

Compare and contrast both poems

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Compare and Contrast Two Poems. The poem Richard Cory by Arlington Robinson, and the song Richard Cory by Paul Simon have identical s, and they deal with the same topic, which is the life and ultimate suicide of Richard Cory. The main theme in both pieces is the contrast between this very wealthy man who lived in great luxury, and the poverty of ordinary people, who could hardly afford enough food to eat, and who envied his lifestyle. Both pieces use the same shocking phrase that describes how Richard Cory “ put a bullet through his head” (Robinson, line 16; Simon, line 26). The main message is the same in both pieces: for all his wealth, Richard Cory was not happy, and so people should not envy material possessions and high status in society because there are other things that can make you happy.

The main difference between the two is in the form of the pieces. Paul Simon uses a verse and chorus structure, repeating the lament of the poor workers, which breaks up the main narrative and emphasizes the situation of the poor people. The chorus sections also change the focus from “ we” to “ I” and they highlight the fact that the poor person works in Cory’s factory. There is therefore a more direct connection between the narrator and Richard Cory in Paul Simon’s version. Robinson’s poem has a linear structure of four verses which starts with Richard Cory, describing him and his suicide, and then ends with the perspective of poor people. It is a simple binary contrast, while Paul Simon’s switching back and forth between rich man and poor man’s perspective makes the piece more like an on-going debate.

Both pieces are very powerful, using simple language, with rather formal and dated vocabulary such as “ clean favored” (Robinson, line 4) and “ quietly arrayed” (Robinson, line 5) in the earlier piece, and a more modern

vocabulary in the later one such as “ a show” (Simon, line 13). They each choose a style suited to their time, and represent the very best in popular creative writing.