

## Rhetorical analysis essay sample

Edgar Allan Poe is considered one of America's greatest novelists and journalists. He's particularly well known for his masterful horror stories. Poe's use of metaphors and similes have never failed to put readers on the edge of their seats. And, while he is less famous for his poetry, *The Raven* remains an undeniable classic that leaves a lasting impression on every reader. This effect is achieved through subtle use of not only poetic devices, but also rhetoric means.

Poe's poem *The Raven* shows the struggles of a man possessed by his own ghosts of the past his fear of the ever-changing present, hinting at his impending psychosomatic breakdown. When you start reading *The Raven*, the first feeling you get is that of immense loneliness. The author uses powerful Pathos to evoke feelings of paranoia, fear, hopelessness. The Unseen main character seems to be tormented. With every new verse, poem tone becomes darker and sadder. Every time the word "Nevermore" is uttered, readers get the impression our main invisible character is becoming more enraged.

Throughout his life, Poe was plagued by misfortune. At a young age, he was traumatized by his mother's death. This experience gave him a fascination with death and the macabre. His adult life was not happier. Some experts believe now that Poe has been suffering from a chronic depression.

These dark elements appear clearly in his works. *The Raven* is a self-painted portrait of a man who is ready to welcome death. It employs anaphora to emphasize feelings of looming insanity. Poe uses anaphora by ending all 18 stanzas with the word "Nevermore", "nothing more," or "evermore." By keeping true to his theme, Poe successfully follows narrator's train of thought as he goes from an irrational human being who is grieving, to an insane lunatic who sees a giant raven "perched on his door."

Alliteration is used to add to an overall paranoid tone of this poem. By combining both alliteration and anaphora we can clearly walk side by side with someone who has truly lost all meaning to live.

*The Raven* itself is an anthropomorphic metaphor for the past. We are not sure if there actually is a raven in the room. No other character can justify the existence

of that creature but what we do know is that this metaphor is so well crafted that we sometimes feel unnerved and frightened ourselves.

Readers can sense the narrator's optimism seeping through the Mask of Madness. Every single time Raven quotes "nevermore" we have a separate verse where the narrator is making an excuse. Whether that is a step in the grieving process called denial or just madness its unknown. Poe wasn't the first writer who used denial to paint an eerie picture. He was, however, feeling guilty at the time he wrote this poem; Raven was written several years after his cousin passed away. It is assumed that Lenore, the maiden in this poem, is actually his cousin. If we assume that to be true, Poe himself acts as a protagonist in this poem. We already know that Poe's cousin died because he himself neglected her and didn't have the funds to treat her illness. In that sense, a narrator fighting The Raven has his own specter coming from the depths of Hell to torment his grieving soul. By hiding his true identity behind that of an Invisible narrator, Poe has the power to say to himself what he wasn't brave enough to say in reality. That being, he considers himself a murderer.

This hypothesis ties in with anaphora use throughout the poem. Not only is our narrator too paranoid but he is also questioning the legitimacy of reality itself. Every time he glances at the raven, readers are shown exactly what is on his mind. Narrator's constant attempts to escape are Poe's own failed attempts to escape his miserable life.