

Thematic and tonal echoes of annabel lee in lolita

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



The story of Lolita and the poem Annabel Lee exhibit similar themes and parallel one another significantly. Although both pieces were written by separate authors, there is an identical tone initially set by both Nabokov and Poe. This continues throughout the story of Lolita and as the audience, we begin to see that the characteristics of Lolita correspond to those of Annabel Lee. Throughout Lolita, there is much textual evidence to support the conjecture that both pieces have numerous amounts of similarities.

It is believed that Nabokov was inspired by Poe's poem and that the original title for Lolita was The Kingdom By The Sea. This is an interesting comparison because the phrase "in this kingdom by the sea" is repetitively used throughout Annabel Lee and also appears in Lolita. One interpretation on the analytical aspect of this phrase is that the narrator of Annabel Lee portrays his life with Annabel as separate from all other human beings in a grand, magical world, which in turn would mean Humbert Humbert envisions the same for himself and Lolita.

This can be seen when he first meets Lolita and states, "All I want to stress is that my discovery of her was a fatal consequence of the 'princedom by the sea' in my tortured past." This only further proves the speculation that the narrators of both pieces see and describe their loves in similar ways. Another topic discussed was that in this magical world the narrator of both stories might imagine themselves as the king of their fantasy world and therefore have a controlling power over Annabel and Lolita.

With this being said, there is textual evidence to support the hypothesis that both narrators take on the role of being controlling and obsessed with their lovers. The word "my" is used numerous times in both Lolita and Annabel
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Lee to foreshadow their fixation and obsessive behavior towards both characters. One example that clearly portrays this can be found in *Lolita* when Humbert Humbert first meets Lolita. Humbert states, " A little later, of course, she, this nouvelle, this Lolita, my Lolita, was to eclipse completely her prototype.

This is the first of many instances in which Humbert Humbert refers to Lolita as his, implying that she belongs to him, almost creating the image that she is his property. Even as the story first begins when Humbert is speaking to the jury, there is evidence to portray the similarities amongst the pieces. Humbert states, "" Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, exhibit number one is what the seraphs, the misinformed, simple, noble-winged seraphs, envied. Look at this tangle of thorns. " This can be compared to the phrase in *Annabel Lee* where Poe writes, " With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven coveted her and me.

This shows how both pieces mirror one another and how Nabokov adapts language from *Annabel Lee* and often uses it in context throughout *Lolita*. Another ironic similarity is between the characters of Annabel from *Annabel Lee* and Annabel Leigh from *Lolita*. This romance between Humbert and Annabel Leigh is described by using phrases from *Annabel Leigh*. Through this, the audience is able to convey yet another correlation between Poe's poem and Nabokov's story. *Annabel Lee* and *Lolita* echo one another numerous times but there is one statement in *Lolita* that really shows the correlation between the two pieces.

It is when Humbert Humbert is speaking about Lolita and says, " She trembled and twitched as I kissed the corner of her parted lips and the hot
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lobe of her ear. A cluster of stars palely glowed above us... that vibrant sky seemed as naked as she was under her light frock. I saw her face in the sky, strangely distinct, as if it emitted a faint radiance of its own. " This can be directly related to the phrase in Annabel Lee which states, " For the moon never beams without bring me dreams of the beautiful Annabel Lee; and the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

In both phrased, there are many overarching themes but the one that is most similar is the way in which the authors compare Lolita and Annabel Lee to aspects of nature, specifically the moon and the stars. Finally, one of the major overarching themes presented throughout both pieces of literature is love versus death and everlasting love. This is portrayed in Annabel Lee when Poe states, " That the wind came out of the cloud by night, chilling and killing my Annabel Lee. " After Poe affirms Annabel's death, he continues to speak of his love and passion for her just s Humbert does for Lolita right before he dies.

This is a theme that is also seen in many other literary pieces and proves that love can be everlasting, even when death is a factor. Based on the textual evidence explained above, the correlation between Annabel Lee and Lolita is quite obvious. Nabokov repetitively uses language from Annabel Lee and modifies it to fit the context of Lolita. It is interesting to closely examine the comparisons made between both the pieces because there are many of them, and the references from Annabel Lee enhance the plot of Lolita.

The tone in both pieces can be portrayed in various ways. While initially the tone in Poe's poem may seem gloomy and full of despair, it also portrays a tone of passion and an eerie obsession the narrator has with Annabel. This is <https://assignbuster.com/thematic-and-tonal-echoes-of-annabel-lee-in-lolita/>

tone of passion and obsession is also seen in *Lolita* as Humbert Humbert grows fond of her just as the narrator grew fond of Annabel. Although it may not seem as if these two pieces should have any connection to one another, Nabokov is able to alter the language used in *Lolita* so that it directly correlates to the language used in Edgar Allen Poe's *Annabel Lee*.