

# Author study of edwin arlington robinson

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Quite normally, writer's call upon events from their lifetime that stand out to them as memorable for both positive and negative reasons for inspiration. A clear example of this can be found in the poetry of Edwin Arlington Robinson. When interpreted with regards to his life experiences, Robinson's poetry shows a distinct connection to what he's been through in his life. We can see this by comparing/contrasting 2 of his most famous poems; 'Richard Cory' and "Miniver Cheevy'.

Robinson uses symbolism, tone and character in these poems to convey his past experiences. During Robinson's life, he went through several traumatic experiences that most likely influenced his writing. One that has become a central theme in his poetry is his brother Herman's marriage to the love of his life, Emma Shepard. This proved to be a very big 'blow to his pride', seeing as how Robinson was also with her at one point and expected to marry her. Another event that potentially made an impact on his poetry was referred to as his Annus Horribilis, or 'year of woes'.

His father died after he lost their family fortune, his mother died shortly after of diphtheria, and his older brother Dean died of a drug overdose. His brother Herman made several bad investments which all failed, and became an alcoholic. He eventually shot himself, and his death was said to be the underlying inspiration of Robinson's most famous poem 'Richard Cory'. Robinson himself had a battle with alcoholism while living in poverty in New York City, another experience that contributed to his writing; more specifically his poem 'Miniver Cheevy'. Robinson's poetry can be interpreted several different ways, but the most significant way is through the troubling experiences of his lifetime.

Two of Robinson's poems that convey the experiences of his life most clearly are his poems 'Miniver Cheevy'; which was said to be written about Robinson himself, and 'Richard Cory'; which was based off the death of his brother Herman. Both poems use fictional characters in place of the names of whom the poems are really referring to, and use similar literary tools to convey the message. In 'Richard Cory', Robinson changes to tone from cheery to surprisingly somber to symbolize his brother's 'perfect' exterior yet troubled reality. For example, in the first stanza the poem reads '...he was a gentleman from sole to crown, clean favored, and imperially slim' and ends with '...And Richard Cory, one calm summer night, went home and put a bullet through his head.' In 'Miniver Cheevy', Robinson started and ended the poem on the same sad notes yet gave the body of the poem a happier tone.

Robinson used imagery and symbolism to show that he resented the time period he was born in and felt that he was meant to be born much earlier. For example, the poem reads 'Miniver loved the days of old when swords were bright and steeds were prancing' and 'Miniver cursed the commonplace and eyed a khaki suit with loathing, he missed the mediaeval grace of iron clothing.' His word choices in these lines show that he felt he should've lived during the medieval time period; how he contrasts a khaki suit and 'iron clothing' (a knight's armor) and claims that he misses 'days of old when swords were bright...'. I feel as if Robinson wrote this poem to convey his feelings of not belonging, feeling out of place, or being looked at as a 'loner' during childhood. Although the two poems are different in tone

and purpose, they are also both prominent examples of Robinson making connections between his writing and his personal life.

Edwin Arlington Robinson was a great writer who led an unfortunately troubled life; a life that most likely influenced his writing more than any other inspiration he had. His technique of symbolism, characterization, and using life experiences as a basis for his writing is clearly shown in the two poems ' Miniver Cheevy' and ' Richard Cory'. In my opinion, Robinson's work has a more meaningful message because of his use of connections to his own life.