Symbols Essay, Research Paper

Symbols

Symbols can play very important roles in the stories that contain them. ?The Masque of the Red Death? by Edgar Allan Poe has three major examples of symbols that help to give the story its true meaning. The three main occurrences of symbolism are evident as a color, number, or a name.

The colors in the story show strongly the attitudes, feelings, or emotions that are occurring. For example, ?the western or black chamber? distinctively indicates a sense of death especially when compared to the other six, colorful chambers. ?The panes were scarlet-a deep blood color.? Poe compares the color of the windowpanes to the color of blood, which implies that blood may be a factor in the plot of the story. As Prince Prospero runs from the ?Red Death,? he rushes hurriedly through all six rooms in which were six completely different colors. The blue, purple, green, white, and violet chambers that the Prince ran through distributes the range of emotions that were racing through his head within those few moments before his death.

Numbers in the story indicate how the author wants the reader to feel. Seven is a holy number which evil may be determined to destroy. This, perhaps, is the reason that the Red Death was a plague of the seventh chamber. He wanted to eliminate any holiness that could be in his way. It is also told that the Red Death appeared at 12 o?clock midnight. Midnight is known as the witching hour. This helps indicate that the ?Red Death? is obviously a bad creature of the night. If the symbols in these numbers were not known, then the time and place of the plot of the story would have been meaningless.

A person?s name can also be a type of symbol. Prince Prospero?s name indicates a prince of prosperity. The beginning of the story says that the Prince was a ?happy and dauntless and sagacious?-the stereotypical life of a prince. Later, even Prince Prospero was killed by the ?Red Death.? The author uses the symbolism of the prince?s name to make the reader jump to conclusions about how the story will end; however, Poe tricked the reader by not making the predictable occur.

Symbols played an extremely important role in ?The Masque of the Red Death.? These symbols (colors, numbers, and names) helped to develop the theme of the story. Nobody can escape his or her destiny of death. If this rich fictional device had not been used then there wouldn?t have been as much meaning to the story. Symbols not only helped to add the finishing touch to this story, but they also help many other authors out by letting them explain them selves in a hidden and mysterious way.

“The Masque of the Red Death” by Edgar allen poe