

Edgar allan poe's the cask of amontillado: a analysis and comparison on the movie...

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Poe: Written vs. Film Cold-Write

The Cask of Amontillado is a story written by Edgar Allan Poe, about a man who has been wronged by one he once called friend and the steps he takes to get his revenge. Montressor, the narrator eventually ends up burying Fortunato alive, entombing him behind a wall of rock that Montressor had built to cover the opening of a small alcove that he had tricked the extremely drunk Fortunato into before chaining him to the wall and beginning work on the wall. I believe that this story was written to have the readers question how far exactly we all will go to get done what we think is right as well as show us the morbidly creative things our brains can do if we used them for such. Poe's language, along with the video you can almost see in your head allows this story to be transformed to a chilling display of ourselves and the things we try to accomplish when dark falls and we think that no one can see us. So, naturally some people would attempt to make a movie out of this, to show this story to more people who have not experienced it yet. A movie has been made for The Cask of Amontillado, actually several were made I think. In the below paragraphs, I will explain what I think are the differences between that versions and then the similarities which I will follow with explaining the effectiveness of the filmmaker as he set off to transfer the classic Poe story to screen.

Many differences can be found when one looks at the writing and then turns to the movie of Cask of Amontillado. One that I found was as Fortunato is leading the way into Montressor's vaults, they discuss the Montressor family crest. It is described as being " the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose

fangs are imbedded in the heel". This is not described in the text. Actually, in the text, the reader never learns the name or any other identifying characteristics about the narrator. I think that by the filmmaker adding this, it created another way to show that Fortunato is doomed. In the beginning of both the movie and the text we learn that " The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as best I could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge." This being stated by Montressor before the conversation about the coat of arms of the Montressors throws the words about the rampant serpent into a darker light, and adds to the sense of dread throughout the story. Another difference is slighter, but no less important. In the very end, before Montressor puts the final brick in place, in the text he throws a torch inside the alcove with Fortunato. I believe that this was a taunt, so Fortunato would see the light of the torch growing dimmer with his own as the oxygen in the room was slowly used up. The torch was Montressor's way of telling Fortunato that he was going to die, and that he only had until the torch went out to live. This also fits the common idea that death comes in a dark, quiet place, slipping like a thief through the night to claim people's lives. The torch was a small detail not in the movie, because it would be hard to have actors throw burning sticks at each other, but I think it was one that had a great impact on the story. The simple action of Montressor throwing the torch may not be understood by some, but it still stays with them and increases their sense of the story.

But, for all the differences, the movie's script did seem to be a modified version of Poe's story. A specific similarity, that shows the filmmaker's fine attention to detail was the " shouting contest" between Montressor and

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Fortunato while Montressor builds the wall in front of Fortunato, trapping him inside the vaults. Fortunato begins to yell and shout in an attempt to free himself from the chains and escape before Montressor can finish putting the stone's in place. Deciding to taunt the man, Montressor yells back. They have a contest of sorts, both seeing who could out yell the other. I believe Poe put this in the story to show exactly how foolish Fortunato, and by extension, everyone was. It shows that even if we are chained to a wall, watching the only source of oxygen and light being walled away, we are still ready to waste the precious resources that we have left in an attempt to escape.

I think that the filmmaker did a good job of translating Poe's work to film, and I enjoyed watching what I have previously read. The filmmaker did a good job because everything played out as it did in the story, and it was clear that effort was put into the project. Even small details like Montressor's black cape came to the screen, and Fortunato's gesturing from the Freemasons also made an appearance. Yes, there were some things that could have been more imaginative or very small elements that were left out, but the film does do a good job of portraying the story for those who might not wish to read it.

In conclusion, the spine chilling tale of lies, trickery and murder bearing the title *The Cask of Amontillado* has earned its place on a collector's bookshelf of classics. The film adaptation should not be forgotten, as it takes Poe's masterpiece and creates a smooth transition from having to imagine the characters to being able to watch the story play out before you. Each is

different in its own way, but both are worthy of recognition and are well done. There are difficulties in moving Edgar Allan Poe's works to film because of how they are written; usually as a letter or a character's recollection, and as such are in past tense. Cask of Amontillado seems to be an easier story to move, but I have no doubt that there were difficulties in the process. In my opinion, the film did a masterful job of retelling the story and should not be ignored by those who for whatever unfortunate reason find reading to be boring.