

Poems "richard cory" and "ezra farmer" essay sample

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Poems “ Richard Cory” and “ Ezra Farmer” Essay Sample

While reading the poems “ Richard Cory” and “ Ezra Farmer”, it is almost immediately evident which poem is an original and which is a parody. Both poems are clearly about men that are popular among those he meets, but once the reader looks beneath the surface, they notice how the diction plays an important role in relaying the theme to the audience it is presented to. In the poem “ Richard Cory” written by Edwin Arlington Robinson, the theme being portrayed is that people are not always as how they seem. In the first stanzas of each poem the differences are subtle yet noticeable. Robinson chooses to use the phrase “ went down town” while the parody says “ chose to go”. The differences in diction here show how Richard Cory goes out to do daily things while Ezra Farmer goes out to be noticed. The following line is the exact same except Robinson says “ pavement” unlike “ sidewalk” in the parody.

This subtle change could hint towards the differences in social classes between the men, or in the way they carry themselves, given that sidewalk tends to be higher up than pavement in physical means. In the third line, the parody changes “ from sole to crown” to “ from heel to toe”. Robinson’s use of “ from sole to crown” implies that Richard Cory is a wholesome man from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head; whereas the parody says “ heel to toe” which has the reader thinking about Ezra Farmers shoes. While comparing the size of a shoe to the amount of wholesomeness a person is doesn’t amount to much. The last line of “ Richard Cory” ends with “ clean favored and imperially slim”. This choice of particular diction gives the

reader an image a man who stands out as more appealing than the average person. Mean while, the parody ends in " clean-cut, good-looking, slim"; though this description depicts Ezra Farmer as an attractive man, that is all he is portrayed to be. The second stanzas of both works have differences as well that begin with the first line.

As Robinson uses the phrase " and he was always quietly arrayed", the parody states " he was a quietly but well-dressed bloke." The use of the phrase quietly arrayed shows that Richard Cory clearly had a variety of clothing, but none of his clothing was flashy or meant to cause him to stand out in a crowd. Ezra Farmer being a " well-dressed bloke" paints the picture that he is one to dress nice to draw attention to himself while in a crowd, or wherever he may be. The second line once again is the same except for the word " human" from Robinson's " Richard Cory" is replaced with the word " courteous" in " Ezra Farmer." The change of words shows the differences between the two characters; Richard Cory can carry a conversation with those around him while sounding like an average person unlike Ezra Farmer talks more polite to once again draw attention to him. This difference is noted in the remaining lines of the stanza as well when the narrator of " Richard Cory" says " but he fluttered pulses when he said, ' Good-morning,' and he glittered when he walked." Though Richard Cory talks like the average person, people still feel special when he acknowledges them.

On the contrary, the parody says " he always caused excitement when he spoke, and everybody watched him when he walked", basically saying that though everyone was interested in hearing what Ezra Farmer had to say,

everyone watches his every move; similar to how celebrities are treated by tabloids and the public. Richard Cory and Ezra Farmer are both wealthy men, but their means of schooling seem to differ. While Richard Cory was "admirably schooled in every grace", Ezra Farmer "was well-trained in every little grace." The differences in word choice here show that Richard Cory was highly admired and educated while Ezra Farmer was taught how to properly do every little thing the correct way. The narrator of "Richard Cory" says "In fine, we thought that he was everything to make us wish that we were in his place" whereas the narrator of "Ezra Farmer" says "In short, we thought that he had everything to make us wish we were in his place", the change from the word "was" to "had" shows how those who were around each of the men truly felt to be around him.

Those who were around Richard Cory wanted to be like him because they admired him, while those who were continually around Ezra Farmer were more so jealous of what he had. The change from "In fine" to "In short" also shows how the narrator of Ezra Farmer wants to shorten up or not go into detail about what he is saying to the audience, as if they are hiding something. In the final stanza of each poem, the first line ends with "and waited for the light", this phrase could mean "waiting for the light at the end of the tunnel" as in waiting for the bad to end, or waiting for the actual light to come as in the sun rising. Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem uses the phrase "So on we worked" as opposed to the parody's use of "And on we went". Saying went instead of worked shows how the people just go about their day doing their normal daily routine. The parody then changes "meat" to "good food", the change shows that they're being more particular in

choosing foods, unlike in "Richard Cory" where the narrator chooses "meat" being general and not too particular.

The last two lines of each poem play the biggest roles in each of them. At the end of the poem "Richard Cory", he takes his own life "one calm summer night"; on summer nights they are usually quiet and those who are outside are able to hear everything from the loudest of sounds to the quietest of noises. This also means that once Richard Cory took his life, everyone knew that it had happened. In "Ezra Farmer" he too "went home and put a bullet through his head" but on a stormy night; on stormy nights, nothing can be heard over the sounds of thunder and lightning, especially a gunshot. The last two lines of these poems show how people really portrayed the two men and how they felt about their deaths. Though everyone knew that Richard Cory had gone home and taken his life, no one knew nor necessarily cared when Ezra Farmer did the same.

The poem "Richard Cory" and the poem "Ezra Farmer" are similar in their content and themes, given that one is a knock off. The main objective of the knock off is to show a similar situation but with a person who is different characteristically from the other. Edwin Arlington Robinson's theme of his poem "Richard Cory" is that people are not always as they seem; this idea is evident in the way that Richard Cory and Ezra Farmer, men that are both wealthy and well-liked are both struggling but no one truly knows what is going on in their lives. The difference between the men is that one is admired, almost idolized, and the other is more so famous, and those who surround him are merely jealous of what he has.