

Below you'll find essays which illustrate some of the basics of clear writing: specific thesis statements and divisions followed by focused body paragraphs explaining why the arguments are valid. Use them, along with the many sample paragraphs on the "Essay Revision" page on Dr. Bordelon's Writing Suggestions as a guide to writing that works.

I've left my comments in the essay so you can see that even exemplary prose can use revision.

Dr. Bordelon

Eng 151 DL

June 6, 2016

Psychological Analysis of *The Cask of Amontillado* <<TITLES OF STORIES ARE QUOTED: NOVELS AND LONGER WORKS (PLAYS) ARE ITALICIZED.

In Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado", the narrator, Montresor successfully plans and executes the murder of Fortunato. Montresor's reasoning behind the murder is the "thousand injuries" Fortunato has inflicted on him CITE PAGE NUMBER. Because no details are given as to what the injuries are, it is difficult for the reader to determine whether Montresor has been really injured or whether his injuries are greatly exaggerated. However, by closely examining this text using psychoanalytic theory, one could argue that Montresor's actions are not warranted. Instead, they are the result of an unstable mental condition. Because Poe creates a protagonist who exhibits paranoid behavior, a lack of empathy, and a lack of remorse, one could argue that Montresor suffers from antisocial personality disorder. <<NICE JOB OF CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUABLE THESIS.

~~In this short story,~~ Montresor exhibits several symptoms of antisocial personality disorder, such as paranoia. <<NICE TOPIC SENTENCE The "thousand injuries" Montresor has suffered "at the hand of Fortunato" (Poe 166) are a manifestation of Montresor's delusional thinking. Montresor truly believes that Fortunato has done him wrong, and killing him is the only suitable revenge. But Fortunato, the one who has supposedly hurt Montresor in such an unforgiving way, seems to be happy to see Montresor when he runs into him at carnival. Had Fortunato truly done something so inexcusable, ~~one would believe that~~ he PROBABLY would have avoided Montresor and would certainly not have trusted the man enough to follow him, unsuspectingly, to his death. <<NICE EXPLANATION OF HOW THE QUOTE CONNECTS TO YOUR TOPIC.>>NEW PARAGRAPH? Delusional thinking is a characteristic of antisocial personality disorder, and according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, it often includes the tendency "to systematically misinterpret remarks, gestures, and acts of others as intentional slights or as signs of derision and contempt directed at oneself." ("ANTI-SOCIAL") NEED TO ADD A CITATION. Montresor makes it clear from the start that Fortunato is very full of himself. In fact, it is Fortunato's vanity that is his downfall. Montresor knows that Fortunato regards himself as an expert on wine, and is able to lure him away by suggesting that perhaps Luchresi would be of help regarding the Amontillado. <<QUOTE TO SHOW THIS? It is possible that it is Fortunato's vanity that caused Montresor's multiple injuries. An example of this type of slight can be found in the text when both characters are in the caverns and Fortunato asks Montresor if he is a mason. When Montresor says yes, Fortunato replies "You? Impossible! A Mason?" This type of insult would be easy for some to shake off, but for an individual suffering from a personality disorder, it would have cut deep. <<GOOD: WHY?

Another way that Montresor exhibits the characteristics of someone with this disorder is his lack of empathy. Throughout the text, Montresor talks about his revenge coldly and without emotion. <<GOOD JOB OF BEGINNING AN EXPLANATION OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN YOUR DIVISION

AND THESIS. MAYBE CLARIFY IT A BIT MORE. One important example is when Montresor is calmly sealing Fortunato into the niche in the wall. Fortunato is laughing nervously and trying to convince Montresor that they need to go back to the palazzo. He also mentions how his wife is waiting for him and tells Montresor, "Let us be gone" (170). Montresor agrees, and continues to smile and laugh as he finishes building the wall. Because Montresor is telling this story, his use of humor and irony is especially important, as it shows his state of mind and attitude about his actions. <<GOOD POINT. Another significant moment is when Fortunato suddenly screams from behind the wall. At first, Montresor seems to be shaken. He states "For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled" (170). However, he seems to feel nothing regarding Fortunato's pain and anguish. Instead, he begins to yell back. He claims "I replied to the yells of him who clamoured. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still" (170). Fortunato may have realized, in that moment, that his crying out would not help his situation, and that he was at the mercy of a madman.<<YES, BUT BACK TO MONTRESOR AND HIS LACK OF EMPATHY – HOW ABOUT HIS COMMENT ABOUT THE CHAINS JINGLING? "The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labours and sat down upon the bones"

Besides not showing empathy when planning and carrying out Fortunato's execution, Montresor also does not show remorse. It is unclear from the start of the story what Montresor's purpose is in telling his tale, or to whom he is speaking, but from his tone, it is obvious that he is not sorry for his actions. At no time does he show a hint of regret. Instead, he addresses the imagined reader as "You, who so well know the nature of my soul", and explains that his vengeance was "a point definitively settled" (166). Montresor also has a conversation with Fortunato about his family crest, telling the man that the family arms are "A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel" and says that the motto is "Nemo me impune lacessit", which means "No one provokes me with impunity" (168). This is another clever way that Poe emphasizes Montresor's sociopathic character. Montresor's own family seems to value destroying anyone who comes in their way.<<EXPLAIN HOW THIS SHOWS A LACK OF REMORSE At the end of the story, Montresor reveals that this event took place about 50 years earlier, and that the body has remained undisturbed during that time, but he does not explain why he is telling the story at this point in his life. If he had been tortured by the memory or filled with regret, he would certainly have mentioned it. Instead, he expresses the wish that Fortunato "rest in peace", which may mean that he hopes the body will continue to go undiscovered.

Like many of his other stories, in "*The Cask of Amontillado*", Poe concentrates on the psychological defects often associated with human nature. This story ~~is not just about a man who gets revenge,~~ it is more about the inner workings of a cold, calculated killer THAN A SIMPLE TALE OF REVENGE. Although Poe may not have been an expert in mental disorders in a medical sense, he was fascinated with the darker side of man's nature. Montresor's paranoia, lack of empathy, and lack of remorse are not only traits that are often tied together, they are also easy to detect with careful observation. What is most chilling about this story is not that it is about a murder, but instead it is the way that Poe creates a character like Montresor with such depth.

Works cited<<CAP C

"Antisocial Personality Disorder." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 2016. Web. 3 June 2016.

REMEMBER TO INCLUDE LAST NAME AND PAGE NUMBER IN HEADER

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Cask of Amontillado." *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. Ed. Kelly J. Mays. New York: Norton, 2013. 165- 171. Print.

WHAT A FINE ESSAY _____.

YOU MANEUVER THE READER CLEARLY THROUGH YOUR THINKING, HELPING THEM UNDERSTAND YOUR INTERPRETATION. PARTICULARLY NOTE WORTHY ARE YOUR EXPLANATIONS OF QUOTES: THEY ILLUMINATE YOUR VIEWS QUITE WELL.

REVIEW MY COMMENTS FOR SUGGESTIONS ON WHAT TO WORK ON FOR YOUR NEXT ESSAY.

You'll find my comments throughout your work IN ALL CAPS. Again I'm not yelling.

Use the comments as a guide for crafting and revising the remaining writing assignments in the class (and, of course, for other courses). Grade for this assignment is at the bottom.

Underlined words/phrases/sentences needed more work – or needed to be deleted.

The focus in this class is on improvement: that's why I make comments. If you're satisfied with the grade, don't rest on your laurels: it's time to work on taking your writing "to the next level." If you're not satisfied with your grade, it's time to get more feedback on rough drafts from myself, the writing center, or smartthinking. Again, keep the focus on improving your writing.

Questions about my comments or your grade? Let me know via email.

MacKayla Probasco
ENGL152- Critical Review Essay #1
Dr. Bordelon
June 6, 2016

Semiotic Review of "The Cask of Amontillado" <<NO BOLD

At the midnight release of a popular horror film series <<NAME A PARTICULAR MOVIE, the lights of the theater dim, an eerie music plays in the background, the big screen shows a focused camera angle of the actor's dimly lit face and the crowd is tense with suspension for what may happen next.<<GREAT IDEA FOR AN OPENING. Many literary works, such as movies, novels and short stories, use physical and figurative elements to manipulate the mood of the film or writer and its viewer, or reader. <<SMOOTH OUT TRANSITION>>Symbolism is another common tool many authors utilize<<USE to disguise information that aids in the development of the plot or the aura it embodies; a tactic<<THIS LITERARY DEVICE that is skillfully used by Edgar Allan Poe in the gothic short story "The Cask of Amontillado". In the short story "The Cask of Amontillado", Poe uses symbolic application through color, objects and the setting to create a deeper interpretation of a dark mood.

Color is the first symbolic tool used by Poe in "The Cask of Amontillado" to build the dark mood of the horror story.<<NICE TOPIC SENTENCE TO SET UP YOUR POINT: YOU MENTION BOTH THE THESIS AND THE DIVISION. NOW WORK ON FRAMING THE ARGUMENT IN YOUR PARAGRAPH BY DEFINING HOW YOUR DIVISION CONNECTS WITH YOUR THESIS OR OFFERING ANY OTHER INFORMATION NEEDED TO HELP READERS UNDERSTAND YOUR ARGUMENT. INSTEAD OF A DICTIONARY DEFINITION, WORK ON CRAFTING ONE THAT SUITS YOUR SPECIFIC PURPOSE. HERE, FOR EXAMPLE, EXPLAIN HOW COLOR, IN GENERAL, CAN CREATE A MOOD. THIS WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH A LIST OF WORDS YOU CAN REPEAT IN YOUR PARAGRAPH TO SHOW READERS THE VALIDITY OF YOUR DIVISION. SEE "FRAMING AN ARGUMENT" ON THE "ESSAY REVISION" PAGE (DR. BORDELON'S WRITING SUGGESTIONS) FOR AN EXPLANATION AND EXAMPLE. Montresor, the narrator of this short story, arrived at the carnival to confront

his acquaintance, Fortunato, whom he had schemed a plan for revenge against. Fortunato approached the narrator donning a jester outfit. To explain this occurrence Montresor stated, “The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells” (166). This outfit is much like a clown costume, including many different colors and little bells, and symbolizes how easily Fortunato would be fooled by Montresor. <<IS IT THE COLOR OR THE FACT THAT IT’S MOTLEY – FOOL’S OUTFIT – THAT CREATES THE DARK MOOD? NEED TO CONNECT THIS TO A DARK MOOD Before leaving the carnival and luring Fortunato back to his home, where Fortunato would meet his death, Montresor dressed in black. To demonstrate Montresor’s attire the author writes, “Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a roquelaire closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo” (167). A roquelaire is defined as a man’s heavy, knee-length cloak. The black silk mask and cloak that Montresor drapes over his body before leaving the carnival allows him to be pictured as the grim reaper. <<MUCH BETTER FOCUS HERE ON YOUR THESIS The black coloring of Montresor’s wardrobe is symbolic of the darkness that lay within him and the death he would bring to Fortunato in time to come. The reader can gain a sense of eeriness from the gloomy shade associated with Montresor and could even begin to speculate the morbid actions he takes next, giving the short story a much darker mood. The use of color within this portion of “The Cask of Amontillado” also allows the reader to gain a sense of the good and evil that exists within the plot and formulates a much darker mood.

Much like the colors used throughout “The Cask of Amontillado”, Poe also utilizes objects as symbols to heighten the gothic feel of the story line. While Montresor and Fortunato descend into the damp <<NICE QUICK FOLLOW UP TO GOTHIC IN THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE cellar, a conversation shared between the two men touches upon the Montresor family arms. Montresor shares that the family arms states, “A huge human foot d’or in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are embedded in the heel” (168). A serpent is typically figurative for a person who has the reputation of being sneaky, conniving <<ISN’T THIS A GREAT WORD? or even disloyal. It is for this reason that the snake is meant to represent Fortunato, who has allegedly betrayed Montresor. The foot of gold that is crushing the snake is symbolic of Montresor. This can be symbolic of, or even foreshadow, Montresor crushing, <NO COMMA and killing, <<NO COMMA Fortunato for the “insult” he caused Montresor. Fortunato also comments on the Montresor family motto and emblem while walking the spiral stairwell to the catacombs. The family motto translates to “No one provokes me with impunity” (168). Fortunato should have heeded this as a warning, seeing it as an indication that Montresor would kill anyone who did wrong to him or anyone in his family. <<MORE ON HOW THE WORDING OF THE MOTTO CONVEYS A DARK MOOD. This added symbolism, when paid close attention to by the reader, can further reveal Montresor’s plans for murder, creating a darker mood.

Another object linked to the symbolism of Fortunato’s eventual death that darkened the mood was the towel Montresor exposed to jokingly confirm that he was a stonemason. During the journey the two men took into the dimly lit catacombs, Montresor shows a towel when asked if he is a mason. Although Fortunato was really asking if he was apart << A PART of the international secret society, Montresor jokingly

admits he is a stonemason. This symbolism foreshadows how Fortunato would ultimately meet his death, by being block in with a wall built of stone by Monsanto himself. Given that Poe is a writer that frequently uses symbolism and foreshadowing, this odd detail of the story sticks out to the reader and makes him or her speculate why that element was important which creates a sense of suspicion, hence darkening the mood further.

<<GOOD: WITHOUT THIS LAST SENTENCE, I WOULD ASK “HOW DOES THIS CONNECT TO A DARK MOOD?” YOU ANSWERED THE QUESTION READERS WOULD HAVE.

The setting “The Cask of Amontillado” takes place in is the final component of the storyline that uses symbolism to create a darker mood. SEE PREVIOUS COMMENT ABOUT FRAMING – HOW IT CAN CREATE A MOOD. The short story begins in a carnival setting. The setting of a carnival is ironic in the case of this short story because carnivals are typically symbolic of fun, youth and happiness. “The Cask of Amontillado” however, is about undermining, revenge, darkness and death.<<THINK ABOUT HOW CARNIVAL IS ABOUT CASTING OFF RESTRAINTS – THAT MIGHT WORK BETTER. Carnivals and clowns are also symbolic of jokes and laughter. However, the plot of the story focused around the death of a friend, which is a very serious and grave concept- creating and even darker feel to the story. This setting also allowed Montresor to disguise himself before taking Fortunato back to his home where he would take his last breath. This makes for an important detail that should not be overlooked in the writing of this story because it made the concealed murder seem possible, again, creating a dark mood. <<FOCUS ON THE NIGHT TIME SETTING AND GENERAL DISARRAY – NO SERVANTS, ETC.

Lastly, the dark catacombs the two men descended into, filled with vaults containing Montresor’s dead family members, was an in-depth description of the place in which Fortunato would be left that added an eerie sensation to the story line. The dead family members that lie inside the vaults Montresor and Fortunato walked among, while Fortunato was distracted with win and the thought of Amontillado, was a symbol for what he would soon become- another dead body, encased in stone in the cellar of Montresor’s home. This morbid idea alone, along with other mentioned elements of the setting, emulate an extremely dark mood to the short story. <<GOOD: THIS SHOULD BE YOUR MAJOR ARGUMENT. NEED SOME QUOTES HERE TO SUPPORT YOUR POINT AND MORE EXPLANATION HERE.

Through contrasting dark and light colors, a number of objects, and the setting of “The Cask of Amontillado”, a plethora of symbols were used in this Edgar Allan Poe short story to achieve a dark mood. The symbols found throughout Poe’s writing made it possible for the reader to speculate what may follow in the story, creating a very ominous feeling. Overall, in the writing of “The Cask of Amontillado”, Edgar Allan Poe used the application of symbolism to create a dark mood for the gothic short story.

FOR A CONCLUSION, CONSIDER ANSWERING THE QUESTION “WHAT’S IT ALL MEAN?” NOW THAT READERS HAVE COMPLETED THE ESSAY, WHAT LARGER MEANING CAN THEY DERIVE FROM IT? YOU CAN ALSO REFER BACK TO AN IDEA FROM YOUR INTRO. AVOID THE CLASSIC (AND BORING) REPETITION OF THE THESIS. IF READERS NEED TO BE REMINDED OF YOUR THESIS, YOU HAVEN’T REALLY CONVINCED THEM IN

YOUR ESSAY – AND REPEATING IT AT THE CONCLUSION WON'T CHANGE THEIR MINDS.

Works Cited

Mays, Kelly. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013. Print.

FOLLOW THE FORMAT BELOW FOR THIS AND FOR ALL ANTHOLOGIES.

Updike, John. "A&P." *Literature: Approaches to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. Ed. Robert DiYanni. New York: McGraw Hill, 2009. 32-35. Print.

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MACKAYLA,
STRONG START TO THE SEMESTER. YOU SET OUT A CLEAR THESIS AND THEN WORK THROUGH THE DIFFERENT POINTS IN YOUR REVISION.

WHEN REVISING YOUR ESSAYS, REMEMBER TO GO BACK AND CHECK FOR WHERE YOU DRIFT AWAY FROM THE THESIS OR DIVISIONS – YOU MOVE AWAY FROM DREAD A FEW TIMES HERE.

REMEMBER TOO TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE TEXT: PULL OUT AND EXPLAIN HOW THE SPECIFIC WORDS IN A QUOTE PROVE YOUR POINT.