



Edgar Allan Poe
(1809-1849)

Why is Poe Important?

- Poe wrote landmark criticism and memorable poetry.
- Poe created the modern short story, with its unity of character, detail, and mood.
- Poe's psychotic murder stories paved the way for later pop-culture writers.
- Poe created the detective story.

Primary Works

Tamerlane and Other Poems, 1827 (poems); *Al Aaraaf, Tamarlane, and Minor Poems*, 1829 (poems); *Poems: Second Edition*, 1831 (poems); "Ms Found in a Bottle," 1835; *Politan - A Tragedy*, 1835 (play); *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, 1838 (novel); *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. 2 vols., 1840 (stories); *The Prose Romances*, 1843 (stories); *Tales*, 1845 (stories); *The Raven and Other Poems*, 1845 (poems); *Eureka: An Essay on the Material and Spiritual Universe*, 1848 (criticism).

Major Themes

1. Love - usually of a mourning man for his deceased beloved. The man may then sleep in her tomb beside her dead body.
2. Pride - physical and intellectual.
3. Beauty - of a young woman either dying or dead.
4. Death - a source of horror.

“Annabel Lee” (1949)

- Many people consider that this poem was inspired by Poe’s wife, Virginia, who married him when she was 13 and died in her twenties.
- Note the rhythm (of the ocean) created by “sea,” “Lee,” and “me”.
- The dreamy feeling created in “But we loved with a love that was more than love.”
- All kinds of repetitions

“Annabel Lee” (p. 678)

- It was many and many a year ago, (11 syllables)
In a kingdom by the *sea*,(7)
- That a maiden there lived whom you may know (10)
By the name of Annabel *Lee*;(8)
- And this maiden she lived with no other thought
(11)
- Than to love and be loved by me.(8)

- I was a **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**;
With a love that the winged seraphs of
heaven
Coveted her and me.

- And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this *kingdom by the sea*,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this *kingdom by the sea*.

- 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,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

- 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,

Nor the demons down under the *sea*,

Can ever dissever my soul from the soul

Of the beautiful *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 her sepulchre there by the *sea*,

In her tomb by the sounding *sea*.

Question

- In which way does “Annabel Lee” fit Poe’s standards for a successful poem? Consider the effect, the length, the impression, and the tone.

“The Raven” (1845)

- What do you think the raven represents? Why?



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Question

- “The Raven” is Poe’s most famous poem. Can you give a reason for its fame?

Question

- Discuss “The Raven” in terms of its setting, theme, word choice, sound and rhythm. (You can get help from Poe’s “The Philosophy of Composition”.)

“The Philosophy of Composition”

- Length
- Effect
- Method
- Tone
- Undercurrent of meaning

Gothic Romance

- Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* introduced the term "gothic romance" to the literary world in 1764. While it presented, at first, a topic for argument and inflammatory rhetoric, over the years the gothic has come to be respected as a venerable albeit still controversial genre. However, due to its inherently supernatural, surreal and sublime elements, it has maintained a dark and mysterious appeal. Since 1764, many authors have followed in the footsteps of Walpole, including such diverse names as Anne Radcliffe, Edgar Allen Poe, Bram Stoker and Shirley Jackson.

Gothic Romance

- This wide variety of viewpoints, however, is what makes one single, all-encompassing definition of gothic literature so very difficult to ascertain. So then, what is "the gothic"? Generally speaking, gothic literature delves into the macabre nature of humanity in its quest to satiate mankind's intrinsic desire to plumb the depths of terror.
(<http://personal.georgiasouthern.edu/~dougth/goth.htm>
1)



<http://www.answehttp://www.answers.com/ligeia>

“Ligeia” (1838)

- What similarity do you find between the subjects of “The Raven” and the short story “Ligeia”?

“Ligeia”

- How do we explain the bizarre and horrific ending of the story?

“The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839, 1840, 1845)



[http://www.gaudela.net/
vdgg/cover-
the_fall_of_the_house-
en.html](http://www.gaudela.net/vdgg/cover-the_fall_of_the_house.html)

Question

- What do the Usher and house have in common in “The Fall of the House of Usher”?

Question

- **In what ways does the conclusion of Poe's story relate to the title "The Fall of the House of Usher"? What is the light that the narrator sees shining through the crack in the mansion? How does this crack recall the description of the mansion at the beginning of the story?**

Websites

- http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/poe/poe_ind.html Poe's Poems
- <http://www.underthesun.cc/Classics/Poe/> About Edgar Allan Poe