

Who is edgar allan poe english literature essay

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Erika FlusinDraft: Planning: Context

To Explore how Stephen King has been Influenced by Edgar Allan Poe

Introduction

Who is Edgar Allan Poe? Who is Stephen King? Edgar Allan Poe was an American author, poet, editor and literary critic. He was born in 1809, and died in 1849 at the young age of 40. He wrote some of his greatest works in his 30's. He has been known as "one of the founders of modern horror writing". Stephen King is also an American author, born in 1947; practically a century after Edgar Allan Poe died, and is one of the most well-known horror writers of the present time period. How are they related? The connection / research question. Both have obsessions with the morbid and macabre of death, as well as being alcoholics and suffering from addictions that affected their writing. Edgar Allan Poe has been labeled as "a model for all time" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and so will begin the analysis to see how influenced the now famous modern day horror writer has been influenced by him.

1st Paragraph – Naming the choices of the books for each Author

Out of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories, I chose to analyze The Oval Portrait, The Pit and the Pendulum, and Tell-Tale Heart because they are some of his strongest pieces of work that clearly display the characteristics of his writing, as well as a personal preference to this specific literature.

As for Stephen King, I chose The Shining as a book to study because it was one of his earliest books, and so has a greater chance of showing more

influence from Edgar Poe's writing rather than his later works, where he will have sturdily developed his own style and characteristics, having proceeded from his influences. 2nd Paragraph – Introduction of stories... or "lack of". At the start of Edgar Allan Poe's stories, a feature that is prominent is how he does not introduce either plot or character at the beginning. As if the story was taken as an extract from a greater novel, he begins writing straight during action. For example, in *The Pit and the Pendulum*, the beginning sentence is: "I was sick- sick unto death with that long agony; and when they at length unbound me, and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were leaving me." At no point is the reader introduced to either the setting or the character to allow them to understand the premises for the tale. Another example is in *Tell-Tale Heart*, as the first sentence is: "True! – nervous – very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad?" Once again, no introduction to either character or setting in which they are placed – however as it is first person narrative, their personalities are discovered quite early on. In King's *The Shining*, there is a certain similarity to this aspect. The introductory line is "Jack Torrance thought: *Officious little prick.*" Although this does provide a name for a character, it still in no way describes the setting in which the story is taking place. Action is already occurring, and the reader is only just catching up to the situation. This characteristic causes the reader to have a near state of confusion when first reading, and forces them to pay close attention to the writing from intrigue to comprehend the behavior of the character. In consequence to this focus, the readers will then be grabbed by any increase in tension, as they will spot even the smallest details that are made to add to

the theatrics. 3rd Paragraph – Tension and Climax In Poe's work, it is always clear to see that the climax occurs at the end of his tales. He deliberately creates an atmosphere of tension and stress from the very beginning, and keeps it at a gradual incline until it suddenly peaks close to the end of the tale. For example, in *The Pit and the Pendulum*, the climax is when the character realizes that he has not been saved, and that all four walls are enclosing on him, with no way to escape but the pit. By now, the reader is almost anticipating the characters' death – not willing to bear with his pain any longer, until "An outstretched arm caught my own as I fell, fainting, into the abyss." Stephen King's writing in *The Shining* is similar to this. The tension is, however, smooth at the start of the novel, but greatly accelerates and amplifies towards the end. Finally, there is effectively a high peak – when Doc finally confronts the monster that has morphed himself as his father, and recalls that the boiler has not been dumped for the day. [Use quote. Talk about the use of capital words and excessive exclamation marks to mark the importance // impact.] Once that great realization has been made – that shocks the readers with an unexpected relief, it is then followed by a short, simple anti-climax. This is to keep the audience from lulling into safety, and close the book with a feeling of calmness. King wants the audience (as Poe effectively does) to put the book down still shaken from the turn of events. This manipulation of the tension and position of the climax generally causes the readers to believe that the tale will end in a certain way (generally a tragedy), as there is not enough space in the pages left for a possible happy ending – or an anticlimax. This causes the climax to have an even greater effect on the reader, as well as the actual ending to have a

greater impact and very sudden anticlimax. This tends to be what leaves such a great impression on the readers after they are done. 4th Paragraph – Mood set by authors In Poe's tales the mood is always set to be dark, mysterious, and very heavy psychologically. His use of adjectives is so rich that they almost become heavy, and darken the setting. For example, in The Oval Portrait, in the mere first paragraph a sense of darkness and despair has already settled on the readers, as Poe describes the setting with adjectives such as "forcible entrance", "desperately wounded", "commingled gloom", "my incipient delirium". He uses many negative adjectives that contain harsh 'g' or 'd' consonants, and resound callously in the readers' mind. Stephen King creates the same mood, however he does this by using the setting and characters to create it, such as establishing the problems between the family members, as well as Doc's 'imaginary friend' that comes to visit him in times of trouble. He explores this mood through the actual emotions of his characters, rather than the setting – however, the moods are still quite similar. It is a heavy, concentrated tension that comes from within the reader. 5th Paragraph – Theme of illusions / hallucinations In both Stephen King and Poe's work, the theme of illusions is extremely prominent and reoccurring throughout the tales and novel. I believe [have to reword / remove this. I can't say "I believe] Poe and King are both fascinated by this aspect in life due to their addictions and alcoholism. King could have related to Poe's work and depth into the realm of hallucinations due to his own experiences, which influenced him and encouraged him to delve into this realm himself. Both authors are constantly referring and describing settings and events with 'dreamy' adjectives to emphasize the illusionist

quality of the text. For example using diction such as " perception", " vision", " deceived", " dreamy stupor", as well as (for Stephen King) directly referring to a supernatural being, Tony. [Also must talk about actually making the characters have dreams and hallucinations – such as the hallucinations that Jack begins to have when the ' hotel' begins to ' affect' him and he ' needs a drink'.] Both authors use much personification and metaphors in order to increase this effect, as then inanimate objects are coming to life in the readers mind and in the world they are being set in, heightening the feeling of being in a twisted, dark yet fascinating dream, where " tall candles sank into nothingness" [The Oval Painting], " The odor... forced itself into my nostrils" [The Pit and the Pendulum], [King Quote].[Find more references/ examples to talk about illusions / show the illusions etc. LITERARY

TECHNIQUES]6th Paragraph – Theme of light / theatricsJust as both authors seem obsessed with the theme of illusions, both take an enormous amount of effort to play upon the theatrics that light brings to the texts. In Poe's tale The Oval Portrait, the use of light emphasizes not only the idea of discovery, but also causes a dramatic tension and mood, for example " rays of numerous candles (for which there were many) now fell within a niche of the room". This manipulation of light causes the reader to visualize where the light falls upon, and anticipate what it will uncover – just as done in theater and cinematic effects. However, his manipulation of light causes a completely different feeling in The Pit and the Pendulum, as the lack of light makes the reader feel " encompassed" by the " blackness of eternal night" and search for the light, which, when it is found, the " faint gleam of light flashed" and creates tricks along the mutilated walls causing ghastly illusions

and horrors. Finally, the reader fears both the darkness as well as the light, as they have become unsure whether or not they truly want to see what the darkness has to hide, and the light to uncover. [Find examples for Stephen King, and also for Poe's final tale]

7th Paragraph – Foreshadowing, deliberate fooling [REDRUM] [BOILER] [PIT] [BEAT]

The use of foreshadowing is extremely important in all texts written by the two authors, as they create both anticipation and tension while also increasing the shock revealed in the moments during and after the climax when secrets are revealed. In *The Shining*, the character of Doc embodies foreshadowing. For example, when Tony first declares "REDRUM" as dangerous, the reader immediately jumps to the idea of being warned of "Red Rum", as Jack is known as a former alcoholic. This foreshadowing is repeated, and, becomes a motif, as it becomes more frantic until Doc finally discovers its true meaning – "MURDER", which is both a huge revelation to the character and the readers, who are then filled with panic as time is running out. [Give proper setting, explanation etc]. This was a deliberate fool from the author to make the reader have differing expectations from what the end of the book would really be. Another example is the foreshadow of Jack's drinking, as well as the issue with keeping the boiler dumped to prevent an explosion. Jack even makes a direct reference to the idea of him being found, his hand on the dumper in attempt of dumping it – but it being too late. It is a horrid idea that the readers believe to have escaped and left behind once he does dump it and leaves, however in the end of the novel, the monster, which has taken Jack's body as a host, puts him in practically the same position that Jack had made illusion to. In Poe's work, he has used the same 'fooling foreshadow',

which could have influenced King to doing the same. For example, in *The Pit and the Pendulum*, when the character escaped from the "jaws" of the "yawning (ed) ...circular pit" it gives the audience the impression that the Pit is no longer a danger – that it is a battle that has been won, and will no longer instill fear into them. However, they are proved wrong, with just as much agony and deceit as the character himself felt, as at the end he is once again pushed back into the Pit by the enclosure of the walls.[use more examples...more more more]

8th Paragraph – Differing aspects [adjectives vs. simplicity + modern] Finally, Stephen King has an impressive amount of similarities with Edgar Allan Poe's writing, but it is important to state that even with all these similarities their writing is distinctly different. Edgar Allan Poe uses an excessive amount of language to portray the visual scenes and images, whilst Stephen King comes from a more modern stand point where 'less is more', so his language is much more simplistic and can, at moments, have greater impact than Edgar Allan Poe. Stephen King's use of English has become more modern, and so the words used are far more crass and simplistic, [however portraying more effectively realistic reactions of day-to-day people], compared to the elegant language used by Edgar Allan Poe. Another difference is that Edgar Allan Poe is more concerned with the plot itself rather than revolving the tale around the character, whilst Stephen King is much more 'character driven', being sure to express the characters thoughts, dreams, feelings and emotions rather than the plot and scenery itself. Conclusion. [Need more literary techniques and direct references]

[Need to include: Direct reference from King to Poe... juxtaposition,

oxymorons etc... illusions]~Conclusion is to do once the rest is done, along with introduction~