|  |
| --- |
| 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, MontresorCOMMA 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.

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.