
Lack of satisfaction leads to irritation

Throughout the analysis of the two pieces, "When I have Fears," and "Mezzo Cammin" there was a similar theme, and use of language to portray it. The former poem was written by John Keats, in 1818, just several years before his death. It expresses sadness, as Keats had ill health and worried that he would not fulfill his potential as a writer. "Mezzo Cammin" was from the perspective of a middle-aged person who expresses that he has let slip half his life without accomplishing anything. It was written in 1842 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Although the poem, "When I have Fears" is more of a young person's lament and "Mezzo Cammin" takes on a bored and dissatisfied tone, both contribute to a central theme based on fear of death and frustration towards unfulfilling one's potential.

There are very clear similarities between the theme relating to depression, frustration, and death in the two poems. In "When I have fears," Keats expresses this sadness, and regrets the way he has lived his life. Line 14 states "Till love and fame to nothingness do think." He uses this powerful imagery to lament on all the things he will never accomplish; love, and success. However, Keats seems to have accepted the fact that he will die soon. In "Mezzo Cammin," Wadsworth takes a similar theme in an entire different direction. He says, in a slightly depressed and dissatisfied tone, "Half my life is gone and I have let/the years slip from me and have not fulfilled." (lines 1-2) In this poem, the speaker seems to be a middle-aged man who is having a crisis. He is dissatisfied and has not carried out all the potential he has. Wadsworth does not know how to live the rest of his life, and regrets the time he has already had. He fears death although it is "Thundering far from the heights" (Line 14). The theme of fear, of death, is exemplified in both poems through imagery, however the tone of each is very different.

The two sonnets were written during very different times, and therefore have very different structures. "When I have fears" is a Shakespearean sonnet, and was written during the romantic movement. Shakespearean sonnets use a distressed tone, with intense imagery revolving around love, sin, and passion. The perspective taken by Keats is shown when he says "And when I feel, fair creature of an hour/that I may never look upon thee more." (lines 9-10) This line is a heavy example of some characteristics of a Shakespearean sonnet written during the romantic movement. In contrast, "Mezzo Cammin" is a Petrarchan sonnet, written based off Italian literature. The title is also very significant in showing tone. "Mezzo Cammin" references a line taken from Dante's divine comedy, "In the middle of the journey of our life, I found myself in a dark wood with the right road lost." This line is a direct reflection of how Wadsworth feels, like he is halfway through his life and has fallen off track. The structure in each poem is significant because it greatly impacts the tone and the direction it is taken.

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The poetic devices and word choice used in both poems is slightly similar. John Keats Uses personification to emphasize the beauty of the world that he will be leaving “When I behold upon the night's star'd face” (Line 5) is an example of his use of intense imagery, this literary device creates a more realistic scene, and allows the reader to imagine they are actually there. Keats speaks of the love he will never experience. He refers to “Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance.” Wadsworth in opposition speaks mostly of death resulting in a very depressing poem he uses personification in the last line by saying “The cataract of death thundering far from the heights. Giving death the ability to thunder makes it seem ever more imminent, and inescapable. The author is restless and believes that he doesn't not have enough time to fulfill himself as a writer. The two authors use similar word choice and poetic devices to show emotion and their respective themes throughout the poem.

Both poems, “When I have fears” and “Mezzo Cammin,” express themes relating to fear of death, regret, and a frustration at life in general. Keats uses romantic Shakespearean poetry to express sadness at all he will never live to see. In contrast, “Mezzo Cammin” uses the Italian Petrarchan style. Wadsworth gives more of a disinterested depressed tone. The poems exemplify similar themes, but in very different ways.

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