

# Comparing and contrasting two literary works essay

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



Poems are used in order to express the feelings of the poet towards the issues they write about. They are used to bring forth the meanings of things that happen in society as well as nature. Emotions are drawn from poems because of the way in which a poet chooses to present their thoughts and the same can be said about the poems *Wild Geese* by Mary Oliver and *Dover Beach* by Matthew Arnold. The two poems share a lot of similarities and differences too with regard to the language used and the meaning derived from them. There is also something about their form and content that looks quite similar and different too. Much of their similarities can be seen through the use of nature to describe events and happenings and the differences can be seen through the main themes that the poems address.

With regard to form and structure there is a great difference in these two poems. In *Dover Beach*, there are four stanzas each of them containing a variable number of lines. For instance, the first stanza contains fourteen lines; the second has six lines, third eight and fourth nine lines (Fabb 2003). There is also no rhyme scheme, and this means that there is a free handling of the iambic pattern in the poem. It can be termed as a series of incomplete sonnets because each one of the stanzas is independent of the rest in so many ways. The thoughts are not organized and are rather free. The poem *Wild Geese* on the other contains one long stanza that has eighteen lines. In it too, there is no clear rhyme scheme and most of the lines are run on just like in *Dover Beach*. In fact, if the lines are to be put together in prose form, they look like a long paragraph that has been broken to make a poem. It is, therefore, clear that there is a similarity between these two poems with regard to their form and structure.

The two poets have used nature to drive their point home. For instance the poem *Wild Geese*, Oliver tries to draw comparison between the behavior of wild geese and human beings. Their behaviors are similar in that people's behavior is like those of wild geese have the same place in the world (Bonds 1992). Even in the middle of a problem, she suggests that people should try and move on in life and that they should not just sit and mourn all the time. Just like the wild geese, which move according to seasons, a time comes when they have to fly home, and they have no choice, but to do so. People also need to move on regardless of the ups and downs of life. In this case, the comparison is drawn between forces of nature and human behavior with regard to different situations and the behavior of geese when it comes to their movement according to the seasons and times of the day.

In *Dover Beach*, the poet attributes some factors of human life; that is feelings to inanimate objects such as the sea. In this case, nature is well highlighted. Arnold uses the sea as a way of presenting sad feelings. This is seen especially when the reader is drawn to feel sympathetic about the situation at hand. The poem centers on religious issues as seen in the third stanza, where it is clear that it stands for faith, it is referred to as "The sea of faith" (l. 21). The faith that human beings have on a superior being is equated to the sea, and this does not end there. The whole stanza is written with reference to how religion changed with the advent of scientific research and progression. With this, there is a lot of uncertainty and confusion that sets in, and religion slowly lost or rather withdrew itself from human grasp as seen in the same stanza in the words "Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar/Retreating to the breath" Reference is used with regard to religion and

the sea (Damrosch et al 2008).

The difference between these two literary works comes in when their different themes are critically analyzed. In the poem *Wild Geese*, it is clear that one has to find their place in the world. It does not matter what one has gone through and the experiences they have had in their lives (Gustavson 2000). A person needs to accept life as it is, and this is a recipe for moving on separating from the past and embracing the future from a different perspective. The persona in the poem says that people are not supposed to spend their lives apologizing for who they are. The most important thing is that people should try and embrace life as it is and do all that pleases them and not that which pleases other people. The poem says that life calls out to everyone just like the wild geese are called home. It is true that the world out there can be harsh but then anyone can turn this into an exciting journey but above all, people should live life to the fullest.

Aside from the religious perspective, the poem *Dover Beach* could be a pointer to society's anxieties at the time of the composition of the poem. The theme, therefore, centers on the negative impact that scientific and industrial developments had on the poor people of that time and the future. The ocean could be a symbol for the lifestyle that the people had at the time. Life was not easy according to the poem and as such, "turbid ebb and flow," could signify the dramatic events that came with the challenges of working. This in a way mirrors how the factory and mills workers worked over and over again within intervals of resting. This took over the place religion had in the lives of many people. Arnold brings in Sophocles, "Sophocles long ago/Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought" This makes the reader reflect

the misery found in his dramatic plays as a symbol of the misery that people were experiencing at the time (Gillon 2008).

The two poems share a lot in common, but there are points at which they differ. In all that, there is one other thing that they share in common, that is the tone. In both poems, there is a ray of hope in the end. In *Dover Beach* hope which seemed to have diminished is found once more in the final stanza. The persona bring his lover to the window and hold each other in the moonlight, he tells his lover, " Ah, love, let us be true/To one another!" (Arnold 28). This could mean that even in the middle of the turbulent times, they have each other. In the poem *Wild Geese*, the persona claims that while people lose hope, the world around them keeps moving (Riley 2003). The first line states that " You do not have to be good" (Oliver 1). This sets a relaxing mood and encourages one to live life as they should. There is positivity in the poem in that the reader gets the notion that no matter how lonely they are, they should embrace the imagination that the world offers them in order to become free.

## References

- Bonds, D. (1992). *The Language of Nature in the Poetry of Mary Oliver*. *Women Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. Vol. 21 Issue 1. New York: Routledge. Pp 1- 15
- Damrosch, D. et al. (2000). *The Longman Anthology of British Literature: Vol. B. Compacted*. New York: Longman - Addison Wesley Longman. Pp 1908-1918, & 2017 -2020
- Fabb, N. (2003). *The Metres of Dover Beach*. *Language and Literature*. Sage Journals. Vol 17: 71- 72
- Gollin, R. (2008). ' *Dover Beach*': The Background of its Imagery. *Journal of* <https://assignbuster.com/comparing-and-contrasting-two-literary-works-essay/>

English Studies. Vol 48, Issue1- 6. New York: Taylor & Francis. Pp 493- 512

Gustavson, C. B. (2000). Inversing Your Life: Using Poetry as Therapy.

Families in Society: TheJournal of Contemporary Social Services. Vol. 81

Issue 3. Alliance for Pp 328- 331

Riley, J. E. (2003). Finding One's Place in the Family of Things: Terry tempest

Williams and aGeography of Self. Women's Studies: An Inter-Disciplinary

Journal. Vol. 32, Issue 5. New York: Taylor & Francis. Pp 585- 602