.

The story tells us of social values of the time. It has an examination of gender, sexuality, and body image issues. The amputation of the lip functions as a surrogate castration. "If the poison be on the finger, take the finger off," explains the Turk; and Stone's use of a specialized scalpel suggests a castration. Social notions of femininity drive the assumption that

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a fitting punishment for an adulterous woman would be to destroy her beauty and sexuality. “ The mouth will not be a pleasant one to kiss (after amputation), “ comments Lord Sannox as the Turk. “ Taken the veil, and that the world would see her no more”, underscores cultural assumptions that people with non-normative bodies should hide them. The social attitudes and values are reflected through this early crime fiction, which was a product of the industrial revolution.

Edgar Allan Poe was an American author continuing on the English tradition of crime fiction. Poe published his first piece in 1827. This text is very imaginary and it is hard to draw the line between horror and crime fiction. Poe was brought up in an orphanage in which he had an awful time, perhaps his work is a reflection of how he felt as a child. The story is about a seemingly maddened narrator (Montresor) who wreaks revenge on his “ friend” Fortunato for an undisclosed reason. Montresor ties Fortunato to a wall when with bricks builds a wall around him, leaving him there to die. The text is a carefully crafted story so that every detail contributes to “ a certain unique or single effect.” Irony, both dramatic and verbal, plays an important role in this process. Dramatic irony occurs when the reader becomes painfully aware of what will become of Fortunato even though the character continues his descent into the catacombs in pursuit of the Amontillado.

Agatha Christie established what is today known as “ golden age” crime fiction. Her work consisted of a very one dimensional plot, with the characters having very little physiological depth. A typical Agatha Christie novel is set in the upper class in closed, defined setting. Murder on the Orient Express is set in 1935, when the train (The Orient) is stopped by deep

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snow, detective Hercule Poirot is called on to solve a murder that occurred in his car the night before. The murder is solved with the result that all the passengers conspired together to kill him. Poirot however lets the characters off showing that he does not always obey the law, but always abides his conscience and his sense of moral law.

Through the duration of the movie there is no real physiological search into any of the characters, and we only really know them from the outside. The plot is very much based on one thing, that being whodunit. The passengers are all wealthy, being it an expensive train. The viewer is given countless confusing red herrings that are so confusing, it is nearly impossible to guess who has committed the crime. In the end there is only one possible result with all the passenger being blamed. Unlike other forms of crime fiction there is no blood, gore, sex, and other things they may have been insulting to the public at the time. If there were any mature events, they were only alluded to and not shown on screen. This reflects the social attitudes and values of the time when Christie wrote. All these conventions are typical of the "golden age" crime fiction genre. This is a reflection of the conservative social attitudes and values of the time.

The "Hardboiled" genre as it has come to be known over the years is a very different sought of crime fiction in comparison to the "Golden Age" crime fiction. "Hardboiled" writing began approximately in the 1930's and was much affected by the social attitudes and values of the time which was that of the great depression. Instead of the hidden violence of our typical Agatha Christie, "Hardboiled" brought in much sex and violence. This is obvious in Raymond Chandlers novel Playback. In playback we see the return of <https://assignbuster.com/the-cask-of-amontillado-essay-sample/>

Chandler's super sleuth Marlowe. Marlowe is hired by an influential lawyer he's never heard of to tail a gorgeous redhead, but decides he prefers to help out the redhead. She's been acquitted of her alcoholic husband's murder, but her father-in-law prefers not to take the court's word for it. Almost 40% of the book is committed to relationships and it is obvious the conservative nature of "Golden Age" is far from it. Instead of being set in a quiet cut of environment, it is in the streets of the US. There is no set detective searching for who has committed a crime but rather trying to prosecute the wrong doer. The genre reflects the social attitudes and values of the great depression and is distant from the conservative "Golden Age".

Through the chosen texts a greater understanding of the crime fiction genre has been achieved. The four authors are all writing in different time periods which is reflected in the content of their respective text. The genre has been through an evolution since its beginnings in which the conventions of the genre have changed to reflect the social values at the time. The social attitudes and values have extended from the Industrial revolution to a conservative England to a period after the great depression in the US.