

The era of Romanticism spans from the late 1700's to the mid 1800's following the French Revolution; therefore, "Romanticism" encompasses characteristics of the human mind in addition to the particular time in history when these qualities became dominant in culture. Romanticism depicts an artistic movement which emerged from reaction against dominant attitudes and approaches of the 18th century. Romanticism established realism in literature through creativity, innovation, exploration, and vivid imagery. By expanding beyond the definition of love, Romanticism, accented by mystery, delves into the strange and fantastic aspects of human experiences. "To escape from society, the Romantics turned their interests to remote and faraway places; the medieval past; folklore and legends, and nature and the common man." Edgar Allen Poe is noted as one of the few American "Romantic" poets. Poe's poem "The Raven" portrays Romanticism as characterized by emotion, exotica, and imagination.

A friend of Edgar Allen Poe, R. H. Horne, wrote of "The Raven", "the poet intends to represent a very painful condition of the mind, as of an imagination that was liable to topple over into some delirium or an abyss of melancholy, from the continuity of one unvaried emotion." Edgar Allen Poe, author of "The Raven," played on the reader's emotions. The man in "The Raven" was attempting to find comfort from the remembrance of his lost love. By turning his mind to Lenore and recalling how her frame will never again bless the chair in which he now reposes, he is suddenly overcome with grief, whereby the reader immediately feels sorry for the lonely man. The reader pities the man's state of mind.

In addition to an emotional characteristic, Poe also portrays the exotic. Exotic means "unnatural". Exotic means a raven that speaks only one word. Exotic means a bird that refuses to leave and insists in staying in one place. Finally, exotic means a life of torment of the speakers soul. The man is drawn to the bird to seek an answer to the monotonous reply of "Nevermore".

Finally, "The Raven: is characterized by imagination. The man imagines that a raven is a godsend, intended to relieve him of his anguish. The man imagines that like all other blessings of his life, the bird will leave. The man's imagination rebukes the bird. The man calls the bird a "thing of evil". The reader imagines a lonely, frightened, old man who has suffered a great loss.

"The Raven is a poem written during the Romantic Era. Romanticism doesn't mean that a literary work has to be about love. Ironically, "The Raven" is both "romantic" and from the "Romantic" period. Poe's poem is about a man's "lost love". The man's emotions causes him to become exotic (shouting like a maniac for the bird to take its leave) and finally to imagine all sorts of weird things (a raven that refuses to leave and speaks only one word; "Nevermore").

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