

CHAPTER TWO

ANALYSIS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE'S POEMS

In this chapter there are three poems by Edgar Allan Poe which will be discussed, they are: "To One Departed", "To One In Paradise", and "Annabel Lee". The analysis will focus on how the diction helps in revealing the theme of each poem.

"To One Departed"

"To One Departed" was first published in Southern Literary Messenger on July 1835. It is said that Poe wrote this poem in remembrance of Sarah Elmira Royster Shelton which was Poe's old flame. The fact is shown in the following quotation:

"Elmira" was Sarah Elmira Royster Shelton, one of the people who had the greatest influence on Poe's life and work. When their first engagement was broken by her father, the eighteen-year-old Poe wrote about his sense of loss in poems including "Tamerlane," "Song," and "To Elmira." Even

Poe's brother, William Henry Leonard Poe, wrote a short story about the doomed romance. (Quinn 127)

The theme of this poem is "Losing a loved one may strip away one's passion in life".

Seraph! thy memory is to me 1
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea -
Some ocean vexed as it may be
With storms; but where, meanwhile, 5
Serenest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.

In the first line of the poem, the word "Seraph!" which means "angel", is mentioned. It can be seen that an apostrophe (a figure of speech in which the speaker directly speaks to someone who is not present or is dead, or speaks to an inanimate object. ("Apostrophe")) is used. The persona in the poem calls over to the seraph. This can be proven by looking at the exclamation mark, which can be used as a sign of direct speech that represents something shouted or spoken very loudly ("Exclamation mark"). In addition to that, the use of the diction seraph is the writer's way of showing that this particular poem is for someone who has already passed away; the use of the diction seraph gives the reader a clue to the location of the seraph, which is in heaven, and heaven is only accessible to those who have passed away.

In the next line, the writer describes the memory of the seraph is like an enchanted far-off isle in some tumultuous sea. The diction "some enchanted far-off

isle in some tumultuous sea” creates a sense of struggle. The words “enchanted” and “tumultuous”, indicate that the persona is in confusion. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary*, “enchanted” means “placed under a spell”(“enchanted”) and “tumultuous” means “involving a lot of change and confusion and/or violence” (“tumultuous”); it may mean that though the memory is special and hard to forget, the persona also feels that he is in confusion in living his life with the memory of the deceased. This analysis indicates that on one hand, the persona cannot forget the beautiful memory about the seraph, but on the other hand, he also has to remember the painful memory. The persona is torn between the beautiful and the painful memory of the the seraph, which indicates that the persona is struggling in living his life with the memory of the seraph.

The lines “Some Ocean vexed as it may be/ With storms; but where, meanwhile,/ Serenest skies continually Just o’er that one bright island smile” further strenghtens the previous analysis. The diction “Some ocean vexed as it may be with storms; . . .” indicates a situation which is volatile and unstable like a storm, or difficult to be approached. It can be seen that this is the persona’s explanation regarding the word “tumultuous”. This supports the idea that the persona has to live his life not only with the beautiful memory but also with the painful memory represented by the ocean vexed with storms.

In sixth and seventh lines, the image of enchanted isle shows that the serenest sky is smiling just to that one island, which creates the sense of uniqueness. This supports the idea that the particular memory is special. In relation to the analysis about the seraph, the memory may be about someone who holds a special

place in the persona's heart. It is obvious that the persona has an intimate connection with the deceased.

For 'mid the earnest cares and woes
That crowd around my earthly path,
(Sad path, alas, where grows 10
Not even one lonely rose!)
My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee; and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose

The second stanza deals with how the persona copes with the lost and continue his life with the memory of the seraph. The lines "For 'mid the earnest cares and woes/ That crowd around my earthly path,/ (Sad path, alas, where grows Not even one lonely rose!)" show how the lost affects the persona. How the persona's life is filled with happiness and sadness can be seen at the eighth and ninth lines, represented by the word "cares" and "woes". The diction "sad path" and "alas" show how the lost of the seraph brings sadness to the persona. It is possible that without the seraph, the persona feels that his world is filled with great sadness, which is supported by the eleventh line; ". . .where grows/ Not even one lonely rose!" The persona is very sad because according to him, not even a single rose bloom. According to "The Language of Flowers", the diction "rose" derives from the Latin word "rosa" which means love. Based on that, it can be seen that the persona in the poem is so sad that he can no longer love. This shows how losing the seraph affects the persona directly.

Twelfth and Thirteenth lines show how the persona in the poem gets consolation from his dreaming about the seraph as well as showing that the effect of losing the seraph still lingers. “My soul at least a solace hath/ In dreams of thee;” the word “solace” can also mean consolation and thus, it can be assumed that the persona’s soul finds consolation in the memory about the seraph. In relation to the previous analysis, these lines also show that the seraph is someone special, proven by how the memory of the deceased gives solace to the persona.

The lines “. . . and therein knows/ An Eden of bland repose”, clearly show that even with the consolation he gets, the persona has lost his passion. The diction “Eden” refers to the garden of Eden, which according to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, is a beautiful garden which is “often seen as a place of happiness” (“Eden”). Normally one would feel either happy or amazed to see such a garden, but, the writer also adds “bland repose” which makes Eden a boring place to the persona. The diction “bland” means “with little colour, excitement, or interest; without anything to attract”(“bland”) while the diction “repose” means “a state of rest, sleep or feeling calm”(“repose”). From the meaning, it can be seen that the persona sees Eden, a magnificent paradise, as a boring resting place. In relation to lines 10 and 11, it is clear that the persona feels the consolation as if it is a bland tranquility in which the persona can no longer be passionate about love.

It can be seen how the diction explained shows that the seraph is the person of interest which the persona loves, and the seraph’s demise affects the persona greatly to the point where the persona can no longer love; From the diction analysis, it can be concluded that the theme of the poem is “Losing a loved one may strip away one’s passion in life”.

“To One In Paradise”

“To One In Paradise” is another poem which will be analyzed. It also deals with how losing a loved one affects someone. The theme of the poem is “Losing a loved one may bring sorrow to one”

Thou wast all that to me , love, 1
For which my soul did pine-
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers, 5
And all the flowers were mine.

In the stanza above it can be seen clearly that the persona in the poem shows the feeling which he has for the person of interest. The repetition of word “love” strongly suggests that the persona loves the person of interest in the poem. The first line of the poem “Thou wast all that to me, love,” gives another impression of how strong the persona’s love is for the person of interest, The diction “all that to me” further shows how great the love that the persona feels for the person of interest; declaring that he/she is all that matters to the persona.

In addition to that, the word “pine” which according to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* means “to become very sad because somebody has died or

gone away” (“Pine”) emphasizes the sense of lost which is in accordance to the theme statement. Thus, the first two lines show that the persona is in the state of mourning because of losing the person he loves.

The lines “a green isle in the sea”, and “a fountain and a shrine” and “all wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers”, strongly suggest how the persona’s love is full of wonder. The diction “fairy”, “green isle in the sea”, “A fountain and a shrine” create the sense of beauty; the words mentioned create a wonder, an image of paradise. These elements strongly emphasize that the persona’s love is beautiful and full of wonder; it is almost like a “dream”. From this analysis it can be seen that this stanza is talking about the love that the persona feels for the person of interest; he/she is all that matters to the persona, he/she is what the persona’s soul is longing for, he/she is the embodiment of the beautiful isle. It can be seen clearly that the persona expresses his/her feeling towards the person of interest, showing the persona’s deep affection.

Ah, dream too bright to last!

Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise

But to be overcast!

A voice from out the Future cries,

10

'On! on!' - but o'er the Past

(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies

Mute, motionless, aghast!

In the second stanza, the writer shows how the event take turns. The first line of the second stanza strongly suggests how “dream” which is the connected to the love that the persona has is starting to crumble and it strongly suggests that his

“dream” is ending. “Ah, dream too bright to last!” clearly shows that something happens to the “dream”. The diction “too bright to last!” creates the sense of an end, which means that the persona can no longer continue his love. Another proof which supports the idea that the “dream” is moving away from his grasp can be seen in the second and third line of the second stanza: “Ah, starry Hope! That didst arise/
But to be overcast!” The persona’s “starry Hope!” which is his love, does exist but it is not visible.

The lines “A voice from the future cries,/ ‘On! on!’” might indicate that the persona is feeling sad. The persona is now in the “future” state while his heart still belongs to the time where his loved one is still alive. By looking at this line, it is obvious that the persona cannot accept the lost of his loved one as he drowns himself in sorrow, and to ease himself from the sorrow, he tries to release his emotion. The word “cries” according to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* means “(of a bird or an animal) to make loud unpleasant noise”(“Cry”). This may indicate how the persona is trying to release his emotion. The sorrow is so great and deep that the writer uses a verb which is meant for an animal to a person. Normally, the word “cry” means “scream” when it is applied to an animal as its subject, when it is applied to human, “cry” means “shed tears”. The diction ““On! on!”” suggests that this sorrow keeps on going; normally, only sadness that is deep and great that will continue to linger. This complements the idea that the sorrow which the persona feels is so great and deep.

The sense of sorrow can also be seen in line eleven until thirteen “. . . – but o’er the past/ (Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies/ Mute, motionless, aghast!”. These two lines show the feeling of sorrow which the persona feels. The word “dim”

according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* means “not giving any reason to have hope”(“Dim”) while the word “gulf” means “a deep ravine, chasm, or abyss”(“Gulf”). It may indicate that over the past since the lost of his love, he feels as if he is living in the deep abyss where hope hardly exists. This shows how the lost brings sorrow to the persona.

Line thirteenth shows that the persona's soul is stagnant, no longer able to feel excitement or love. It strongly supports the sorrow which the persona feels. If someone's soul is in the state of mute, motionless, and aghast (“filled with horror or shock/Horrified”(“Aghast”)) the person must be in shock which according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* is “a strong feeling of surprise as a result of something happening; especially something unpleasant; the event that cause this feeling. (“Shock”); thus, if we relate the meaning of the word to the theme statement, something unpleasant might have happened to the persona as he is in the state of shock.

For, alas! Alas! Me

For me the light of Life is over!

15

'No more- no more- no more-'

(Such language holds the solemn sea

To the sands upon the shore)

Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree

Or the stricken eagle soar!

20

The third stanza explains further about the sorrow of the persona. The lines “For, alas! Alas! Me/ For me the light of Life is over!” strongly enhance the feeling of sorrow. The repetition of the diction “alas” strongly supports the idea of sorrow.

The persona also feels as if his light of life is over, he can no longer find enjoyment and love from his life. Furthermore, the sorrow can also be seen from the third line of the third stanza, “No more-no more-no more”. The repetition of the word “no more” suggests that the persona has enough, as if the persona does not want to feel this torment anymore.

The persona also adds some detail that he truly means it when saying that his life is over, which can be seen in the fourth and fifth line “(Such language holds the solemn sea/ To the sands upon the shore).” The persona swears that he means it when saying that his light of life is over. The sentence can be interpreted as follows: the persona says the words with faith and unbroken truth like sands that bind the sea to the shore. This analysis is in accordance with the theme of the poem; it shows how much sorrow the persona feels towards the lost.

The nineteenth and twentieth lines show how everything is meaningless: “Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree/ or the stricken eagle soar”. The persona tries to say that everything is meaningless now, like the tree that grows only to be blasted by thunder and like an eagle that soars only to be stricken down. In addition to that, the diction “tree” and “eagle” bring forth the sense of life and freedom. In relation to the poem, this indicates that the sorrow which the persona feels banishes all the hopes and dreams to the point where everything is now meaningless, a life with no hope and dream.

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy grey eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams-

In what ethereal dances,

25

By what eternal streams.

The last stanza of the poem shows the persona's resolution regarding the lost. In the twenty first line the persona feels that his days are trances. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* trances means "a state of thinking so much about something that you do not notice what is happening around you" ("Trance"). Based on this, it is clear that the lost really affects the persona to the point where he is haunted by the lost as if he is in trance.

In the twenty second and twenty third lines, "And all my nightly dreams/
Are where thy grey eye glances", clearly show a sense of longing depicted by the fact that in his dreams, the persona still cannot forget about the person that he loses. His dreams are filled with the thought of that person.

The last three lines "And where thy footsteps gleams-/ In what ethereal dances,/ By what eternal streams." Shows another representation of the lost that the persona feel. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* "ethereal" means "extremely delicate and light; seeming to belong to another, more spiritual, world." ("Ethereal") The lines may suggest that the persona is no longer in the same realm with his loved one. His lover now belongs to another realm where she remains eternal.

The sense of longing shows that the persona is having a difficulty to cope with the lost; the sorrow which the persona feel is the product of him losing his loved one and the diction used helps reveals the theme which is "Losing a loved one may bring sorrow to one".

“Anabell Lee”

“Annabel Lee” was written in 1849 but it was not published until shortly after Poe’s death in the same year. Many sources believe that this poem was dedicated to his late wife, Virginia.

The theme of this poem is “Losing a loved one does not mean losing the love for the loved one”

it was many and many a year ago, 1

In a kingdom by the sea

That maiden there lived whom you may know

By the name of ANNABEL LEE;

And this maiden she lived with no other thought 5

Than to love and be loved by me

In this stanza the persona introduces a woman named Annabel Lee and the speaker also suggests that both of them are deeply in love, which can be seen in the fifth line “ And this maiden she lived with no other thought than to love and be loved by me.” The diction “with no other thought” further explains how deep the love is.

The diction “maiden” brings a sense of purity. Instead of using “woman” or “girl” the writer chooses the diction “maiden” to show how Annabel Lee is different from any other girls. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, “maiden” means “a young girl or woman who is not married”(“Maiden”). From this

meaning it is shown that Anabell Lee is still pure, untouched by man; thus, the idea of purity emerges from the diction "maiden".

I was child and she was a child
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love-
I and my Annabel Lee; 10
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

This stanza speaks about the fact that the persona loves Anabell Lee since he was a child and what kind of love the persona has for her. The first line "I was child and she was a child" supports the idea that they have known each other since childhood. The speaker then tries to explain that even in their youth their love is already strong, which can be seen in the ninth line until eleventh line "But we loved with a love that was more than love/ I and my Annabel Lee;/ With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven/ Coveted her and me". From this lines, it is clearly seen that the persona loves Anabell Lee very much and his love is more than ordinary love. It can be seen that the persona's love is so great that the winged seraph of heaven would like them to love each other, "With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven coveted her and me." From the diction used it can be seen that according to the persona, his love has been blessed by the winged seraph of heaven and that their love transcends the ordinary love. The love that the persona has is so pure and blessed by the seraph; it is almost unexplicable. This also suggests that the love that the persona has for her is strong, thus this analysis is in accordance with the theme statement. "With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven coveted her and me."

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And this was the reason that, long ago,

In this kingdom by the sea,

A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling 15

My beautiful Annabel Lee;

So that her highborn kinsman came

And bore her away from me,

To shut her up in a sepulchre

In this kingdom by the sea. 20

In the third stanza the persona tells the reader about how Annabel Lee is dying. The lines “A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling/ My beautiful Annabel Lee” may suggest that Annabel Lee is gone. It can be seen from the diction “chilling”; when a person dies their body will be cold, thus, the diction can be interpreted that way. The seventeenth line suggests that Annabel Lee is a noble, looking at the diction “highborn kinsman”. The kinsman separates Annabel Lee from the persona and buries her in a sepulchre. The next lines shows how Annabel Lee is taken away from the persona. The line “to shut her up in a sepulchre” describes how, according to the persona, Annabel Lee’s kinsman separates the persona from Annabel Lee; the persona cannot accept the reality that Annabel Lee is gone. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, sepulchre is “a small room or monument cut in

rock or built from stone, in which a dead person is laid or buried”(“Sepulchre”)

This also proves that Annabel Lee is dead.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven
Went envying her and me-
Yes!- that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night, 25
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee

This stanza explains how the persona faces Annabel Lee’s death. It can be seen that in the second stanza the diction “seraph” is mentioned, while in the third stanza the writer uses the diction “angel”. This is due to the fact that angel is creation of God, not all of their job is to safeguard mankind; thus the writer uses different words to differentiate them. This may be explained by looking at the holy scripture as reference.

According to Christian angelology, there are nine choirs of angels and seraphim are mentioned first because seraphim have the most love to god, which also means that their place is the highest and the closest to God in hierarchy (Rodabaugh). Angels is the lowest in rank, thus the “angels” in third stanza is different to seraphim. It also seems to be the writer’s way to avoid confusion to the reader.

“The angels” takes Anabell Lee away. In this stanza it can be assumed that “the angels” symbolizes death. The diction “angels” create a sense of pure heavenly beings with power. Death in its own way is also a pure being with power; death

comes to us all. This may be the reason why the writer chooses to use the diction “angels” as a symbol of death as the job of the angel of death is to take life. In Hebrew and Islam an Angel named Azrael (Izra’il in Islam) is known as an angel of death whose job is to separate human’s soul from their body “‘Izrā’īl, in Islām, the angel of death who separates souls from their bodies; he is one of the four archangels (with Jibrīl, Mīkāl, and Isrāfīl).”(Britannica) This fact support the idea of an angel whose job is not to safeguard mankind.

The last two lines of the fourth stanza, “That the wind came out of the cloud by night/ Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee,” may refer to the details of what kills Annabel Lee. In relation to “the wind came out of the cloud by night”, it is obvious that she is not killed by something physical, but something natural. From the diction “wind” which cannot be seen but can be felt, it can be assumed that sickness is what kills Anabell Lee; sickness and wind have one similar element, it cannot be physically seen, but it can be felt. But our love it was stronger by far than the love

Of those who were older than we-

Of many far wiser than we-

And neither the angels in heaven above, 30

Nor the demons down under the sea,

Can ever dissever my soul from the soul

Of beautiful Annabel Lee.

The persona gives the reader more information about how the love that the persona has for Annabel Lee. The diction “But our love it was stronger . . .”, and “far wiser . . .” emphasize the strong love that the persona feel towards Annabel Lee. The love is not an ordinary love, but its a love that transcends the meaning of love; it is a love that transcends lust, cares, and honesty. The writer keeps emphasizing how the persona’s love is different and pure; the writer describes that even in their youth their love is far more stronger than those who are wiser and more stronger than their peers.

This stanza speaks about how strong the persona’s love to his lover. The lines “. . . neither the angels in heaven above,/ nor the demons down under the sea,/ can ever dissever my soul from the soul/ Of beautiful Annabel Lee” this line strongly suggests that even though Annabel Lee has already deceased, and not even hell or heaven will severe the love that the persona has for Annabel Lee. In this stanza, the diction “dissever” gives a very strong meaning that shows how strong the persona’s love, it also it gives us the feeling that the persona’s soul cannot be separated from Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling- my darling- my life and my bride,

In the sepulchre there by the sea, 40

In her tomb by the sounding sea.

In this stanza the persona emphasizes the fact that Annabel Lee has already gone from the line “And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes of the beautiful Annabel Lee.” In this line “the stars never rise” represents the fact that Annabel Lee is dead and will never be alive again.

In the 38th and 39th lines it can be seen how the persona loves Annabel Lee even after her demise. The diction “. . . all the night-tide, I lie down by the side . . .” represents the persona’s never ending loyalty to his lover and the repetition of “darling” further emphasizes that Annabel Lee is the one person that the persona holds most dear.

The next line “but I feel the bright eyes/ Of the beautiful Annabel Lee” represents the persona’s memory about his lost lover. Another line in this stanza that shows the speaker painful lost is “I lie down by the side/ Of my darling- my darling- my life and my bride”. This line shows how much the love that the persona’s has for Annabel Lee even after she dies. It is obvious that even when facing the lost of his loved one, the persona love does not diminished. It can be said that his love grow stronger thus, the diction used in the poem help reveals the theme of the poem which is “Losing a loved one does not means losing the love for the loved one”.