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The Gothic Aesthetic and Morality in Edgar Allan's Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado"

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Abstract

This research paper sheds light on the Gothic aesthetic and morality in Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Cask of Amontillado" (1846). The aim of literature is to give delight and wisdom, which can only be achieved by means of its form and content. This short story, though a Gothic one of horror, cannot be exempted from this category. It derives its elements of delight from the horror it excites in both character and reader, for horror can be a pleasurable experience for them both. Poe is very well known for his Gothic short stories such as "The Cask of Amontillado," whose subject matter is closely related to the theme of claustrophobia which arouses the kind of horror underlying the elements of suspense, interest and curiosity on the part of the reader and is part of the aesthetic elements employed by the author. Thus, concentration in this research paper is placed on the assumption that horror in fiction can be aesthetic—a pleasurable experience that is part of the delight to be aroused by literature, and on the significant moral lessons inferred from the action of this story.

La Estética Gótica Y La Moralidad De Edgar Allan Poe's En “El Barril De Amontillado”

Resumen

Este trabajo de investigación arroja luz sobre la estética y la moral gótica en el cuento de Edgar Allan Poe “El barril de amontillado” (1846). El objetivo de la literatura es dar deleite y sabiduría, que solo puede lograrse por medio de su forma y contenido. Este cuento, aunque gótico de horror, no puede quedar exento de esta categoría. Deriva sus elementos de deleite del horror que excita tanto en el personaje como en el lector, ya que el horror puede ser una experiencia placentera para ambos. Poe es muy conocido por sus historias cortas góticas como “El barril de amontillado”, cuyo tema está estrechamente relacionado con el tema de la claustrofobia, que suscita el tipo de horror que subyace a los elementos de suspenso, interés y curiosidad por parte de lector y forma parte de los elementos estéticos empleados por el autor. Por lo tanto, la concentración en este trabajo de investigación se basa en la suposición de que el horror en la ficción puede ser estético, una experiencia placentera que es parte del placer que despierta la literatura, y en las lecciones morales significativas inferidas de la acción de esta historia.

1. Introduction

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) is a very prominent figure in world literature, being a great poet, a short story writer, critic and essayist. He is famous for writing Gothic short stories that have ever enriched American literature in particular and world literature in general. They are, in the first place, characterized by ambiguity, mystery, demise, macabre, murder, claustrophobia and the supernatural, which are all features presented within the mold of horror, terror and fear which do not only terrify the characters concerned but also the reader who finds himself/herself engaged in a literary experience that arouses interest and delight throughout horror. The terrifying factors in Poe's stories usually conduce to a better understanding of life experiences throughout the inferred themes detected in them.

This research paper is an attempt to shed light on the delight which is created by horror and which is accompanied by moral lessons and wisdom as shown in Poe's short story “The Cask of Amontillado” (1846), whose main theme is revenge. Generally speaking, Poe does not present a direct moral lesson. Rather, the moral lesson in his story is to be detected by the

reader himself. Serious subject matters related to man's experience are tackled. Throughout the presentation of human situations characterized by horror, ambiguity and the supernatural, Poe can allude to the essence of the significant theme which he wants to express. "The Cask of Amontillado" presents the theme of revenge throughout the abnormal behavior of the main character that invites the reader to investigate it as a case study. Furthermore, this study explores the main themes and concepts posed in this short fictional art.

"The Cask of Amontillado" is a horror story that has been the result of hardships from the many deaths in Poe's family, which he has been suffering at the time when writing it—the death of his wife, brother and mother. Besides, he has suffered from poverty, and he has to afford living for himself and his mother-in-law. In his time, the vogue of horror stories was at its peak, so Poe finds it a good opportunity to present such a kind of writing and earn money to support his family.

In "The Cask of Amontillado," the narrator, Montresor, has alleged to his victim, Fortunato, that he possesses a container of wine, so that the latter will be tempted to see it kept in a catacomb where he is going to be buried alive as a kind of revenge since he once harmed the former. Thus, a horrendous impact on the reader is successfully achieved. The whole atmosphere of horror excites delight in the mind of readers in so far as they imagine a nightmarish experience: "It is beautiful and it is the stuff of nightmare" (Neil Gaiman, 2011). Thus, it is a story of deception and revenge. Moreover, to add to the horror of the action of the story, Poe intentionally creates a startling ending for "The Cask of Amontillado," which is shown in the atmosphere of claustrophobia that is ignited by the fact that the victim is enclosed in a tomb that is gradually covered with stones by the victimizer. This is a tragic event which cannot be easily forgotten and which can be seen in line with Alfred Hitchcock's horrible films that have made unforgettable memory.

2. Definitions of Key Terms

A. Aestheticism: "the acceptance of artistic beauty and taste as a fundamental standard. B. Morality: conformity to ideals of right human conduct" (Webster Merriam Dictionary).

3. The Synopsis of "The Cask of Amontillado"

Poe employs a dramatic persona, Montresor, to relate the story, who begins the story referring to an ancient insult made against him by an old acquaintance called Fortunato. Thus, Montresor seeks revenge. Due to Fortunato's great interest in old wine, Montresor finds it possible to

tempt him by inviting him to an alleged cask of amontillado, a white Spanish wine which is claimed to be hidden in Montresor's catacomb, which Fortunato loves most. Thus, Fortunato insists that they go to Montresor's catacomb so as to examine it. The two men have entered into the vaults where the walls are full of human bones. On one exposed wall is a recess. Montresor deceives Fortunato, telling him that the wine is stored in the recess in which he should enter to examine it. Being heavily drunk, Fortunato enters the recess and is suddenly chained to a stone by his oppressor. Hence, Fortunato is trapped inside. His alcohol wears off and begins to cry and moan. Finally Montresor says that Fortunato may rest in peace.

4. Origin and Development of the Gothic Fiction

Gothic Fiction is a literary genre that is characterized by all the ingredients related to horror—death, all kinds of fear such as claustrophobia, misery, killing by untraditional ways and horror. This genre was belittled during the time in which it appeared as being dull and disturbing due to its specialty in depicting the evil yet dark aspects of the human spirit. J. A. Cuddon points out that this kind of fiction was established during the period from the 1760s through the 1820s (Cuddon, 1998: 355), and at the same time it has been attributed to romance due to its elements of adventures, imagination and betrayal. It is also regarded as the origin of what is called in the 1990s as the “ghost story and the horror story” (Cuddon: 355). Tobias Smollett's *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) is considered the earliest production of this genre, which consists of elements of horror, fear and cruelty. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) can be considered a very good example of this kind of fiction, which was written at home, a small Gothic palace near London where the author started to continue his living in 1747. Thus, The building is characterized by the elements of the medieval Gothic architecture (Cuddon: 356). Hence, the literary term “Gothic” comes to describe stories of horror, whose action takes place in anomalous, strange and gloomy houses (Head Dominic, 2006: 308). Gothic stories depict shocking yet unfamiliar happenings in a world unrelated to humans—a very strange one as if it were nightmarish in that it describes:

dream landscapes and figures of the subconscious imagination. Its fictional world gives form to amorphous fears and impulses common to all mankind, using an amalgam of materials, some torn from the author's own subconscious mind and some the stuff of myth, folklore, fairy tale, and romance. It conjures up beings—mad monks, vampires, and demons—

and settings—forbidding cliffs.

(Elizabeth MacAndrew, 1979: 3)

It has already been made clear that Gothic fiction is an umbrella noun to cover all those stories, be the genre what it may, exposing horror, demise, murder etc., with a view to exciting in the minds of the readers a sense of curiosity, suspense and interest, which point to the aim of any fictionist; therefore, elements of interest in a work of art are not necessarily related to only elements of beauty. Thus, the interest in human life and experience can be motivated by the elements of ugliness related to all types of horror. As an established genre of fiction, the Gothic fiction finds its origin in Walpole's magnum opus *The Castle of Otranto* which, according to most critics, has inaugurated a new genre of fiction. This novel is of profound excitement, for it depicts scenes of horror, villainy, murder and bloodshed and a ghost of a very disgusting and unpleasant yet hideous shape, whose action is set in medieval times, and as explicated by Cuddon who says that Walpole intends to

scare the daylights out of his readers, and no doubt he succeeded. This novel proves a seminal work which had much influence on the development of a genre which was ultimately dubbed 'Gothic novel': partly, perhaps, because Walpole wrote his book in his 'Gothic castle', and partly because the content of such novels was associated with the Middle Ages and with things wild, bloody and barbarous of long ago.

(Cuddon: 356)

It is generally accepted that the influence of the Gothic genre on novelists and story tellers is tremendous, for it has been conducive to many and various fictional works. Among those significant writers influenced by this kind of fiction is Poe who has endeavored to present vital works classified within the domain of this particular art. It is important to notice that Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) is his early Gothic short story of horror, which unfolds most of the representations of this genre.

5. The Gothic Elements in the Story

Like his other Gothic short stories, the fear and terror are excited by the fact that Montresor claims that Fortunato has done him thousand injuries and insults. The theme of revenge is central to the story. Law has no existence in Montresor's mind who acts therefore as a judge and executioner too. To add to the horrible scene, Montresor's face is masked by black silk, and at the same time the carnival season for Fortunato turns to be

murderous. The story appears to be one causing strong dislike and disgust, for it is closely related to the sense of prisons, tombs and corpses, not to mention the sense of frightfulness. Furthermore, the murderer manages to make successful revenge and escapes with his evil deed. He has shown his cleverness in this regard.

6. The Aesthetic Elements in “The Cask of Amontillado”

All branches of literature aim at giving thought and delight, and Gothic fiction is no exception. Like the sentimental novel which excites aesthetic pleasure in the minds of readers through descriptions of human experiences that impose feelings unrelated to horror, and thus the sense of aesthetic is conveyed to the reader, the Gothic story excites pleasure through exposing horror within the action of the story which gives a pleasurable experience to the reader. Furthermore, Gothic fiction obliges the reader and the critic as well to enjoy the pleasure of investigating the moral and psychological development during the fearful circumstances of the characters concerned. In “The Cask of Amontillado” Poe tries to make his readers face particular ideas concerning human nature and the gist of vice in the human character. Hence, some novelists make use of environmental elements such as enclosed worlds, ancient abodes, gloomy atmospheres and dark and deserted palaces so as to create horrible atmospheres which oblige readers to have interest and an enjoyable experience throughout satisfying their curiosity to learn about human nature and throughout the suspense underlying such experiences.

To excite fear and horror in both character and reader is the specialty of Gothic fiction, whose significant aim is to allow readers to believe that there must be something to be feared in this world. This kind of fiction involves the mind of the reader with horror that is changed into a sense of joy throughout suspense and curiosity.

“The Cask of Amontillado” motivates the readers’ sentiments in an attempt to make them relate with the characters’ feelings, and therefore the readers are made to sympathize in so far as the aesthetic sense is aroused by means of imagination. Besides, the readers are invited to explore the psyche of the concerned character when facing horrible actions. The following passage said by Montresor, the oppressor, shows an aesthetic joy stirred by means of contrast and an ironical situation. An example of contrast is shown between the happy occasion enjoyed by the victim, Fortunato, and the destiny awaiting him throughout the plot already designed by Monresor, and as follows:

I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought large-

ly whenever I could. It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tightfitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him, that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand. I said to him: "My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met.

(Poe, 1846: 3-4)

The ironical situation that creates a sense of suspense and curiosity is shown in Montresor's idea that Fortunato is Lucky when he is met with him, for the readers already know Montresor's wicked intentions to kill him. The Aforementioned passage also shows how the readers are reminded of particular representations illustrating thoughts about the dark aspects of human nature, especially the strong desire of some malicious men to see others suffer. Thus, the dread in the reader's mind is awakened into a sense of joy when having a strong desire to witness the subsequent outcome alluded to by that ironical situation.

"The Cask of Amontillado" is loaded with the kind of horror which makes readers think that they will not face the same circumstances in actual life. The ghastly situations provide the reader with excitements which develop particular aesthetic joy created by means of suspense from horrible scenes which obliges him/her to follow the events of the story till the end in order to satisfy his/her curiosity as to what will occur next. From the psychological point of view, one can find himself interested in the way how one is killed or in the way how a building wholly falls down suddenly. Of course, one feels sorry for the human and material loss; yet, the interest is made in the human situations. Thus, it is of great interest that one watches how the nuclear bomb explodes in Japan and what aftermaths it causes, which can be interpreted as a violent joy. W. F. Pang has his word in this regard, saying that Poe's horror stories:

make the courage and force to defeat horror in the readers' hearts and encourage people to face the real self bravely. We can draw a conclusion that horror can bring people a stronger tragic aesthetic delight, which can urge people to get moral, correct mentality and purify morality, and at last make them achieve "goodness" or "virtue". So, the purpose of literature is to arouse people's emotion and let out people's horror, pain and mercy.

(W. F. Pang, 2015: 5)

The human mind is set at work by imagination which can be created by many figures of speech, which, of course, create an aesthetic joy. It has been said that this genre approaches poetic imagination in that it consists of the “surreal, raised to the level of poetry which is the very essence of ‘gothic’: that which displays the range, depth, audacity, and fantastical extravagance of the human imagination” (Joyce Carol Oates, 1996: 9). However, “the Cask of Amontillado” presents fantastical scenes which let the reader practice his faculty of imagination with urgent curiosity as to what may happen during the horrible actions described by the narrator. One can only imagine the aesthetic joy when watching the films exposing Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes which has been prompted and influenced by Poe’s Gothic arts and whose scenes of horror create the aesthetic joy through horror, murder and odd deeds (Sime,1997: 276). The final scene of “The Cask of Amontillado” is not only giving delight, but it also gives a sense of purgation on the part of the reader. Pangs admits that “in Poe’s Gothic fictions, horror and ugliness grasp our aesthetical vision. In the parts about horror and evil, Poe achieves the aesthetical functions of sublimation and purification of human morality and spirit” (Pang, 2015: 4).

The following passage can make the reader imagine the horror of claustrophobia which is created by fitting the last stone in the tomb:

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position.

(Poe: 10).

Thus, the fear from completely closed places on the part of reader can be regarded as violent or cruel joy which is an example of the figure of speech called oxymoron which underlies one aspect of the aim of literature that is delight to be enjoyed by the reader’s inner sense that is inserted in his mind throughout suspense and curiosity when watching fearful actions related to a human experience. Therefore, it can be suggested that “The Cask of Amontillado” is an investigation of the horror which inflicts humans. This story may also aim at dismissing human horrors by means of the moral lessons the readers may apprehend from such a Gothic story:

Poe's Gothic fictions make the courage and force to defeat horror in the readers' hearts and encourage people to face the real self bravely. We can draw a conclusion that horror can bring people a stronger tragic aesthetic delight, which can urge people to get moral, correct mentality and purify morality, and at last make them achieve "goodness" or "virtue". So, the purpose of literature is to arouse people's emotion and let out people's horror, pain and mercy.

(W. F. Pang, 2015: 5)

7. The Morality of "The Cask of Amontillado"

"The Cask of Amontillado" abounds in numerous moral lessons and implications. The most significant moral lesson to be inferred from the story is that one should not harm others lest one should be harmed by them. This moral idea seems to permeates the whole story and is the pivot of its action. It implies that people should carefully pay their attention to the their behavior as to their treatments of others. In a word, one should be as polite as possible when one says something to or deal with one's acquaintances. One may feel ashamed when he/she may unwittingly harm somebody. So, what is the impression of that somebody when harmed intentionally by somebody else? This is the question underlying the story under consideration. In actual life, the offended person may or may not avenge himself against those who once harmed him/her, which indicates that he/she is tolerant. But what about intolerant people? "The Cask of Amontillado" explores the latter case. The relevant reference in The Bible is: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew's Bible, 7: 12).

Fortunato is presented as a harmful character who once intentionally insulted Montresor, regarding himself a cleverer personality. This insolence causes trouble and a sense of bitterness to Montresor who has already decided to avenge himself against him, and at the same time it should be noted that Fortunato appears to be a very proud character that always prides on the fact that he is most skillful in the art of checking the quality of good types of wine. Thus, the narrator makes use of Fortunato's pride and superego and tempts him down in the place where the supposed cask of amontillado is placed "He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine" (Poe: 3).

But the price Fortunato is going to pay is his life, and the death he is going

to face is made in such a way as to cause claustrophobia to him, for he is going to be buried alive by his oppressor, Montresor. It must be noted that Fortunato does not deserve the punishment done by Montresor when taking the principle of measure for measure into account. To kill him is unequal to the insolence he once directed towards Montresor. In a word, Fortunato had not tried to kill Montresor whose response to kill him is only justifiable when he is considered an abnormal person who has prepared abnormal yet unequal retaliation for his rival, Fortunato.

It seems that Fortunato's insolence is faced by unequal vengeance, which may indicate that Montresor appears to be a very savage person who can be representative of the savagery of man in actual life. This point of view is substantiated by Delaney when he says: "Revenge is not generally equivalent to the offense it forecasts to make right, especially if the demonstration of requital is killing" (Delaney, 2008).

Montresor shows an extraordinary state of a "man who may recall wounds for a considerable length of time and strike back, yet he is only an outrageous case of human instinct" (Delaney, 2008). It is reasonable and ethical too that one treats others as they do treat him/her. Fortunato is made to meet his end in a terrible way by means of the many and various wounds by which he has blighted Montresor who says at the very beginning of the story that

THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely, settled --but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

(Poe: I)

"The Cask of Amontillado" can be taken as a case study for an abnormal man who excites horror in his victim to avenge a crime unequal to the crime done by his victim. Montresor proves himself an evil personality that is very obsessed by the idea of revenge to be brought about by a horrible action of killing: "Hence, the moral lesson we may derive from this short piece is simply: Revenge is not always equal to the offense it portends to make right, particularly if the act of retribution is murder (Delaney, 2008).

On the other hand, it seems that Poe alludes to the theme of drunkenness which is conducive to immoral deeds. It is generally accepted that revenge can never be virtuous and can never lead to righteousness. Nonetheless, Fortunato's love for alcohol accounts for his fatal sin of greediness which leads him nowhere but to death. This is a reflection of the author's experience as to the sin of drunkenness that has destroyed his life. Moreover, Montresor is going to escape punishment, for he has already designed a close plan to murder his ancient foe. However, Montresor's behavior in this situation seems to be controversial in this regard. Reynolds has simply set the question of controversy by saying that "The Cask of Amontillado" shows that some may believe that Montresor never avoids the torture of his conscience, and some may see him "as an unrepentant, pathological killer whose crime is a source of power for him and a source of vicarious satisfaction for Poe and the reader" (David Reynolds F., 1993: 107).

It is one of the characteristic features of Poe's short stories that they are mixed with the element of ambiguity which is a favorable feature to be found in literature inasmuch as it is conducive to suggesting particular meanings in relation to the story in question. "The Cask of Amontillado" does not show the essence of the insult done by Fortunato, for the reader is just informed that Montresor has been insulted by Fortunato. Therefore, one may suggest that Fortunato's insult against Montresor might be so grave that it invites the latter to kill the former. This can be another interpretation for Montresor's odd behavior towards Fortunato.

This short story makes some touches upon one of the features that may inflict man which is pride. One may struggle with pride in life. It is made quite clear in The Bible that man is always warned that pride is a sin hated by God who will control and punish the proud. The moral to be obtained from the story under consideration is that one should not always consider himself/herself wise and that one should be humble as far as possible, so that one becomes willing to be like Jesus Christ, the ultimate exemplar of self-denial and unselfishness who has sacrificed himself on the cross for humanity: "But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory" (Daniel's Bible, 5: 20).

It is pride which has motivated Adam and Eve's fall from paradise and which is regarded as one of the most serious sins. Since Montresor's pride has been offended by Fortunato, the former's pride has driven him to take action against the latter in "The Cask of Amontillado." Pride is thus made the source of malice and revenge. The theme of pride in this story

focuses on the notion that it leads to man's destruction. Montresor cannot bear the idea that he is insulted by Fortunato who has made him appear to be a mediocre, and therefore he intentionally designs a plan to avenge his pride. He has a strong desire to offend Fortunato. He says "Nemo me impune lacessit," which implies in English "No one dare attack me with impunity" (Poe: 6). Montresor feels that it is his own responsibility to clear the offense that is made against his family by Fortunato. Montresor's moral destruction is the result of his pride. Besides, one should not forget the fact that it is pride too that has ruined Fortunato. Montresor makes use of this trait found in Fortunato, for he realizes that he is characterized by "a weak point... He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine" (Poe: 3). Therefore, one can say that Fortunato's shortcoming is his pride which has driven him into the trap of Montresor, the tomb where he is going to be covered alive. As a result, the two men, Fortunato and Montresor, are being driven by pride to their physical and moral destruction respectively.

What enables Montresor to fulfill his plan is the steps he follows to achieve deception; he is able to make Fortunato believe that there is something important to him, the cask of the amontillado, which does not exist at all, so that he would be able to achieve his wicked plan, the killing of Fortunato. Montresor and Fortunato are both disguised in odd dresses due to the occasion of the carnival. The disguise serves Montresor on the strategic level, for it makes his plans valid to secretly take Fortunato to his final destiny.

"The Cask of Amontillado" suggests the theme of drunkenness in so far as wine is made as being a titular term. Though undrunk in this short story, it is made to allure characters to do horrible and naive actions. From the autobiographical perspective, Poe, the creator of this story, has struggled with drunkenness and come to the conclusion that it is something conducive to perverseness. All kinds of liquor make man lose his mental balance as what to do in a certain serious situation. The fictionist battle with drugs is well manifested in this story to illustrate the fact that drunkenness leads nowhere but to devilish actions unpermitted by morality. Fortunato's abnormal behavior when he is drunkard makes him do odd things and have too much opinion of himself: "His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upward with a gesticulation I did not understand. I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one" (Poe: 7). He is rid of any restraints during the carnival, whose love of alcohol leads him to his demise.

As shown in "The Cask of Amontillado," foolishness may cost one's

life. Human foolishness is shown in both characters, Montresor and Fortunato. The former is foolish because he has achieved revenge unequal to the action which has ignited it—it is just an ancient insult that can be forgotten overnight. The latter's foolishness is shown in his ridiculing Montresor on a certain occasion—an insult that has not only injured him, but it has also injured his ancestors as he claims. Both characters are foolish because they have forgotten the word of God which advocates the resort of good behavior on the part of Fortunato and tolerance on the part of Montresor. The outcome of their foolish behavior is that they are both condemned according to religious standards. Their disaster is the outcome of their silly conduct: "The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting party-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells" (Poe: 3-4). This story can be regarded as a good example of the foolishness of a connoisseur who should have been relieved himself in bed because of his old age instead of going out looking for old wine which has trapped him in the tomb prepared for him by his rival, Montresor.

The opening of "the Cask of Amontillado" shows a paradoxical theme which starts with a carnival, an occasion during which people enjoy themselves celebrating and rejoicing what is going on in the street. Certain social activities are made to entertain people among whom are Fortunato, the victim and Montresor, his oppressor. Poe's skilful presentation of the setting of the story lets the reader feel the contradiction between the intentions of both characters. An old friend turns to be an executioner who allures his victim into the tomb to become a corpse. Therefore, the reader recognizes the contradiction between what is going in the outside world and what is going in the basement of the dead, which of course deepens the tragedy of Fortunato. At the same time, an ironical situation is created by the fact that the readers know what Fortunato does not know about his fortune, whose name, to add, also adds an element of irony felt by the reader. Fortunato unknowingly goes intentionally to his end. The horrible situation in which Fortunato is trapped makes him feel a sense of claustrophobia. To add to his calamity, none of the servants hears his cries, for Montresor has already let them go home so as to make his plan closely designed and cleverly exacted.

Injuries, gluttony, revenge are all interface in "The Cask of Amontillado," which are accessory and productive of a horrible compulsion with demise and corpses with their remains and bad smells. Hence, Poe has deepened the calamity, fate and melancholy of Fortunato. A general moral lesson can be inferred from the fact that people in actual life should

be cautious about how to behave in the presence of others, be whatsoever they may, what they say and what they act in front of them. Careful and meticulous messages and addresses are so much significant. An utterance, event, a word, or even a look may be unwittingly interpreted as being offensive by others, which may destroy intimate relations among friends and relatives, and which may be too bad to be repaired. People should take into consideration the fact that others are as susceptible as they are and that they should treat others in the same way they want to be treated. People naturally remember the injuries done to them. In the story, Fortunato's ignorance of those axioms leads him to death. To add to Fortunato's calamity, Montresor appears to be a very good example of the extremist person who always remembers past injuries:

He has been nursing a grudge against his friend Fortunato, who has committed several unnamed offenses against him, and has been coldly planning his revenge. Meeting Fortunato in the street one evening, Montresor takes this opportunity to lure his friend into the deepest catacombs beneath his palazzo, and there he chains Fortunato to the wall of a small alcove, seals him in behind a new brick wall which he builds even as Fortunato begs for mercy, and leaves him to die.

(Lsumner, 2018)

It is generally accepted by Christianity that revenge is the task of God and not of humans; yet, the question to be posed in this regard can be formed as follows: Is Montresor's revenge equal to Fortunato's injuries? The answer to this question cannot be easily attained, for the kind and size of injuries are not unfolded by the author who lets it to be ambiguous as he always does in almost all his horror stories. Nevertheless, it may be suggested that Fortunato may deserve his lot as far as his relation with Montresor is concerned:

No doubt, Montresor has had enough. Fortunato has gotten by with his injuries and insults. Now, Fortunato will reap what he has sown. Montresor will have his vengeance. Fortunato made a grave mistake when he insulted Montresor. Now, Fortunato will meet with his death. He should have treated Montresor the way he wanted to be treated, another relevant message. Truly, the message of revenge is an important one in this story. Also, you reap what you sew. Fortunato has sown grievous insults and now he will reap the ultimate insult. Montresor is about to put Fortunato behind a wall,

there to die.

(Lsumner, 2018)

Montresor's quest for revenge makes him design a fatal plan to murder Fortunato. Thus, revenge is not a matter of righteousness. It may be suggested that Fortunato's excessive love for wine can be regarded as his fatal sin of gluttony that leads him to his death. He intentionally drinks the wine that ends his life. His too much consumption of liquors shows that he is an alcohol addict, which lets his rival design his final breath.

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