

Poe black cat. all of
these stories are



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Poe is a very complicated author.

His literary works are perplexed, disturbing, and even grotesque. His frequent illnesses may have provoked his engrossment in such things. In 1842 Dr.

John W. Francis diagnosed Poe with sympathetic heart trouble as well as brain congestion. He also noted Poe's inability to withstand stimulants such as drugs and alcohol (Phillips 1508). These factors may have motivated him to write *The Tell-Tale-Heart*, *The Cask of Amontillado*, and *The Black Cat*.

All of these stories are written in or around 1843, shortly after Poe became afflicted. His writing helped him to cope with his troubles and explore new territory in literature. Poe's interest in the supernatural, retribution, and perverse cause them to be included in his burial motifs; therefore sustaining his interest. There is a common thread laced through each subject, but there is variation in degrees of the impact. The supernatural is the phenomena of the unexplained.

With this comes an aura of mystery and arousal of fear. Death in itself is the supreme mystery. No living human being can be certain of what happens to the soul when one dies.

It is because of this uncertainty that death is feared by many. These types of perplexing questions cause a reader to come to a point of indifference within one of Poe's burial motifs. One is uncertain of how the events can unfold, because a greater force dictates them. Reincarnation in *The Black Cat* is a supernatural force at work. There is some sort of orthodox witchcraft-taking

place. The whole story revolves around the cat, Pluto, coming back to avenge its death. One can not be sure how Pluto's rebirth takes place, but it is certain that something of a greater force has taken hold.

The cat's appearance is altered when the narrator comes across it the second time. There is a white spot on the chest " by slow degrees, degrees nearly imperceptible it had, at length, assumed a rigorous distinct outline of the GALLOWS" (Poe 4). Foretelling the narrator's fate a confinement tool appears on the cat's chest.

This also foreshadows the cat's confinement in the tomb. It reappears like a disease to take vengeance on a man that has committed horrid crimes. " I was answered by a voice within the tomb! -By a cry, at first muffled and broken, like the sobbing of a child, and quickly swelling into one long, loud and continuous scream, utterly anomalous and inhuman—a howl—a wailing shriek, half of honor and half of triumph (Poe 6). Pluto is like Poe's reoccurring illness it keeps coming back just when he thinks it is gone.

This can be related to the ever-looming question of why people become afflicted with disease. Is it punishment for wrongdoing? Some religions find this to be the answer. Poe's intrigue in reincarnation may have been in that of his own immortality. Metaphysical events take place in The Tell-Tale-Heart. The perpetrator is driven by some unknown source to reveal his evil deed.

The paranoia he feels is very real to him. " I fancied a ringing in my ears it became more distinct I found that the noise was not within my ears It is the beating of the hideous heart of the old man" (Poe 3). Ringing is heard only in

the man's head, but because an impetus has compelled him to believe otherwise he is inclined to reveal his misdeed. The source of the man's "voices" is from a force within himself. One's soul is an unexplainable power, which governs over the body. The murder of the old man is committed in passion. Disregarding any rational thoughts the narrator is engaged in his own desires.

His unconcern for mankind causes his own insanity. Even he can not live with his actions. The mind as a supernatural force, that dictates life, can only cope with so much. Poe himself experiences hallucinations from his illness, and abuse of alcohol.

Years of defilement caused his body, and mind to break down. At one point in time Poe raved "for protection from an imaginary army of conspirators disguised as 'loungers'" (Mankowitz 232). Constant weight on one's mind can lead to insanity. Human beings can lose control of their lives. The Tell-Tale-Heart illustrates the