

Good example of edgar allan poe research paper

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This paper is aimed to give a brief outline of Edgar Poe's life and a short analysis of one of his famous poems ' Annabel Lee' to trace the main peculiarities of the author's style.

Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most prominent figures in the American romantic literature of the second half of the 19th century. Apart from being a critic, an editor and a poet, he is considered to be a founder of the short story in its modern form. Edgar Poe came from the family of professional actors, who died three years after the poet's birth, and he was raised by a rich merchant's family. Poe gained an excellent education, in the boarding school, however, later being a student of the Virginia University, he was expelled because of refusing to pay out his gambling debts. Allan's, his foster father's reaction was far from positive, their relationships soon dwindled to nothing and in 1827 Poe was recruited to the US Army. The same year was highlighted by publishing of the poet's first collection of poems ' Tamerlane' which received no significant attention. The next collection was destined to experience the same outcome (Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site). Advancing the career ladder, Edgar Poe entered the US Military Academy but soon left it for lack of money. Failures in career and unstable financial situation made him move into his aunt's Maria Clemm house in Baltimore. His writer's experience was developed and in 1835 he both started to publish his short stories and became an editor in the Richmond's magazine. A year later, Poe married a thirteen year-old cousin Virginia. The next decade shaped him as a writer, poet and editor - during this time Edgar created his most prominent works. The 1847 was darkened by his young wife's death and deterioration of Poe's troubles with alcoholism

and depression. Two years later Edgar Poe died under mysterious circumstances in Baltimore (Sova).

‘ The Gold Bug’ – a story which is going to be analyzed in respect of main themes, characters, stylistic devices, the title and historical context it was written in. ‘ The Gold Bug’ by Edgar Allan Poe was first published in 1843 in ‘ Philadelphia Dollar Newspaper’. The story focuses on the immense power of logics which helps to unscramble a code made of symbols, punctuation marks and numbers (The Gold Bug Site).

‘ The Gold Bug’ is considered to be an example of an early American detective story, though it does not seem to be from the first sight. A hut on the coast, treasures, cryptograms, skulls and golden bug push the reader to be misled by the mysterious atmosphere. However, Legrand’s story about how he had solved the riddle and found a treasure, resembles a denouement in any detective story, when the reader learns about by whom and how a crime has been committed. Poe creates a story behind an intricate plot of which lies the topic of the restoration of lost status and fortune. Legrand, once having been a wealthy man, manages to gain not only material fortune, but his mere self. The process of restoration is not a heavenly gift but rather a long process involving persistence, logical thinking, self-interest and cleverness. However, if to look deeper, the reader notices that most of the character’s findings and reveals have happened due to lucky coincidences. In other words, on the one hand, a position gained back is the result of hard mental work and on the other hand, is the result of on-time happenstances. If it were not for a dog, who jumped on the physician’s lap, making the piece of parchment with secret code heat, if it were not for Jupiter who used the

treasure map to protect himself from being beaten by the bug, if it were not for the sketch of scarabeus, Legrand would never have reached his fortune: ‘ This bug is to make my fortune, ‘ he continued, with a triumphant smile, ‘ to reinstate me in my family possessions. Is it any wonder, then, that I prize it? Since Fortune has thought fit to bestow it upon me, I have only to use it properly and I shall arrive at the goal of which it is the index’ (Poe). Thus, a happy coincidence together with the ability to discern it and make the most of it using knowledge and mental power is the key to success.

The story is evolved around three characters: William Legrand, the narrator, whose name is not given and Jupiter, a former slave devoted to Legrand. William Legrand is the central character who lives on the Sullivan’s Island together with Jupiter – a once freed slave. Legrand lost his fortune and escaped to the desolate place to avoid embarrassing position he found himself into. The thing is that this character resembles the author Edgar Poe in many ways combining extreme intelligence with changeable mood. The physician describes him in the following way: ‘ I found him well educated, with unusual powers of mind, but infected with misanthropy, and subject to perverse moods of alternate enthusiasm and melancholy’ (Poe). He relies on logic and scientific investigations, but no human emotions are alien to him at the same time. Jupiter is another major character and through his portrait mostly, the reader can make out that Legrand is a kind person hidden under the mask of moody and reserved man. In fact, Jupiter might have chosen to abandon Legrand after liberation, but preferred to stay with his former master. His childish, a bit silly but sincere nature dilutes Legrand’s changeability: ‘ Is de lef’ eye ob de skull 'pon de same side as de lef’ hand ob

de skull too?—cause de skull aint got not a bit ob a hand at all—nebber mind! I got de lef' eye now—here de lef' eye! what mus' do wid it' (Poe).

Finally, the unnamed narrator about who nothing is known, apart from his occupation and place of living. Poe gave the opportunity to observe Legrand from aside, trying to make an objective description of the protagonist.

However, the physician judges by appearance, thinking that his friend is mentally ill. The narrator is the example of true friend who will come to rescue or help no matter how insane his friend's idea will be.

There are three main peculiarities that make this story unique. Apart from the fact mentioned above, that 'Gold Bug' is referred to as a detective story, it is necessary to point out a cryptogram as an essential part on which the plot is built. In fact, deciphering the code is the only action the character's mind is centered on (Silverman). What is more, Poe uses pun – play with the words to create a twofold sense. The word 'Fortune' means money, on the one hand, and a lucky chance, on the other, making the reader to contemplate on the role of Providence in the story. In addition, Poe's story is autobiographical in many ways: the author uses realia, Fort Moultrie, for example, where he had spent a year after having been enlisted in the army; passion for cryptography which was his hobby; finally, the parallels with his own character and life.

The title should give the first impression and guesses about what the story will be about. In this case the golden bug has almost nothing to deal with the theme and developing of the plot. However, even the title reveals ambiguity of the tale (Silverman). At the beginning bug is a piece of scientific interest, an unknown thing to study, however, as the story proceeds the bug becomes

a key part. If it was not for the bug lying on the coast, Jupiter would never have found a parchment with the secret code. The title poses a question: was the bug a mere lucky chance or a turning point of the story?

Edgar Poe wrote 'The Gold Bug' seventeen years before the Civil War for rights of the Black people broke out (American Civil War). Despite the author does not dwell on the topic of slavery, several moments help to distinguish a tense transition period. First, the action takes place near one of the slave-owning states South Carolina and one of its cities Charleston is mentioned. Second, Poe gives Jupiter freedom but leaves him with the former owner. Third, in spite of Jupiter is treated as equal, his lower social status is shown through illiteracy. Thus, the plot is based on treasure-hunting and restoration, but Poe does not avoid to indirectly mention an acute social problem.

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