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Introduction

Literature often employs vivid imagery to evoke emotions and deepen thematic meaning. Two renowned poets, William Butler Yeats and Edgar Allan Poe, masterfully utilize symbolic imagery to craft specific moods within their works. Yeats's "The Song of Wandering Aengus" employs the image of apples to evoke longing, hope, and a mystical aura, while Poe's "Eldorado" uses symbolic representations of a lost city and its environment to explore themes of despair and the relentless pursuit of an elusive ideal. This article explores how each poet uses imagery—particularly apples in Yeats's poem and other symbols in Poe's—to develop mood and enhance the reader's emotional experience.

The Use of Apples in Yeats's "The Song of Wandering Aengus"

Context of the Poem

William Butler Yeats's "The Song of Wandering Aengus" is a lyrical poem that draws from Irish mythology, narrating the journey of a fairy boy named Aengus who seeks a mystical, ideal love. The poem is rich with symbolism, with the apple imagery serving as a pivotal motif that underscores its themes of longing, beauty, and spiritual quest.

Apples as Symbols in the Poem

The Apple as a Symbol of Desire and Beauty

In Yeats's poem, apples symbolize the allure of beauty and desire that drives Aengus's wandering. The poet describes the boy's pursuit as a quest for an elusive, sacred love, reflected through the imagery of apples:

> "And pluck till time and times are done,
> The silver apples of the moon,
> The golden apples of the sun."

These lines evoke images of celestial apples, emphasizing their divine and mystical qualities. The apples are not ordinary fruits but symbolize the eternal and transcendent nature of the object of Aengus's longing.

Apples and the Mood of Enchantment

The imagery of "silver apples of the moon" and "golden apples of the sun" creates a mood of enchantment and wonder. The celestial apples suggest a dreamlike, otherworldly atmosphere that elevates the poem beyond mere earthly desire. This mystical mood reflects Aengus's spiritual quest, making the

pursuit seem both beautiful and bittersweet.

Developing the Mood Through Apple Imagery

Longing and Hope

The recurring imagery of apples as luminous celestial bodies enhances a mood of hopeful longing. The dream of divine apples symbolizes an aspiration that is both beautiful and unreachable, creating a sense of yearning that pervades the poem.

Mysticism and Transcendence

The apple imagery contributes to a mystical atmosphere, positioning the journey as a spiritual or poetic quest. The celestial apples evoke a mood of wonder and reverence, emphasizing that the pursuit is as much about spiritual fulfillment as it is about love.

Summary of Apple Imagery's Effect

- Creates a dreamlike, enchanted atmosphere
- Symbolizes divine beauty and desire
- Enhances the mood of longing, hope, and spiritual transcendence

Edgar Allan Poe's "Eldorado": Use of Symbolic Imagery to Develop Mood

Overview of the Poem

"Eldorado" is a narrative poem by Edgar Allan Poe that depicts a knight's relentless quest for the legendary city of gold, Eldorado. The poem explores themes of aspiration, despair, and the human condition's inherent longing for fulfillment.

The Symbolic Significance of Eldorado

Eldorado as an Allegory

Eldorado represents the ultimate goal, the ideal or paradise that remains elusive. Poe uses the symbol of Eldorado to explore the universal human desire for happiness and perfection, which often leads to despair when unattainable.

The Environment and Mood

Poe describes the knight's journey through a bleak, often desolate landscape:

- > "Gaily bedight,
- > A gallant knight he wandered long,
- > Singing a song."

And later, the imagery shifts to a more foreboding tone as the knight searches desperately:

- > "Over the mountain shadow,
- > Over the mountain shadow,
- > Out of the sunlight,
- > Out of the sunlight,

> Into the gloom.”

This transition from light to gloom underscores the mounting despair and the futility of the quest.

Poe’s Use of Imagery to Develop Mood

The Environment as a Reflection of the Knight’s Psyche

- Bright, hopeful images early in the poem set a mood of optimism.
- Dark, shadowed imagery as the journey continues amplifies feelings of hopelessness and despair.

The Use of the “Gloom” and Darkness

The recurring motif of darkness and gloom – such as “into the gloom” – intensifies the mood of bleakness and resignation. Poe’s vivid description of the landscape and the knight’s wandering through it evoke feelings of loneliness and existential longing.

The Final Encounter

The poem concludes with the knight’s death, symbolizing the death of hope:

> “And on the horizon,
> There rose a shining city,
> Bright with golden towers,
> Eldorado.”

This imagery of a shining city in the distance contrasts sharply with the preceding gloom, emphasizing a fleeting hope that remains just out of reach, thus deepening the mood of poignant longing and tragic futility.

Developing Mood through Symbolic Imagery

- The City of Eldorado symbolizes the ultimate aspiration—beautiful yet unattainable.
- The contrasting imagery of light and darkness reflects the shifting emotional landscape of hope and despair.
- The desolate environment underscores the loneliness and perseverance of the knight’s quest.

Comparative Analysis: Apples in Yeats and Symbols in Poe

Common Themes in Imagery Use

Aspect	Yeats’s “The Song of Wandering Aengus”	Poe’s “Eldorado”
Symbolic Object	Apples (silver and golden)	Eldorado (city of gold)
Mood Created	Enchantment, longing, hope	Despair, longing, futility
Imagery Style	Mystical, celestial, poetic	Dark, bleak, allegorical
Purpose	Elevate spiritual and emotional longing	Emphasize human aspiration and despair

Differences in Mood Development

- Yeats’s apples evoke a mystical, hopeful mood, emphasizing beauty and

divine aspiration.

- Poe's Eldorado employs contrasting imagery to evoke a mood of tragic longing, emphasizing the futility and despair of human pursuits.

Conclusion

Both William Butler Yeats and Edgar Allan Poe skillfully utilize vivid imagery to shape the emotional landscape of their poems. Yeats's use of celestial apples in "The Song of Wandering Aengus" fosters a mood of enchanted longing and spiritual elevation, reinforcing themes of desire and transcendence. Conversely, Poe's symbolic portrayal of Eldorado and its surrounding environment in "Eldorado" builds a mood of despair and relentless pursuit of unreachable ideals, emphasizing the tragic dimension of human aspiration. Through their masterful use of symbolic imagery, both poets deepen the reader's emotional engagement and enrich the thematic complexity of their works.

References

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SEO Keywords

- Yeats The Song of Wandering Aengus analysis
- Apple symbolism in poetry
- Poe Eldorado imagery analysis
- Developing mood through imagery
- Literary symbolism in poetry
- Poetic imagery and mood development
- Symbolism in William Yeats's poetry
- Edgar Allan Poe themes and symbols

Frequently Asked Questions

How does Yeats use the image of apples in 'The Song of Wandering Aengus' to develop the poem's mood?

Yeats employs the imagery of apples to evoke a sense of longing, allure, and the pursuit of an elusive ideal, creating a mood of mystical yearning and nostalgic aspiration.

What is the significance of the apple imagery in Yeats's poem in relation to the theme of quest or

desire?

The apples symbolize the unreachable or divine beauty that Aengus seeks, emphasizing the themes of eternal longing and the pursuit of spiritual or idealized fulfillment.

How does the mood created by the apple imagery in Yeats's poem influence the reader's emotional response?

The imagery evokes feelings of wistfulness and hope, drawing readers into the poet's mystical longing and enhancing the poem's reflective, enchanted atmosphere.

In Poe's 'Eldorado,' how does the use of imagery contribute to the poem's overall mood?

Poe uses vivid, somber imagery of the knight's quest and the elusive Eldorado to evoke feelings of despair, futile longing, and the relentless human pursuit of unattainable dreams.

What role does the imagery of the 'golden' or 'shining' city play in shaping the mood of Poe's 'Eldorado'?

It creates a mood of idealized aspiration and hope, but also underscores the inevitable disappointment and the tragic persistence of longing for something forever out of reach.

How does Poe's use of imagery in 'Eldorado' deepen the theme of the unattainable or elusive goal?

The shimmering, distant city symbolizes the ultimate goal that remains forever beyond reach, emphasizing themes of human desire, mortality, and the eternal chase after dreams that may never be fulfilled.

Compare how Yeats and Poe use imagery to develop mood in their respective poems.

Yeats uses natural, mystical imagery like apples to evoke longing and enchantment, creating a mood of spiritual quest, while Poe employs somber, shimmering imagery of a distant city to evoke despair and the tragic pursuit of unreachable dreams.

How do the images of apples in Yeats's poem and the city in Poe's poem serve to symbolize the human condition?

In Yeats's poem, apples symbolize hope and mystical aspiration, reflecting a spiritual or idealistic longing; in Poe's poem, the city represents the elusive nature of dreams and the existential human struggle with mortality and unfulfilled desire.

Why do both poets use vivid imagery of distant or desirable objects to develop mood, and what effect does this have on the reader?

Both poets use vivid imagery to evoke emotional resonance and deepen the reader's engagement with themes of longing, aspiration, and mortality, creating a mood that is both hopeful and contemplative, emphasizing the universal human experience of yearning for something beyond reach.

Additional Resources

In *The Song Of Wandering Aengus*, Yeats Uses The Image Of Apples To Develop Mood

The poetic landscape of William Butler Yeats's "The Song of Wandering Aengus" is richly woven with symbolic imagery, among which the apple holds a significant place. Yeats's masterful use of the apple image is instrumental in creating a mood of longing, enchantment, and elusive beauty. Through this symbolism, the poet explores themes of desire, spiritual pursuit, and the transient nature of happiness. The apple in Yeats's poem acts as a multifaceted motif, shaping the emotional tone and reinforcing the poem's mystical atmosphere. This article examines how Yeats employs the image of apples to develop mood and deepen the poem's themes, and then compares this with Edgar Allan Poe's use of symbolism in "Eldorado," highlighting contrasting techniques and effects.

Yeats's Use of Apples in "The Song of Wandering Aengus"

Symbolic Significance of Apples

In Yeats's "The Song of Wandering Aengus," the apple symbolizes both temptation and the pursuit of ideal beauty. The poem narrates the speaker's quest for a mystical girl who appears to him in a dream or vision, embodying an unattainable ideal. The apple emerges as a key image early in the poem:

"Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done,
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun."

Here, the "silver apples of the moon" and "golden apples of the sun" evoke a sense of celestial purity and divine beauty. Apples, traditionally symbolizing temptation (as in the biblical story of Adam and Eve), are reimagined here as luminous, otherworldly fruit, heightening the mystical

mood of the poem. The apples are not ordinary; they are celestial and eternal, representing the poet's longing for spiritual fulfillment that remains just out of reach.

Pros of Yeats's Apple Imagery:

- Creates an otherworldly, mystical atmosphere that elevates the poem's mood.
- Reinforces the theme of longing for something divine or unattainable.
- Adds a rich layer of symbolism that invites multiple interpretations.

Cons or Limitations:

- The celestial apple images may distance some readers from the tangible emotional core.
- Overreliance on symbolism could obscure the poem's narrative clarity for some audiences.

Development of Mood Through Apple Imagery

Yeats's use of apples contributes significantly to the mood of enchantment and wistfulness. The luminous apples evoke a dream-like state, emphasizing the transcendence of the poet's desire. The recurring references to celestial apples suggest that the pursuit is both spiritual and eternal, yet tinged with melancholy because the object of longing remains elusive. The mood oscillates between hope and despair, with the apples serving as a symbol of the distant, perfect happiness that the wandering poet seeks but cannot fully attain.

The apples also serve to elevate the tone of the poem, imbuing it with a sense of wonder and mysticism. The imagery transports the reader into a realm of myth and legend, where the boundaries between reality and fantasy blur. This creates a mood of reverie, inviting the reader to share in the poet's eternal quest, marked by both beauty and sorrow.

In Eldorado, Poe Uses

Symbolism and Mood in Poe's "Eldorado"

In Edgar Allan Poe's "Eldorado," the symbol of the knight's quest for the legendary city functions similarly to Yeats's apples, representing an ideal or a distant, perfect place. However, Poe employs the symbol differently to evoke a mood of despair, weariness, and the inexorable passage of time.

The poem's narrative follows a weary knight seeking Eldorado, the mythical city of gold, as he journeys through a desert. The knight's search is relentless, and the poem captures a sense of futility:

"Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,

Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.”

Later, the knight’s encounter with Death underscores the futility of his quest:

“Over the mountain
Down the valley,
Climbing the canyon,
Seeking Eldorado.”

Ultimately, he encounters “Death,” which signifies the end of his pursuit, casting a somber mood over the poem.

Pros of Poe’s Symbolism:

- Effectively creates a mood of relentless pursuit and inevitable mortality.
- The knight’s quest symbolizes human ambition and the futility of reaching idealized dreams.
- The stark contrast between the luminous city and the desolate landscape heightens emotional tension.

Cons or Limitations:

- The poem’s brevity may limit depth of exploration of symbolism.
- The bleak mood might overshadow any sense of hope or achievement.

Development of Mood Through the Use of Symbolism

Poe’s use of Eldorado as a symbol develops a mood of desolation and existential longing. The journey through the desert underscores human vulnerability and the transient nature of worldly pursuits. The final encounter with Death emphasizes the futility of human endeavors, evoking feelings of melancholy and contemplation of mortality.

The imagery, combined with the rhythmic structure, enhances the poem’s somber tone. Poe’s portrayal of the knight’s unending quest imbues the poem with a sense of tragic inevitability. Unlike Yeats’s celestial apples, Poe’s Eldorado is an unreachable dream that ultimately leads to death, emphasizing the darker aspects of aspiration.

Comparison of Techniques and Effects

While both Yeats and Poe utilize powerful symbolism—apples and Eldorado—they serve different emotional and thematic purposes.

- Yeats’s Apples:
 - Symbolize divine beauty and spiritual longing.
 - Create a mood of enchantment, hope, and mystical aspiration.
 - Elevate the poem’s tone with a sense of wonder and transcendence.
- Poe’s Eldorado:
 - Symbolizes human ambition and the pursuit of idealized dreams.

- Develops a mood of despair, futility, and existential reflection.
- Highlights the tragic dimension of unfulfilled pursuits and mortality.

Contrasts:

- Yeats's imagery is luminous, mystical, and aspirational, fostering a mood of hopeful longing.
- Poe's imagery is stark, desolate, and somber, emphasizing futility and mortality.
- Both poets use the symbols to evoke emotional responses aligned with their themes—Yeats with wonder and aspiration, Poe with melancholy and reflection.

Conclusion

The use of apples in Yeats's "The Song of Wandering Aengus" exemplifies how symbolic imagery can shape and deepen the mood of a poem. The celestial apples evoke enchantment, longing, and spiritual aspiration, embedding the reader within a dreamlike atmosphere that oscillates between hope and melancholy. In contrast, Poe's "Eldorado" employs the symbol of the legendary city to evoke a mood of despair and existential questioning, emphasizing the futility of human pursuits in the face of mortality.

Both poets demonstrate mastery in using symbols to develop mood—Yeats through luminous, divine imagery that inspires wonder, Poe through stark, relentless symbols that evoke tragedy. Their contrasting techniques underline how symbolism, when wielded effectively, can profoundly influence the emotional landscape of poetry, enriching themes and engaging readers on a deep, visceral level. Ultimately, these works exemplify the power of imagery to transcend literal meaning and evoke complex emotional and philosophical responses.

In The Song Of Wandering Aengus Yeats Uses The Image Of Apples To Develop Mood In Eldorado Poe Uses

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