

Good essay about similarities between a lost grave and a conversation with my fat...

[Family](#), [Father](#)



" A Lost Grave" by Bernard Malamud and " A Conversation with My Father" by Grace Paley are remarkably two of the greatest stories published during the 21st century. Both authors are outstandingly experienced, talented and with greater ability to use fiction and irony to sway their audience. Grace Paley and Bernard Malamud stunningly and ingeniously use narration to generate stories that utterly explained the real apprehensions that are affecting the society. The stories offer a unique insight into the challenges confronting people in their diurnal lives. Despite being written by celebrated authors from diverse genders and cultures, " A Lost Grave" and " A Conversation with My Father" are outstandingly similar in many aspects. In both stories, the main characters are in a conflict that finally defines their destinies. In " A Conversation with My Father," there are skirmishes between the father and daughter. The father and the daughter are in a conflict due to a generational gap. Through the story, the author unambiguously illustrates the generational gap that is common in the contemporary society (Bohner, 56). The motive of battle between the daughter and the father is that they are inflexible and are not prepared to admit what is erroneous to them. They strongly hold onto their ideas of reality and apparently, no party is ready to change. The grandfather is a perfect representation of the older generation. To the grandfather, life is family oriented, simple and nice and no wonder he strongly believes in the family as an institution. Moreover, the old man believes that characters in the story have some form of individuality and are not supposed to change under any circumstance (Bohner, 18). Each character should also have some physical form that should be elucidated unequivocally in a story and their life story should have a reasonable end.

The daughter who represents the new generation holds contrary ideas. To her, life family life is not important and every person can change depending on the circumstances confronting him or her. She says, " Everyone, real or invented, deserves the open destiny of life." Her hatred for stories that start with " There was a" is evident implying that he could not stomach the ideas and opinions of the old man.

Similarly, In " A Lost Grave," Hecht is in a mission to look for his wife's grave but his mission of finding her is challenged by the cemetery's management. A conflict of interests ensues between the two parties as Hecht insisted that the cemetery managers must show him where his wife's grave was and offer any computerized information that would probably help in identifying her wife's cadaver. The graveyard management seemed to hide some information from Hecht since they feared that uttering the reality would disorient Hecht conceptually and emotionally. Additionally, Hecht says, " my wife wasn't the most stable woman. She left me twice and disappeared for months. Although I took her back twice, we weren't together at the time of her death." This implies that there were conflicts between Hecht and his wife Celia.

Thematically, the two stories are analogous. The preponderate themes in " A Conversation with My Father" is the generational breach, care for loved ones and the difference in opinions due to life experiences and exposure. The storyteller trusts that a narrative should replicate the chances of life not obtainable by preceding cohorts. In comparison, her father prefers works written by writers who were familiar to him, writers who spoke of inflexible societies characterized by limited prospects and everyday struggles (Bohner,

28). However, the daughter thought it imprudent to appease the wishes of a dying parent. " I had promised the family to always let him have the last word when arguing, but in this case I had a different responsibility" (34). In " A Lost Grave," loss of a loved one and generational experiences are predominant themes. Hecht mourns the death of his loved wife that apparently made him undergo stark melancholy. He gets so mad when he finally realizes that Celia was buried with another man. " How could he transfer her grave anywhere if it wasn't his legal property?" It is whoever revealed that Hecht was quite aware of her wife's whereabouts but fabricated not to know. Goodman tells him; " don't forget you gained an empty grave for future use" (212). Hecht replies, " that was obviously true." The two-facedness of Hecht is revealed. Additionally, the young secretary that Hecht meets at the cemetery strived to use technology to help identify Celia's grave. However, being a true traditionalist, Hecht did not believe the machine could assist him in his expedition to find his misplaced wife's grave. This clearly comes out when Hecht tells the young secretary, " If that's how far you can go on this machine, we have to find another way to go further, or I will run out of patience"(210).

Both stories concern coming to terms with death. In " A Conversation with My Father," the father perceives that all of lifecycle's windups are heartrending. He is interested in facts concerning life and how it impacts on an individual's destiny. When the father told the daughter to write a story, he expected her to write about his death since all that they were discussing concerned his death. The narrator refuses to acknowledge that bereavement was the issue of discussion. It is clearly illustrated when the father tells her, "

You misunderstood me on purpose . . . You left everything out" (Bohner, 108). Notwithstanding the argument, the daughter does not want to come to terms with the forthcoming death of her father. Correspondingly, in "A Lost Grave," Hecht could not confess the death of his young wife who left her too soon. He considers himself "a born late bloomer" (Bohner, 29). He is inept to let go of his lost precious one. He sympathizes with her and wonders how difficult the conditions in the grave to be for her. He believes that the grave is his only connection to her. He still adores her and believes that she still needed her help but wonders how to help. "How can you cover a woman who is not where she is supposed to be?" He is seen arranging for perpetual care and finding her grave will enable him unite with her once again.

The two authors use virtually akin literacy devices to convey the message. Grace Paley uses description to illustrate to pass the message to the audience. The use of vivid description and conversational style makes the story interesting to read. "How long will it be? Tragedy! You too. When will you look it in the face?" Similarly, Bernard Malamud uses description and conversational style to put across a very intense message. The story provokes the audience both emotionally and intellectually. He fails to deconstruct the tension created all along and the story ends in a somber mood.

As elucidated above, "A Lost Grave" and "A Conversation with My Father" are two stories written by two different writers and set in different environments. Bizarrely, the stories share many similarities ranging from themes and literary devices to characters' actions.

Works Cited

Bohner, Charles H. Short Fiction: Classic and Contemporary. Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice Hall, 1989. Print.