Critical Summary #4

1-Summarize “Psychological Criticism”

Psychoanalytical criticism adopts the methods of "reading" employed by Freud and later theorists to interpret texts. It argues that literary texts, like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of the author, that a literary work is a manifestation of the author's own neuroses. Like Psychological Criticism itself, this critical endeavor seeks evidence of unresolved emotions, psychological conflicts, guilt's, and so forth with literary work. The author's own childhood traumas, family life, and fixations possibly can be traceable within the behavior of the characters in the literary work. But psychological material at times will be expressed indirectly, disguised, or encoded (as in dreams) through principles such as "symbolism" (the repressed object represented in disguise), and "displacement" (anxiety located onto another image by means of association). Also psychological criticism may focus on the intentions of the Author, plot, and characters in the story being told. Psychological criticism can also be viewed in the psychological stages of development in a character throughout a story line. In psychological criticism there are three competing forces according to Freud: id, ego, and superego.

Id is an uncontrolled appetite or simple desire. The id psyche satisfies itself or one seeking pleasure. The second force is ego. This is a dimension of personality, the conscious rational part of our personalities. The ego controls various impulses that erupt from other parts of the unconscious mind. And the third force is called superego. This is the conscience of the mind. This stage is when one punishes themselves in the way of guilt, fear, or regret.
Short film “Cask of Amontillado”

From the beginning I felt Montresor had some psychological issues and insecurities that at times made him jealous of Fortunato. It seemed that he looked down on Montresor for a long period and it was just a matter of time before Montresor would get angry at him for all the verbal or physical abuse that he was getting. My impression of Montresor that he wanted to be perceived as a sincere, compassionate well spoken man that had purpose in life versus Fortunato who was rude to others and did not care how he presented himself. I believe the way Fortunato acted bothered Montresor terribly and at the end he felt murdering him was the only solution to satisfy his desire to become like Fortunato. But with Montresor killing Fortunato at the end he became the cold hearted person that he despised in Fortunato. When Montresor was walking Fortunato to the vaults I felt that he was punishing him by changing the subject and showing concern about his cough in order to mislead him. Maybe Montressor was mocking him like Fortunato did at times to himself. This was another way to punish him for all that was done to him in the past. I believe he was jealous in many ways for Fortunato. Montresor spoke how he was rich, respected, admired, beloved, and how happy he was but the one clue that jumped out at me was at the end of the statement when he said “as once I was.”

After rereading this area of the story I started to think that Montresor was trying to be like him but could not. Either he did not have the family wealth or admiration of Fortunato had. When both were having conversations in the vaults about Montresor not being a mason; I believe this was another sign of how he wanted to become important in society but it was impossible to do. When Montresor was creating the stone wall I felt he regretted what he was doing but it was too late to turn back. What he did was not only act heartless like Fortunato showed at times but Montresor acted worse. He became the person he despised, Fortunato.
2- “The Cask of Amontillado” Questions Pages 244-245 (1-11)

Question 1

My first impressions reading the story was who Amontillado is and how do these two characters come together. Then I soon realized with the help of my teacher that it was a kind of wine. This showed how deep the storyline to me was and how I had a difficult time understanding the conversations between the two of them. It took many rereads to understand the story and at the end I feel I still missed some clues to explain many of my questions. The moment in the story that strikes me instantly was how he was explaining his hurt or how Fortunato treated him. Maybe I understood a little of his pain.

Question 2

I like stories that are told in the first person. It gives you a personal view or feeling of what he or she may be thinking or doing. My first impression of Montressor’s values is a proper, well spoken and caring person. But as I read more I believe he was just as heartless as Fortunato in his thinking and his perception he tried to create for society to view. This took time to plan how to murder him and where to do this. So my impression changed throughout the story from a good person to a bad individual.

Question 3

The point where the narrative true purpose comes out is when they were both in the vault and Montresor offered him some wine, knowing that Fortunato has had too much to drink already. This shows how Montresor took advantage of Fortunato and enhanced his altered state to trick him into his death. It is like kicking a person when he is already on the ground.
Question 4

I cannot say I can relate to any situation compares to the story. I am not a jealous person but I can recall a moment that is similar. At times learning either at school or in public would become easier to me. I find it amazing how people understand how to do math equations without thinking about it and for me it takes time. This becomes very frustrating. But I have never hurt anyone because of their talents or how well liked they are.

Question 5

Montresor is a person of deceit; he takes advantage of anyone to progress in society. An example is how he took advantage of Fortunato’s weakness of drinking. Fortunato is a person that seemed to fall into what his status was towards society; by being wealthy, admired, and happy. He also seemed to not to take life seriously, this showed by him drinking excessively and not acting proper in public. He was never his true self; he was always the drunken person people either laughed at or did not take seriously.

Question 6

Fortunato’s behavior I believe is id motivated. His drinking excessively fuels his appetite for satisfaction. He has a hard time not drinking which Montresor notices and uses as a way to lure him into the vaults. Another example of his id motivation is how he disrespects Montresor. His actions towards him must give him pleasure and this is why he constantly did it.

Question 7
Fortunato’s behavior is total ego motivated by him knowing that he has it all and no one can take it away. This type of thinking creates tension for people around him that have to work hard to try to become wealthy and known in society as Fortunato thought he was.

**Question 8**

I feel Fortunato’s other side is a non serious, rude person that abuses not only himself but others. I feel his drinking excessively is a sign that he wants to forget who or where he comes from. For example; when people get depressed sometimes they drink excessively to forget their problems or worries.

**Question 9**

I believe Montresor had a superego. This is displayed when he is laying the final stone and he begins to call Fortunato’s name. This could be a sign he had guilt or felt some form of regret for what he has done. Then instantly his ego takes over and puts his mind set back on track to finish the wall that ultimately kills Fortunato. I do feel sympathetic to a point, one should not be disrespected. Montresor should have expressed his concerns when he was being disrespected by Fortunato. But with id’s, ego’s, and superegos between the both of them I feel that Fortunato would have not listened anyway to Montresor.

**Question 10**

Montresor killed Fortunato I feel because of jealously and being upset of how he was being treated by him. Any individual can take only so much until one hits his or her breaking point. Unfortunately he ended up killing Fortunato which it the wrong thing to do. He does defend his feelings, but to any normal person this thinking is totally wrong. One should never be looked at
differently than another but this gives no reason for revenge. I find one of his explanations in the very beginning of the story when he describes how he has been treated. Another situation that I can remember is when one of the very last stones is being placed on the wall. He listens one more time for Fortunato. Either he wants to make sure he is dead or he has a moment of regretting his actions.

**Question 11**

The obsession of revenge throughout the story becomes excessive to me. I understand how one would feel when emotionally or physically hurt; the narrator does not leave anything out for the reader not to think it is not revenge. At times a person cannot forget the pain they feel; and return they resort to revenge.

**3-Secondary source of “The Cask of Amontillado” interpretation**

The way in which Edgar Allan Poe describes irony in the story of “The Cask of Amontillado” is through conversations that take place between Montresor and Fortunato. Irony is the use of words to express something different from and often opposite to their literal meaning. An example of how irony is used in the story is when Montresor toasts Fortunato to a long life, and how Montresor comforts Fortunato by mentioning his cough and how it will not kill him. These exchanges between the two main characters show how one meaning of a word or sentence can
create a different meaning. The one important example of irony that I enjoyed is when Fortunato asks if Montresor is a mason. Although Montresor is not a true mason he exhibits talents like a mason to create a stone wall to murder Fortunato. I find this to be one of the best examples of Edgar Allan Poe’s use of irony in the story.

Montresor has many personalities. He speaks well, dresses in sharp detail and calculates what he does and thinks constantly. One of the first encounters with Fortunato shows how detailed he becomes when they talk amongst each other. I feel Fortunato tries to be Montresor’s equal with the lavish words he uses but I get the impression he has a hard time expressing himself in the proper way. I feel Montresor is trying to be a person he cannot and this shows by looking the part. Personally Montresor is trying to satisfy his desires of others by using revenge. He only feels that revenge is the only solution making him look not as smart as he thinks he is. This type of psychological issue either can be translated from having a self esteem problem or not fitting in socially as an adult. He becomes obsessed with being accepted in society and when Fortunato does not take him seriously this angers him and return murders him. But how he kills has to be noticed. Montresor does not kill Fortunato quickly; he creates a slow painful death. This shows how Montresor has no regard for individuals. I feel when one kills in a fast way the suspect does not think over what they are doing. An impulse action is occurring. But when one plans a murder for weeks or days they have the intension to hurt in a violent way. Both are not right but Montresor had a special trait, he wanted to create pain in Fortunato; this was accomplished at the end when Fortunato realized this was a trick and his death was interment. This is the moment I feel Montresor accomplished his satisfaction for what he has done. I understand Fortunato really does not know what is going to happen to him but Montresor is enjoying leading him on. I feel he is mocking him just like Fortunato did to him. There seems to be remorse in killing him but
just for a moment and then his superego comes back. I feel he is showing a non caring way not only towards Fortunato but to others also. Montresor is a person that does not respect others and will do anything to satisfy his desires that translate to be bigger than life.

Step 4:

Works Cited


Lessons learned

When I started to read the story of “The Cask of Amontillado” my understanding of it was mixed. I had to reread it many times to fully understand and I was still confused in areas. I again missed some simple errors that I should have caught from creating the incomplete sentence to not explaining myself well with my interpretation of a detail of the story. The one area that I need to pay attention to is to stop and read what I am writing. A perfect example of this is how I messed up the works cited. After viewing the last page I knew that the author needed to be first. Sloppy! One last concern that I should have done is investigate better what irony meant. I thought I knew but after researching the topic more I began to understand better the meaning.