

Edgar allan poe: comparing and contrast between his life with the philosophy of c...

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Prof's Loss and Remembrance in the Raven The Raven is one of the, if not the, best known works by Edgar Allan Poe. There have been innumerable attempts to connect aspects of this story to his poem. In his own "Philosophy of Composition" Poe rejects most of these ideas - making himself seem almost a detached craftsman following clear contours of rational thought. However, an analysis of the poem "The Raven" demonstrate that its underlying theme is loss, and loss's partner, remembrance, two inseparable sides the same coin that never leave a life untouched, and that certainly played a central role in Poe's life.

One of the most interesting things about "The Raven" is that, reversing the normal trend, remembrance precedes loss. Typically, the loss is the thing that comes first, only once the initial shock of loss has been fully experienced can the body and mind rest enough to remember their lost love - even if this remembrance is melancholy in nature.

In Poe's poem, however, remembrance occurs almost at the outset of the poem. After briefly establishing a setting in the first stanza, Poe moves on and describes that the protagonist was trying to wear through the day to get to the next day, where hopefully he would experience "surcease of sorrow" for his love Lenore, who has been lost (Poe 10). Poe thus sets the tone for the poem by establishing it as an act of remembrance in and of itself, and makes the memory of Lenore the central focus of the poem.

One could argue that the character indicates that he has experience loss by calling his love "the lost Lenore," but this is not the case. The protagonist has never fully processed the loss - which is why, when he investigates a sound that he could not find a source of, he calls out to her, asking "

Lenore?" (26) - in his heart he thinks that she may not be lost, he reaches out to her when something seemingly mystical happens.

Poe then springs the trap of loss. It is not Lenore who made the tapping sound, but a raven, a raven whose name is " Nevermore." This name brings the loss home to the protagonist. Everything he tries to say or do is countered by the simple phrase, which tells him in no uncertain terms that he will experience his love " nevermore" - that she is lost forever. Thus loss comes rushing after its partner remembrance, and stays with the protagonist for the rest of his days. Because of his unwillingness to experience loss before remembrance, he will never actually be able to move past the loss, in the form of this raven, sitting forever on his mantle.

Poe's life probably relates quite closely to this story - he experienced a great deal of loss early in his life, with his father abandoning his family quite early and his mother dying shortly after that, and his foster mother in his mid 20s. Poe's experience of loss and remembrance as interconnected ideas probably drove forward much of the experience of this poem.