Symbolism In Edgar Allan Poe S The Black Cat Essay, Research Paper

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In Edgar Allan Poe s The Black Cat, symbolism is used to show the narrator s capacity for violence, madness, and guilt. The Black Cat, written by Edgar Allan Poe serves as a reminder for all of us. The Capacity for violence and horror lies within each of

us, no matter how docile and humane our disposition might appear. In this story, the narrator portrays a man who is fond of animals, had a tender heart, and is happily married. Within several years of his marriage, his general temperament and character make a radical

alteration for the worse. He grows moodier, more irritable, and more inconsiderate of the feelings of others. This change for the worse caused by alcohol, ends in the narrator s waiting on death row for the murder of his wife. The symbolism of the first black cat

(Pluto), the second black cat, and the white spot illustrate the narrator s expanding capacity for evil and perverseness.

The most important symbol of the story is the first black cat. The first black cat is symbolic of the narrator s evil heart and there are many ways one can prove this. Black cat one started out in the story as the narrator s favorite pet and playmate named Pluto,which is the name of the God of the Underworld. And one night, after returning home much intoxicated the narrator s love for the pet seem to fade away. That night in which the narrator is intoxicated, black cat one avoided him. This bothered the narrator to the

point where he would pick up the cat and frighten it. Afraid of his master, the cat slightly wounded the narrator on the hand with his teeth. Because of the cats reaction to his picking him up, the narrator pokes out one of the cat s eye. The eye of the cat which is

poked out by the narrator is symbolic of the narrator not wanting the cat to get a clear perception of his evil heart. Then suddenly on one morning the narrator hung black cat one by a noose from a tree. The hanging of the first black cat is symbolic of the narrator s

not being able to except love. And finally the archetypal symbol associated with black cat one is its color, black. One obviously knows that black cat one is symbolic of evil because of its color, black. The color black is associated with the well known superstition

that black is symbolic of evil and darkness. The first black cat was the victim of the narrator s evil and violent heart.

The second black cat is symbolic of the narrator s guilt. The night after the narrator s house caught on fire, he went to a bar where he saw black cat two. Black cat two resembled black cat one in every aspect except one. The finding of black cat two is symbolic of the night in which the narrator had came home from a bar toxicated. When the narrator began to leave the bar, black cat two began to follow him and this is symbolic of the guilt that follows the narrator. The narrator noticed that black cat two resembled

black cat one in every aspect except one. And the similarity of black cat two to black cat one is symbolic of the guilt that the narrator is carrying. The narrator noticed that at night black cat two sits on his chest, just as the narrator s guilt is doing. The narrator also recognized the resemblance of black cat two to black cat one in every aspect except one. The similarity of black cat two to black cat one is symbolic of the guilt that the narrator is

experiencing.

Finally, the white spot found on black cat two s chest is symbolic of the burden that the narrator carries on his heart. Black cat two had a splotch of white covering nearly the whole region of its breast, which at times changed forms. The color of the spot, white,is an archetypal symbol that has a universal meaning of purity and light. This white spot on the heart of black cat two is symbolic of the purity of black cat one s heart. The white spot changed to the form of gallows, which is symbolic of the guilt of the narrator. If you remember the narrator hung black cat one with a noose or gallows. So basically the white spot serves a punishment inflicted by black cat two.

The first black cat, the second black cat, and the white spot are the three most important symbols in this story. Each one of these symbols represents the evil and perverseness of the narrator. Black cat one let s the reader get a clear understanding of

the narrator s evil heart and unwillingness to except love. The second black cat gives the reader an insight of the narrator s guilt for what he has done to black cat one. And the white spot helps the reader to realize what type of punishment black cat two is inflicting

on the narrator. The basic function of black cat one, black cat two, and the white spot is to illustrate the narrator s increasing capacity for evil and his descent into madness.