

# Analysis of the imagery in e. a. poe poem the raven and stanley kubrick's movie t...

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



It has been strongly argued that our routine language, however mundane it may appear, may be as poetic, precise and intentional as literary texts, leaving the literary and non-literary divide blurred. Linguistic creativity has been defined as the “way people use literary-like features”, associated with poetry and highly valued literature, yet the definition of creativity is extremely broad, with researchers acknowledging the creative process, as well as the final creation as creative. (Swann, 2006, p. 12). Creativity has many forms, one of which is literariness. Literariness refers to a quality of literature, something inherent, a value, or a reader’s interaction with a text as well as the text itself. (Swann, 2006, p. 12). According to Carter, literariness is formed by the creativity of a text, which varies as it is evaluated by different creativities rather than a “essentialist creativity”. (Carter, R., 2004, P. 139). It is a matter of degree along a cline of creativity. This method of identifying creativity allows multiple forms of creativity to be considered although the theory appears to suggest literariness is determined by the amount of literary features it contains, which I suggest may trivialise the text. In deciding which texts to choose for analysis, I gave consideration to the BAAL criteria and I am confident both texts conform to the requirements for good ethical and professional practice. I have chosen the poem, ‘The Raven’ by Edgar Allan Poe and a DVD blurb from the horror movie Stanley Kubrick’s 1980’s ‘The Shining’ as I believe both texts to be similar. I view ‘The Raven’ as a hybrid of a narrative and a poem portraying an eerie tale of a man who loses his mind. Equally Text 2, another hybrid tells a similar plot, with a man descending into madness in the form of a blurb, an advertisement, accompanying a creative production. I will

demonstrate that both texts contain creative and literary evidence, demonstrating routine as well as literary texts can be creative.

Carter tells us of three approaches, Inherency, Sociocultural and Cognitive, which help identify creativity and ultimately the literary quality of a text. The Inherency Approach perceives creativity inherent within the text, such as the use of poetic function and artful language. The Sociocultural approach focuses on social and ideological issues, the consequence of beliefs and cultural differences, in particular contexts, that may influence our language use. Lastly, the Cognitive Approach considers the affect and interpretation of the text drawn on by the reader. (R. Carter, 1999 cited by J. Maybin and M. Pearce 2006 p. 6). I believe, all three approaches fall short of fully identifying creativity, failing to completely explain why some texts are considered literary with the omission of poetic language such as academic texts or why some text have been persistently valued as literary throughout time, or how a text is considered literature with fragmented multiple meanings, allowing the reader to interpret a text in ways the author may have not anticipated. However, all three approaches do have their merits and due to the many forms creativity adopts through the text itself or the creative process, I believe it is vital to use all three approaches to analyse a text successfully.

Jakobson adopts Carter's inherency approach claiming deviation, a poetic function, which disrupts the reader's perceptions causing defamiliarisation, argued by Jakobson to be intertwined with literariness. (Jakobson cited by J. Maybin and M. Pearce 2006 p. 16). Jakobson explains all utterances have at least one of the following functions, referential, emotive, conative, phatic,

metalingual and poetic, with the most dominant feature defining the text. He claims a dominant poetic function indicates literariness. Text 1 demonstrates a dominant poetic function conveying a significant amount of deviation and parallelism. Graphological deviation is prevalent with the use of stanzas, each consisting of six lines and capital letters commencing each sentence. Phonological parallelism is ubiquitous with a rhyming scheme of ABCBBB and the grammatical parallelism of "rapping, "tapping" are produced for rhyming purposes with "chamber door", rhyming with the word "nevermore". These features foreground the text and allows the reader to identify it as a poem. However it is argued readers can be influenced to award a text with literariness based on the speech genre. Once it has been recognised the reader may read it differently. This could be further influenced by our upbringing and education where the definition of literariness is already defined by approved texts and we are taught to find meaning in literary texts when there may be none. (Bakhtin, 1986, cited by Maybin, J., and Pearce, M., 2006 p. 14). Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge that individuals due to social practices may classify a text as creative and literary, simply by recognising its inherent features.

Text 1 conveys archaic lexis "Tis", "morrow" and "lore" and semantic deviation with the metaphor "dying ember wrought its ghost", which personifies fire. This is a formal property of Carter's pattern-reforming choices demonstrating literariness. Alliteration is prevalent with, "weak and weary", the repetition of the consonant /w/ and "nodded, nearly napping" the repetition of /n/. Assonance of /ʊə/ in "forgotten lore", and /æ/ in "rare and

radiant” consequently adding to the texts literariness. (J. Maybin and M. Pearce 2006 p. 8-10).

In comparison, Text 2 demonstrates alliteration in “madness and murder” and “milestone of the macabre” with the repetition of /m/. Assonance is present with /o/ in “isolated Overlook Hotel”. Graphological deviation occurs with the elongation of ‘Here’ in “Heeeere’s Johnny!”, quoting an infamous line from the movie. Jakobson tells us when direct lines are taken out of context, it can cause a ‘split’ and ambiguity can occur, increasing the potential meaning and thus its creativeness. (Jakobson, R., 1960, cited by Thornborrow, J., 2006, P. 56) There is evidence of elliptical syntactic structure, excluding verbs, “a member of your own family?” Carter claims ellipsis can be used deliberately to create an illusion of closeness. (Carter, R., 2004). The inclusion of multiple adjectives belonging to the semantic field of fear such as “terror”, “macabre”, “murder” and “monstrous” foregrounds the text intensifying suspense for the reader. (J. Maybin and M. Pearce 2006 p. 8-10). Although Text 2 conveys poetic function, conative function dominates the text, in order to persuade the reader, therefore according to Jakobson, Text 1 would be valued as more literary than Text 2. However, I disagree with this view, adopting Eagleton’s perspective that ‘one person’s normal may be another’s deviation’, signifying individuals may have fluctuating perspectives of what deviation is, for example, the archaic language indicated in Text 1 may appear irregular today, yet it was not the case when Poe wrote it in the nineteenth century. (Eagleton, T., cited by J. Maybin and M. Pearce 2006 p. 11). This emphasises how creativity is not static and

fluctuates with time and place. Thus deviation is highly subjective, varying for each individual and context. However it is clear, Text 2 is using poetic features to manipulate the relationship between reader and author for the purpose of persuading the reader.

The graphological parallelism of interrogative statements, in Text 2, demonstrates defamiliarisation, constructing an informal tone, imitating a conversation genre. Pennycook identifies hybrids as a new form of creativity, challenging the established notions of language. (Pennycook cited by J. Maybin and M. Pearce 2006 p. 22). Nauman explains genre deviations, a genre echoing another genre, are exploited to 'make things strange', foregrounding the text. (E301, CD-ROM Band 2: 'Raw Materials'). While this conforms to the Formalist ideas of creativity, it also adopts a sociocultural ideological function, exploited by the writer to capture the reader's attention. Fairclough (1992) informs us of interdiscursivity, a hybrid of existing genres combined for specific sociocultural purpose. This concept has stemmed from Intertextuality (Kristeva, 1986), the theory that all discourse is influenced by past spoken and written texts, also present in Text 2 with "Heeere's Johnny!". However both require interpretation from the reader, and it is unclear if all readers are able to interpret intertextual references, due to diverse cultural backgrounds. Yet, it can be argued intertextual references are so entwined in literary and everyday discourse, they form a fundamental part of language, implying it is possible that neither the writer nor the reader are conscious of them as they occur so frequently.

Similarly, Bakhtin's sociohistorical heteroglossic theory states texts carry 'many voices', posing contextual and social connotations, which echo previous creations. Bakhtin argued literariness is conveyed through its context, manipulated by the author's intentions. He claims this form of creativity suggests a transient, unrestrictive way of thinking, merging different genres, creating a novel pluralistic discourse to benefit society. (M. Bakhtin, cited by J. Maybin, 2006, p. 435-440). Eagleton identifies literariness by suggesting the powerful members of society give a text value to influence and promote social values in society. Therefore the literariness given to a text disregards the notion of intrinsic quality and depends entirely on the ideologies embodied in the text, accompanied by the political complexities of the time. (T. Eagleton, 1983 cited by J. Maybin and M. Pearce 2006 p. 11-14) Text 1 highlights biblical references throughout the text such as "angels", emphasising religious significance, which may explain its popularity and literary value within society, enforcing cultural beliefs. The poem also focuses on the pain and anguish of personal loss through death, which strikes me as significant with the rising tensions of the time in America with the Civil war looming. In contrast Text 2 has less literary value as an advertisement, however the most important sociocultural issues of the 1980s were to earn money and the film industry was proving vital to the economy, while it was not used directly by the powerful members of society, undoubtedly they benefited from a stronger economy. With this in mind, I believe that both texts can be seen equally creative, however, I suggest that Text 1 is more literary, as it is more appreciated, simply by being an extract

from a poem, and thus valued more by society, as a literary text than a blurb.

Cook argues the formal aspects of language invoke fictional worlds, allowing the reader to escape the restrictions of reality and to think creatively. Cook relates this to 'schema refreshing', literary texts which invigorate and challenge our mental representation, a concept that establishes creativity in Carter's cognitive model. (Cook, 2006 p. 37-45). However Jeffries and Semino argue that not all people are affected by literary texts, insisting that some texts reinforce existing connotations. (Jeffries, 2001, Semino, 1997, cited by Swann 2006 p. 14). Perhaps the metaphor of the fire in Text 1 triggers a different schema of warmth rather than a ghostly personification, either way the ambiguity is evidence for literariness, as it accessible to many interpretations. Jefferies also suggests a text may not always have to challenge the reader's previous knowledge in Schema Refreshment, but may also reinforce what they already know, whether the text is being read for the first time or re-read. This also highlights the possibility that the reader may have previously encountered reviews, regarding Text 2, which may alter their opinion of the text.

Swann supports Cook, referring to story telling, an embedded social activity, as "mind intelligence". Similarly Text 1 is a narrative poem, combining poetry with a narrative, or story. Text 1 demonstrates an I-Narrators viewpoint by using the personal pronoun "I". The protagonist recollects a story, and tells it as if it was happening for the first time. Short suggests the writer deliberately manipulates the reader by withholding information as



they are telling the story from a limited perspective. (M., Short, 1996, P. 257-259) I would also argue that by writing from this viewpoint the text conforms to Bradford's double pattern theory. Bradford informs us creativity can be identified according its polysemic value, a text's resistance to closure. A text, which is monosemic, is expected to be less creative as it fails to challenge the reader's perceptions. (R. Bradford, 1997, P. 86-93). A narration from a third-person perspective is perceived as omnipresent, and less plausible to challenge the reader. In comparison, Text 2 utilizes a third-person narrator, demonstrating the writer's omnipresence, creating ambiguity surrounding the identity of the author. Writers often adopt a third persona narrative to adopt differing viewpoints from their own suggesting a 'implied author' to the reader. Equally, the reader must adjust to be a 'implied reader' enabling the reader to completely emerge in the fictional world described by the writer. (M., Short, 1996, P. 257-259). Ordinarily the third-person narrator enlightens the reader by giving information demonstrated by the declarative statements shown in the second paragraph "Torrance has never been there before", however this is immediately followed by a tag question "or has he?" which acts to forge uncertainty about the narrator. This suggests to the reader the narrator is no longer an omnipresent, but unusually limited, foregrounding and assisting in the suspense and mystery of the text.

Toolan suggests finiteness indicates creativity in connection with plot.

Finiteness determines which sentences are essential to plot by assessing the finite verbs within a text. Finite verbs, verbs changed to show present or past

meaning, can highlight an alteration in time. Text 1 highlights multiple finite verbs with "I pondered", "I nodded", "came", and "I wished". Text 2 has fewer finite verbs with "plays" and "came", nevertheless according to Toolan this information is essential to plot. (M., Toolan, 2001, p. 124-127). However, I believe that although finite verbs show creativity by strengthening crucial plot elements, other linguistic devices such as the parallelism of "chamber door" adds suspense and descriptive clauses such as "midnight dreary" and "bleak December" and the choice to use a dark bird such as the raven all aid in emphasising a dark and mysterious aura crucial to plot.

Both texts use multimodality demonstrating creativity through new possibilities of interpretation. The images add meaning, causing deviation, foregrounding the text. They also portray social and cultural information giving the reader connotations to interpret. Text 2 uses a variety of images from the film, to entice the reader and to create an atmosphere of fear. All the images included are dark and frightening, in particular the main image, the protagonist with a sinister smile. However this is my interpretation of the images, it is important to note that not all people will interpret these images in the same way. The interpretation is dependent on cultural context, social and political factors. Cook argues connotations are numerous and loosely connected, resulting in various interpretations, causing confusion for the reader. (Cook, G., 2001, P. 105 cited by Goodman, S., 2006 p. 253). Authors and advertisers frequently manipulate meaning to deviate away from the expected interpretation. However it could be precisely this ambiguity, which makes a text creative, the author must challenge the reader's pre existing

knowledge, to actively interact with the text. Although it is important to remember not all is a sign of creativity. In comparison, Text 1 has black and white illustrations by Gustave Doré to enhance a dark and eerie mood, accompanied by the raven, a bird with strong connotations of evil and setting the fiction at midnight in a "bleak December" influences the reader's experience. Semino tells us images are combined with texts to help provide the reader with visual support of the mental space described by the writer. The illustrations are also creatively drawn and can be considered creative on their own. Although I believe multimodality enhances meaning communicated through a text, not all multimodality is creative, as we frequently encounter it in our daily routine such as road signs. The reader and their recognition of semiotic domains, the practices that employ one or more modalities, which vary according to our social and cultural background must move beyond the literal translation of the text and focus on the undertone, what is being inferred, to have a greater understanding, (Gee, 2003, cited by Goodman, S., 2006 p268)

Creativity emerges, also in the collaborative construction of reading, editing, and decision-making. Carter and Williams emphasize the importance of collaboration, rather than individual skill, suggesting that it is partly due to our Western traditional beliefs of creativity. The collaboration of text and images demonstrated in Text 1 is successfully used to create the illusion of a fictional world. As well as this, Poe is said to have taken inspiration from other successful writers such as Charles Dickens and drew upon his own experiences of lost love from the death of his wife. This highlights how Poe

accessed available resources to construct new texts for his own purpose. In Western cultures creativity is recognized and valued only when it has been changed significantly enough to hold original properties. (Uta Papen and Karin Tusting, 2004, p. 316). In contrast, Text 2 has been produced by multiple writers and advertising specialists utilizing market research in order to persuade readers successfully. These are both examples of meaning-making processes, which are considered creative. All meaning-making processes collect existing cultural resources for a purpose in a particular setting. However this definition is extremely broad, making it difficult to find a text that doesn't have any creative element. (Uta Papen and Karin Tusting, 2004, p. 315).

In conclusion I have analysed both texts and highlighted significant evidence of creativity and literariness. Text 1 has conveyed evidence of creativity by demonstrating a dominant poetic function, interdiscursivity, social value, multimodality and ambiguity. In comparison with Text 2, I found Text 1 to have more evidence of creativity due to a greater significance of social value, its narrative qualities and its high content of formal linguistic properties, therefore it has more literary value according to Carter's cline theory. Nevertheless, Text 2 is still creative having demonstrated evidence of creativity and literariness with ambiguity, intertextuality, multimodality, being polysemic and its collaborative construction. The analysis has emphasized the diverse forms of creativity and demonstrated how they relate to different literary, cultural and socio-historical contexts. Creativity can be seen by the formal properties inherent in a text emphasising how

both texts hold literary quality. It is also conveyed by creating ambiguity and meaning-making processes, creative acts involving the collection of resource to create something new for a specific purpose. By analysing all the different aspects of creativity that we are able to see forms of literariness in everyday as well as literary texts which is perhaps not expected by some individuals. I conclude there are many different forms of creativity, which we encounter, in our routine experiences suggesting they are deeply embedded in our society giving roots to literariness in formal texts. However, I believe the reader, what they classify as creative, their ability to read and interpret meaning and willingness for schema refreshment ultimately determines creativity and literariness.