

Free essay on from my books surcease of sorrow - sorrow for the lost lenore

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



Compare and Contrast

The poem “ The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe and “ The Blessed Damozel” written by Gabriel Rossetti are both about love. However, they deal with this in a different ways. The poem by Rossetti deals with eternal love between two people while Poe’s work is about mental anguish and the struggle that this person undergoes (Kickerbocker 471). Rossetti’s poem is about eternal love and loss, the title itself speaks of being blessed, meaning being with God or ascending to heaven. Poe’s poem is a bit more ambiguous in terms of the title. The reader will have to read the piece of work to understand what the poem is talking about. The title suggests that it is about a bird. Although the bird is part of the poem, and the story behind it, the message which it speaks is completely different. Aside from these different meanings and themes, the genre of the two poems are also very different. One is romantic and the other gothic. The form, imagery and references are also very different. “ The Raven” is much shorter and more playful in terms of words and imagery (Floyd). The rhyming and form of the poems are not alike. However, how they deal with the subject is almost the same. There are several similarities and differences within the two poems that can be analyzed through in depth reading.

The poem “ The Raven” uses a lot of symbols and word play. There are more than meets the eye when it comes to the words in the poem. For example, Lenore, which is the woman that is stuck in the obsessive thoughts of the main character. He talks about her constantly, and she brings him mental anguish. When he tries to think about something else, you can see that his thoughts always go back to her. No matter how hard he tries to forget about

her or think about something else, Lenore comes back in mind. She is the character that fills his mind with sadness and sorrow. However, there is always a bit of mystery when it comes to her. The readers are not certain if she is a wife, girlfriend or lover. There are also no hints of as to what she looks like. Lenore is this character who we hear about very often, yet know nothing about. Although the readers do not hear about her until the 10th line, we understand that she is lost:

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore-
Nameless here for evermore." (Poe, l. 10-11)

We see here that the narrator of the story becomes sad and feels restless about the loss of Lenore. Although his exact feelings towards her are not yet established, the readers know that she is someone important to him, and someone who occupies his thoughts. Lenore is someone who he believes is beautiful and radiant, one who the angels care for. This might have been a hint that she has passed away and is now in heaven.

Rossetti's poem has a different tone, it is not as mysterious as "The Raven". Although there are a lot of different interpretations as to what the poem actually means, the theme of the poem revolves around two lovers who are separated after the death of the damozel. This is seen in the ideal and picturesque painting of love and admiration that the speaker portrays of his love. We see his view of women, how to him they are pure, beautiful and God's angels. The tone of the poem and how he speaks of his love is lighter, filled with eternal love, instead of sadness and grief. Although they had been separated, you do not see as much sullen words as compared to Poe's poem.

The speaker in Rossetti's poem is full of love and was happy to have been with this woman.

“ The blessed damozel leaned out

Her eyes were deeper than the depth

Of waters stilled at even;

She had three lilies in her hand,

And the stars in her hair were seven.” (Rossetti 1. 1-6).

The tale is beautiful yet tragic. However, the imagery and words used were full of life and love. The speaker really admires the lady that he is in love with. The words that he used to describe her paint a picture of eternal gladness, although he knows that she is now in heaven, he does not stop loving her. She fills his thoughts, yet he does not mind. Unlike in Poe's Poem, he does not try to brush her away or think of other things. He is glad that he remembers her and he delights in thinking about her. He even says that his love is eternal and that it knows no bounds. He is not trapped in sorrow because he accepts her death and even believes that she is with God now, leaning over the barriers with flowers circled on her head. He believes that death and eternal life are not a negative thing. In Poe's poem, there is no hope seen when the narrator claims that Lenore is lost. He says that she is not there, although he obsesses over the thought of her, we do not know what he thinks. We are not certain if the narrator believes in eternity or wonders about where Lenore is. Instead of loving her wholly, he is haunted by her.

Rossetti's Poem is very different. For him, love does not end with death. The

lady in his poem is still alive and full of joy. She joins the angels in heaven and she sees lovers rejoining once again. This means that there is hope in his words:

“ Around her, lovers, newly met

'Mid deathless love's acclaims,

Spoke evermore among themselves

Their heart-remembered names;

And the souls mounting up to God

Went by her like thin flames.” (Rossetti 6. 37-42).

Although, not all of the words in this poem by Rossetti are happy. The damozel, being surrounded by lovers that have reunited after what seemed like an eternity in which death separated them, she starts questioning life and love. She wonders why she cannot be with her lover as there are happy couples all around her. The anguish and pain that is felt is dealt with in a completely different way as compared to Poe's “ The Raven”.

Instead of writing about feeling mentally incapacitated by the loss of Lenor, the readers have the image of a big raven in the room. The raven in the poem is symbolic, and it is used to show the sadness and darkness that the loss has brought. Whenever the narrator tries to forget about this mysterious lady who haunts his thoughts, and maybe even in his dreams, the raven comes back and taps on his window. Poe put in a lot of emphasis on how the raven comes in and out of his chambers. This is because he is trying to show how much the thought of Lenor haunts his mind and slips back into his subconscious even when he is busily trying to occupy his thoughts. This was

evident in lines 38 - 40, how the raven comes in as if it owns the place. The image that we see is like one of royalty walking in and sitting on top of their throne.

The grief and sorrow in both poems are handled differently in terms of wording and imagery. In the first poem, the one by Rossetti, we see similes and metaphors in order to try to explain the sadness that has encompassed both the lovers' hearts. We see that they are both forlorn, however there is still hope in their eyes. Their anger is not very destructive, it is short-lived and something that we see they can deal with. They know and understand that their love has not ended and it will not vanish very soon. It is something beautiful and eternal. However, when it comes to Poe's work, his grief is not handled very well. This is done through the use of a refrain. In line 48, we see him repeating the line " Quoth the Raven, Nevermore." (Poe 8. 48) this is the line that breaks him down and makes the narrator fall apart. He realizes how sad he is and what the Raven is doing to him. He goes from sad, to forlorn, to a shuddering wreck. You can feel his anguish and his grief, and you are not sure when it will end, unlike in Rossetti's poem.

The two poems are alike in terms of theme. Although, the deeper theme in the poems are very different. One is about obsession, aloneness and anguish while the other is about eternal love and hope even after death. These two poems are different in form and style. Poe's poem is very mysterious and alluring while Rossetti's is light and heartfelt.

Works Cited

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