

# English 1102



*Professor Caroline S. Brooks*

# Narration and Point of View

- ❖ **Perspective** and **focus** influence the way we view the events in our lives and the way we tell stories.
- ❖ A story is told from a particular perspective, where the truth is either revealed or concealed.
- ❖ **Narration** distorts experience; it is important to learn how to read stories, how people tell stories, what is involved, how they make stories out of their own experiences, how through narrative they can make sense of their own lives.

# Narration and Point of View

- ❖ **Narration** and **point of view** are less often the focus of student essays. Who is telling the story and from what perspective?
- ❖ How does **point of view** contribute to the meaning of a particular text?
- ❖ **Narration** and **point of view** affect reader's sympathy and knowledge of particular characters
- ❖ **Narration** shapes a text's overall meanings

# Narration and Point of View

- ❖ **Form** can either support or complicate particular interpretations of text.
- ❖ What is lost or at least fundamentally changed by altering **point of view**?
- ❖ Keep a record of expectations and pay attention to the way in which point of view shifts and how point of view affect those expectations?

# Character

- ❖ We judge fictional characters the same way we judge real characters in our lives.
- ❖ Our responses are based on what a character says, does and how they say it and do it, and what others say about them.
- ❖ In analyzing fiction, you must read characters carefully to try to understand who they really are.
- ❖ There is the influence of cultural stereotyping in fiction and in life.

# Character

- ❖ **Characters** in the story are not reducible to their racial identity
- ❖ How close we get to a character in a story is a function of **point of view**.
- ❖ **First person narration** provides a close encounter, a kind of intimacy and proximity to one character's thoughts and experience which causes us to respond more sympathetically; we feel a greater sense of outrage or betrayal if the character lets us down.
- ❖ **Third person narration** is highly variable and omniscient; it tells the story from no perspective at all.

# When Writing About Character

- ❖ Show how a particular character embodies a world view or value system and show why a character suffers a particular problem or dilemma.
- ❖ Note how and why a particular character develops or changes over the course of the narrative, and outline clearly the claim regarding each stage a character goes through.
- ❖ Show how a central conflict in the narrative is dramatized through a comparison of and / or opposition between multiple characters.
- ❖ Show how and why a minor character plays a crucial role in any given text.

# When Writing About Character

- ❖ The key problem for students is to treat characters as individual people versus as embodiments of certain worldviews, values, attitudes and ways of being.
- ❖ Characters in fiction function both as individuals and as representatives of certain worldviews.
- ❖ Facts do not support any argument unless you infer something from them.



# Setting

- ❖ Ask the following questions when studying the **setting of the story**:
  - ❖ When does the story take place?
  - ❖ Where does the story takes place?
  - ❖ What part does the **setting** play in the experience and meaning of the story?
  - ❖ Don't skip over descriptions of setting when reading!
  - ❖ How do portrayals work to evoke particular feelings, expectations or attitudes in viewers?

# The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe

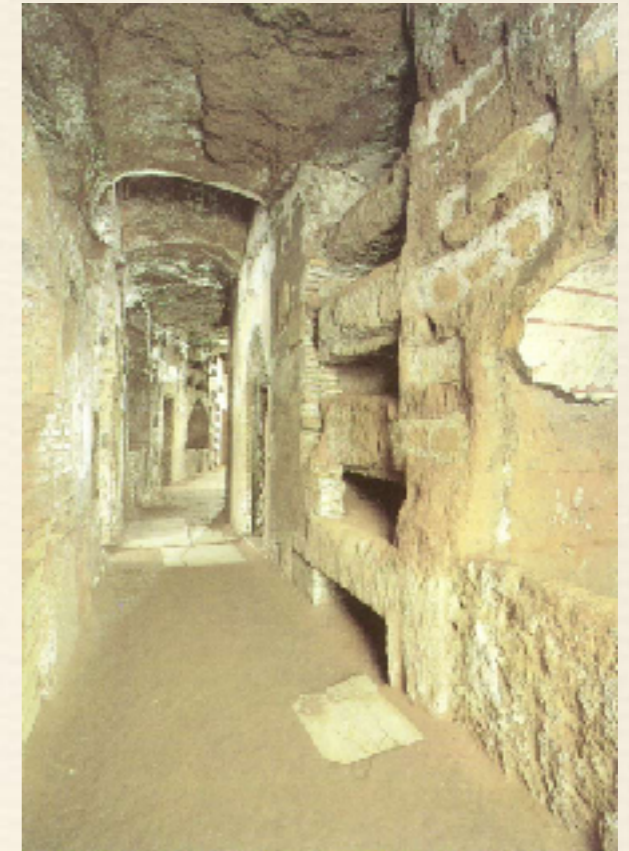
- ❖ Answer one of the following questions:
- ❖ Is **revenge** ever justified?
- ❖ Have you ever thought of enacting revenge of someone for something they have done?

# The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe

- ❖ Behind the story:
- ❖ Poe has a real fear of being buried alive
- ❖ After reading Poe's work, a Russian inventor created a device that allowed the "deceased" to ring a bell so that people above ground would know the buried person was not really dead.

# The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe

❖ **Catacombs** are a network of caves, grottos or subterranean places that are used for the burial of the dead.



❖ **Etruscans** used to bury their dead in underground chambers. **Christians** revived the practice because they did not want to cremate their dead due to their belief in bodily resurrection.

# The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe



- ❖ In the days before electricity one would light up dark, damp catacombs with flambeaux.

# The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe



- ❖ What is a **Cask**?
- ❖ A wooden barrel or container.
- ❖ The word comes from the Spanish *cascara* which means tree bark, in the sense that the bark surrounds and holds the tree in the way that a cask surrounds and holds wine.



# The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe



- ❖ What is **Amontillado**?
- ❖ A pale, dry sherry, named after the Montilla region of Spain where this style of wine originated in the 18th century.

# The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe



- ❖ **Setting:** Carnival Season in Italy
- ❖ It is a festival season that occurs immediately before Lent. The main events are usually during February and March.
- ❖ The season involves a public celebration or parade combining some elements of a circus and a public street party. People often dress up and masquerade during the celebrations.



# The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe

- ❖ **Carnival** or Carnevale
- ❖ **Carnival** is mostly associated with Roman Catholics.
- ❖ The world's largest carnival celebration is held in Brazil, and in the United States carnival is celebrated as Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Louisiana.



# The Cask of Amontillado by Edgar Allan Poe

- ❖ **Irony** is the result of a contrast between appearance or expectation and reality.
- ❖ **Verbal Irony** is when words are used to suggest the opposite of what is meant.
- ❖ **Dramatic Irony** is what appears to be true to a character but it is not what the reader or audience knows to be true.
- ❖ **Situational Irony** is an event that occurs which goes against expectations that have been built up.

# The Cask of Amontillado

## by Edgar Allan Poe

- ❖ Poe's story is **first-person narration** with a partially unreliable narrator, who reveals at the end of the story that 50 years has passed.
- ❖ **Suspense** is founded on the reader's expectation that Montresor will gain revenge; the reader is both curious and anxious about the ending.
- ❖ **Exposition** includes the first three paragraphs
- ❖ When reading fiction, we take the high ground and damn imperfect characters.

# The Cask of Amontillado

## by Edgar Allan Poe

- ❖ The **first-person narration** makes us cheer for the **protagonist**; The story involves character types or stereotypes.
- ❖ Poe challenges the reader to try to guess what will happen next. Amontillado challenges Fortunato's pride; Fortunato is dressed as a fool.
- ❖ Poe's story is **macabre**, like a fable, with Montresor as the author and Fortunato as the unfortunate reader.
- ❖ Montresor announces that there is a plot (a good plot) where perpetrator doesn't get caught.

# The Cask of Amontillado

## by Edgar Allan Poe

- ❖ Montresor's charge is vague, yet we can count on him to carry out his plot.
- ❖ Stop at certain points and write down what you think might happen.
- ❖ What would be lost if the story were told from the 3rd person omniscient perspective?
- ❖ Montresor plays fair with Fortunato with ironic indications: he agrees Fortunato won't die of cough and he drinks to Fortunato's "long" life.

# The Cask of Amontillado

## by Edgar Allan Poe

- ❖ Reader's guesswork is based on cause-and-effect. There is a logic in the sequence of events and in the character's motivation.
- ❖ Plot and suspense seem to depend on logic. How can you guess what will happen next?