



Manonmaniam Sundaranar University

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

TIRUNELVELI - 627 012, TAMILNADU

M.A ENGLISH (FIRST SEMESTER)

Poetry

(From the Academic Year 2023 - 2024)

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FIRST YEAR – SEMESTER I

POETRY

UNIT I

Middle English Poetry

Chaucer – “The General Prologue”: Pardoner, The Nun, Doctor, Friar

UNIT II

Elizabethan Poetry – Spenser: “Epithalamion”

Donne – “A Valediction: forbidding mourning”

“The Canonization”

UNIT III

Seventeenth Century Poetry

John Milton – “Paradise Lost” Book IX

Marvell: “To His Coy Mistress”

UNIT IV

Eighteenth Century Poetry

Dryden – “Absalom and Achitophel” Lines (150-476)

Gray - Ode to a Distant Prospect of Eton College

UNIT V

Modern Poetry – Rupert Brooke: “The Soldier”

Wilfred Owen: “Anthem for Doomed Youth”

W. H. Auden: “Elegy on the Death of W. B. Yeats”

Dylan Thomas: “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”

Philip Larkin: “Whitsun Weddings”

Ted Hughes: “Hawk Roosting” Seamus

Heaney: “Digging”

LO1 To introduce the learners to the literary tradition of English poetry starting from the Medieval to the Modern period.

LO2 To focus on the evolution of poetic forms such as Sonnet, Ballad, Lyric, Satire and Epic.

LO3 To enable the students to have a comprehensive view of the history of English literature.

LO4 To differentiate the various stages of English literature through the representative poets.

LO5 To critically examine the works of the writers of the period.

	Text books (Latest Editions)
1.	1973, The Oxford Anthology of English Literature Vol. I. The Middle Ages Through the 18 th century. OUP, London.
2.	Standard editions of texts.

UNIT I

MIDDLE ENGLISH POETRY

“THE GENERAL PROLOGUE”: PARDONER, THE NUN, DOCTOR, FRIAR

– CHAUCER

Poetry is a type of literature that uses focused, lyrical word arrangements to get a thought across, explain a scene, or tell a story. When you use meter, the rhythm and stress of a line based on syllabic beats, you can arrange your poem with lines that rhyme. Also, poems can be freeform, which means they don't have a set format. A stanza is a line of verse that makes up the main part of a song. A stanza is a group of lines that all have something to do with the same idea or subject. It's like a paragraph in writing. There are different parts of a lyric based on how many lines it has. As an example, a couplet is a line that has two words in it.

There are many things that can be in a poem that give it shape. One of these elements that you may find most often is rhyme. Many poetic works, from limericks to epic poems to pop songs, use rhymes. But meter is just as important. Meter tells a poem what length and focus to give each line. Read on to find out more about meter in poems. Poets use a lot of different kinds of rhymes in their work, such as eye rhymes, slant rhymes, internal rhymes, and more. It is common for poems to rhyme when they use a system of consonants or vowel sounds that are the same.

In writing and poetry, imagery is the use of figure of speech to make the reader feel something. When a poet uses detailed language well, they play with the reader's senses by letting them know about sounds, sights, tastes, smells, and feelings, both inside and outside the body.

Since the 1800s, free verse poetry has been popular. It doesn't have to follow any rules for rhyme or meter. Blank verse poetry really took off in the 1600s, and great writers like William Shakespeare, John Milton, William Wordsworth, and many more have used it. It has a strong metrical rhythm, unlike free verse.

Middle English Poetry:

Middle English was the stage of the English language during the High and Late Middle Ages. It lasted roughly four hundred years, from the late 1100s to the late 1300s. Late Old English (Anglo-Saxon) gave rise to Middle English in Norman England (1066–1154). It was spoken during the Plantagenet era (1154–1485).

12th and 13th centuries

When the Normans took over England in 1111, the Anglo-Saxon language quickly lost its use as a writing language. The new upper class spoke French, so judges, parliament, and polite society all spoke French. As the invaders became more integrated, their language and literature mixed with the locals'. For example, the upper-class French dialect turned into Anglo-Norman, and Anglo-Saxon slowly turned into Middle English.

Old English mostly used Late West Saxon writing rules in the years before the Normans took over England. Written Middle English, on the other hand, has a lot of different writing (and probably dialectal) styles. This variety shows that Wessex stopped being the main place where writers and scribes met and set trends over time. Instead, more unique local writing styles and dialects developed, and there was a general pattern of activity shifting over the next few hundred years, with Northumbria, East Anglia, and London all becoming major literary centers with their own unique interests.

In the 12th and 13th centuries, most writing was in Anglo-Norman or Middle Latin, so there isn't a lot of Middle English literature. For high culture, Anglo-Norman or Latin was more common. However, English writing never went away, and many important works show how the language has changed over time. Around the beginning of the 1300s, Layamon wrote *Brut*, which was based on Wace's Anglo-Norman epic of the same name from the 1200s. Layamon's language is clearly Middle English, but his prosody still has a strong Anglo-Saxon impact. People also kept other transitional works alive as entertainment, like different types of romances and songs.

14th century

The English language became important again over time, and in 1362, it took the place of French and Latin in Parliament and the courts of law. In the 1400s, major works of English literature started to appear again. These included the "Pearl Poet's" *Pearl*, *Patience*, *Cleanness*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; William Langland's political and religious allegory *Piers Plowman*; John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*; and, of course, the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, who was the most famous English poet of the Middle Ages and was seen by his peers as a successor to the great tradition.

15th century

Compared to Chaucer, those who came after him in the 1400s have a bad image, though John Lydgate and John Skelton are studied by many. But the century really goes to a group of great Scottish writers. James I of Scotland wrote *The Kingis Quair*, which was the first

literary work to really take off in Scotland. Robert Henryson, William Dunbar, and Gavin Douglas were the most famous writers in this Scottish group. Henryson and Douglas added a tone of almost wild humor that may have come from the Gaelic bards. Douglas's version of Virgil's Aeneid is one of the first great works of Renaissance humanism in English literature.

The Middle English period ended around 1470, when the Chancery Standard, a form of London-based English, started to spread. William Caxton's arrival of the printing press in England in the late 1470s helped this process along. It was around that time that the type of Northumbrian dialect spoken in southeast Scotland was changing into the Scots language. This dialect is common in northern England. Early Modern English is the name for the English language spoken in England from 1470 to 1650.

Paragraph Questions

1. Describe the character of the Pardoner in Chaucer's *The General Prologue*.
2. How does Chaucer portray the Nun in *The General Prologue*?
3. What are the main characteristics of the Doctor in *The General Prologue*?
4. Explain Chaucer's satire in the portrayal of the Friar.
5. Discuss Chaucer's use of characterization in *The General Prologue*.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss Chaucer's skill in character portrayal in *The General Prologue*.
2. Analyze the satirical elements in Chaucer's depiction of medieval society.
3. Examine the character of the Pardoner as presented in *The General Prologue*.
4. Discuss Chaucer's portrayal of religious figures with reference to the Nun and the Friar.
5. Evaluate *The General Prologue* as a social document of medieval England.

UNIT II
ELIZABETHAN POETRY
“EPITHALAMION” – SPENSER

About the Author

Edmund Spenser was born sometime between 1552-1553 in the city of London. His father was a clothmaker for Merchant Taylor’s Company. In 1561, he entered the newly founded Merchant Taylor’s School, admitted as a ‘poor scholar’ which cut the cost of fees and payments. There he studied and suffered under the cruel teacher Richard Mulcaster. Spenser was taught both Latin and more importantly English, as Mulcaster, “who was a strong defender of the English language [said], ‘I honor the *Latin*, but I worship the *English*.’” Mulcaster’s approach to education may have had a strong impact on Spenser’s later work. Although it was common to be a prominent Latin poet in this period, Spenser’s work is overwhelmingly and thoroughly English.

Summary of the Text

Introduction:

- Epithalamion is an ode written by Edmund Spenser to his second wife, Elizabeth Boyle, on their wedding day in 1594.
- It was first published in 1595 in London by William Ponsonby as part of a volume entitled Amoretti and Epithalamion.
- The volume included the sequence of 89 sonnets (Amoretti), along with a series of short poems called Anacreontics and the Epithalamion.

- Only six complete copies of this first edition remain today, including one at the Folger Shakespeare Library and one at the Bodleian Library.
- Epithalamion is a poem celebrating a marriage. An epithalamium is a song or poem written specifically for a bride on her way to the marital chamber.
- He is spending the day anxiously awaiting to marry Elizabeth Boyle. The poem describes the day in detail in 24 stanzas.
- It has 433 lines.

Stanza -1

Inviting muses for his song:

“You learned sisters”—The author talks about how great the muses are here. He says that the muses have been with him and other people by teaching them how to sing beautiful songs. In this line, the author talked about the other writers. In their prayer songs, most of the artists have talked about you. Some writers have written prayers of happiness, while others have written songs of sadness about bad things that happen, like death, love, and lucky losses, etc. They use your names in sad songs, which shows that the muses can change depending on the poets’ ideas. People have used the names of the gods in both happy and sad times, says the poet. But the artist doesn’t want to talk about that sadness. He gives the muses wreaths to wear and asks them to help him write a love song. The artist wants to have the things that Orpheus had. He wants to write his own song for his bride, just like Orpheus did.

Stanza-2

Get Ready Bride:

From the hill, the sun shines out to the rest of the world before it even gets there. It’s not as cold or wet at night when there is light around. This is because Hymen, the god of marriage, is already awake and ready. He tells the muses to go to her room and wake her up. All the single men are waiting for him in neat clothes. He tells the muses to get her ready because today is the day they’ve all been waiting for. No more pain or sadness for them, and now they can enjoy themselves. The poet tells the gods to sing for her.

Stanza-3

Inviting Muses & Nymphs for floral decoration:

The author tells the muses to bring all the nymphs. He asks the nymphs of the rivers, woods, and sea, as well as any other nymphs they can call with a pretty wreath. As he speaks, he tells the nymphs to bring the flower arrangements and lilies and roses. He tells them to use a blue silk ribbon to tie the garlands together and put them away in wedding poses. He tells

them to bring more flowers to make their wedding bower look nicer. He tells the nymphs to put flowers everywhere his bride walks on the grounds. He says the flowers should have a nice smell. He asks the nymphs to decorate her door room so that she can see right away when she wakes up. He asks them to sing a song for her while they do this.

Stanza-4

Nymphs, to be careful and invite to decorate:

The poet asks the Mulla nymphs to be careful because there are silver-skinned fish in the water where people fish with pikes. He tells the nymphs to keep fishermen from fishing in the Lake. He asks the gods to make sure the water is clear; it should reflect their faces and be as bright as glass so that his bride can see it and see that there are no marks on her face. As they watch over the deer on a grayish mountain with towers, the author talks with maids with light feet. He tells the maids to use their steel darts to guard the deer from the wolves. He tells them to be careful, but he also wants them to come to his wedding to sing a song and dress his bride.

Stanza-5

Poet asks the sleeping bride to wake up hearing birds singing:

He asks his bride to wake up. In this stanza, he called the Rosy Morn the Goddess Aurora, who was married to Tithonus. She is the dawn goddess. The poet says Aurora has already left Tithonus's bed, which means it's almost dawn and you're still asleep. The sky starts to turn silver before dawn, and the aurora is ready. The Sun God Phoebus starts to show his beautiful head. In this picture, the birds are singing a happy song of love and praise. The artist talks about the birds. The lark birds are singing Christian church songs. The thrushes playing the songs again and again. There is more noise from the mavis birds than normal. There are screams from ouzel birds. There are soft songs from ruddock birds. For today's party, they are all singing together. My sweet lady love, you've been asleep for a long time. You should wake up now because it's finally a happy day. Can't you hear the bird singing? The author asks. The birds are sitting on the wet leaves and singing you a happy, sweet song.

Stanza-6

The bride is awake and the poet seeks help to make his bride up:

The poet is glad that his bride is finally awake. During the night, her eyes are dim, like dark clouds. But when she's awake, they shine brighter than Hesperus, the Venus star. He asks the girls to help her get ready. After that, he asks Jove's fertile days and nights to fill their days with good times so they can live a productive life. He wants fair days so that he can enjoy his life. The artist asks three of the Cyprian Queen's maids to make his bride look

beautiful. Euphrosyne, Agalia, and Thaila were Venus' three maids who took care of her looks and clothes. He asks them to give him a makeover like they do for Venus because of how beautiful she is.

Stanza-7

The bride and groom are ready:

The poet informs that his bride is ready. The virgins, the bride maids are waiting for her, and the fresh boy, the groom's men, are waiting for him. He asks them to be prepared as he is coming. He asks them to look upon every matter whether it is correct for the beautiful day. On this joyful day, the poet is looking at the Sun. He is asking the Sun God to do him a favor. He asks the sun god to produce less heat because it may burn the beautiful face of his bride, which may spoil her beauty today. He is requesting Phoebus, the Sun god, that he sings the song of praise, which may enter at least at the corner of the head of God. He represents himself as a servant who wishes to boon the Sunlight for his wedding day alone and let all the days shine brighter. If he does so, the poet will sing a song of praise for him.

Stanza-8

The wedding Music:

The poet asks to hear the singers out loud. From far away, you can hear their happy song. He says that the sounds of the pipes and tabors match the voices of the people singing. The songs are making all the young women happy. The tumbrels are making a sweet sound that makes everyone want to dance so much that they lose their minds, which means they focus on the sound. The boys are running down the street and making a noise that sounds like Hymen, the god of marriage. This noise could reach heaven and fill the sky. When they answer that, the people standing cheer with them. They seem to be singing for Hymen.

Stanza-9

The Bride is on her way to the Bridal chamber:

The poet says that his love is coming to the wedding bower, making it sound like Phoebe, the Moon Goddess, is coming from the East. He says she's like the Moon Goddess. As the moon rises and spreads its white light, his bride wears white, which shows that she is a virgin and therefore pure. Because she looks like an angel, it might make all men weak. She has pearls and fresh flowers in her blonde hair that makes it look like golden wire. She wears a green garland crown and a dress that looks like a golden robe, which makes her look like a queen. Everyone is looking at her, which makes her feel bad about looking up, so she fixes her eyes on the ground and blushes as she hears the praise song. As the author is far from being proud, a loud wedding song plays in the background.

Stanza-10.

Praise of bride's external beauty:

Now, the poet asks the daughters of traders who travel the world if they have ever seen such a beautiful creature as his bride. She is lovely, sweet, and gentle, and she is full of beauty and goodness. The author then starts to compare his bride's beauty: her eyes are like sapphires, her forehead is like ivory, her cheeks are like apples, her lips are like cherries, her breasts are like bowls of cream, her pap's or nipples are like lilies buds, her snowy neck is like a marble tower, and her whole body is like a white palace. All of her beauty on the outside is rising to respect, but her purity is sitting even higher in a bower. When the virgins look at her, he asks them why they forgot to sing the wedding song.

Stanza-11

Bride's inward beauty:

Poet says that eyes can never show how beautiful his bride is on the inside. She is very beautiful on the inside, with gifts from heaven, which is more than anyone could see. Astounded, people would stand there as if they had seen Medusa's head. She loves sweetly, stays pure all the time, and has unwavering faith in women's hood. Some rules need to be broken because of how good she is, like a queen on the royal throne. She shows love in certain ways. Anyone who thought about getting her to change her mind had already seen her divine gift of chastity. He asks everyone at the wedding to sing about the fun things she hasn't told anyone about being chaste.

Stanza-12

Bride arriving at the wedding altar:

The poet asks someone to let his lover through the church gate. He asks you to let her in by opening the gates wide. The women look at her and forget what they are doing. There are flowers on the pillars to welcome a creature that looks like a holy saint that is coming. In a nervous and humble way, she walks inside. In the church, she stands before Jesus Christ. When the poet asks them to enter the holy place, he tells them to take off their proud faces and learn how to obey from his bride. He tells them to take her to the altar, which is where the wedding is happening. The instruments begin to play out loud to praise Jesus Christ. The band starts to sing the Joy Anthem as they sing the chorus.

Stanza-13

Bride's shyness at the Altar:

The holy priest says the wedding prayers and blesses the bride with his two happy hands while she stands at the altar. Her cheeks turn rose-red, which makes them look like

vermeil marks in the snow. (Golden white), and her blush looks like dark red dye. Angels are mistakenly ignoring their tasks at the altar to look at her beautiful face. But she still looks at the ground with her eyes, which shows how humble she is. All eyes are on her, even though she has nothing to look at. This might make her angry. She turns pink when the artist asks for her hand in marriage. When angels look at her, he tells them to sing Alleluya.

Stanza-14

Post-wedding party:

It's over with the wedding. They are to bring the bride home, he says. She is what made their win possible. Asking the bride to bring her glory, the poem says. He says that God has given him so much happiness that he is happier than any other guy. He tells everyone to enjoy the feast because the day will always be special to him. He tells everyone to fill up on wine. He tells everyone to have fun at the party until they're completely drunk and hot. Because they have watched over the day so well, he wants to crown Bacchus, the God of wine and Hymen, and all the other Gods and Goddesses. The girl needs to sing a song now.

Stanza-15

Description of the wedding day:

Because today is a holy day, the poet tells the young men to ring the bell and take a break from their normal work. This will be put down so that it will never be forgotten. This was his wish for the Sun to moderate because it was Barnaby day, which isn't like other days. As he had hoped, the Sun gave off less heat and light. He doesn't like that the priest picked this day. Because he picked the longest day of the year, he must have been looking behind him when he made his choice. He thought it was unlucky, which means he didn't know much about religion. It's a long day today, but only a short night, and the author can't wait to be alone with his wife. He tells the bells to ring to get the day back to normal and start the fire. He tells everyone to sing and dance about the day.

Stanza-16

Poet's impatience and arrival of the evening:

The poet asks when the long day will end. He wants to spend time with his love. He thinks that the timing is running slowly like feathers moving. He asks the Sun to go west and set because he has been riding all day and he may rest. After a long wait, the poet sees Venus, in the golden Crest appears on the west. He praises Venus as the fair child of beauty and the glorious lamp of love, who has been ranked as a host in heaven and guiding lovers to the beautiful night. you look cheerful above and laughing between the twinkling light. The site is joyful and the poet is glad to sing about it.

Stanza-17

Poet asks the bridesmaids to leave:

She asks the girls to leave her alone because they've been with her all day. Today is over, and now it's getting dark. He tells them to get his wife from the bridal chamber, take off her wedding dress, and get her ready for the bed. The singer now talks about their wedding bed. It has flowers and violets on top of a silk curtain. If you use an Arras bed cover, the sheets will smell good. His bride is shy and humble now. He says she's like Maia, who is shy but chills out with Jove on the green grass. She got pregnant after they woke up. Now, the bridesmaids may have left my love alone, just like they do when they sing the wedding song in the morning.

Stanza-18

Poet wishes for an undisturbed Night:

They have been looking forward to this night for a long time, and the author starts to welcome it. As of now, they have paid for the longest day of work, which means they no longer have to suffer. After she said yes, he stopped his soft love and gathered all of his care and cruel love into one. He tells the night to cover them with its wings so no one can see them. He doesn't want any commotion to happen under the mantle because he is afraid that something might happen. He hopes that there is no treason that could catch them. Fear shouldn't get in the way of their happiness. He wants the night to be quiet and calm, with no storms or fights on the roads. He doesn't want anything to happen like when Jove had Alcmena because of her husband Amplitron, Triynthian's groom. He lied and said he was her husband and slept with her. He doesn't want anything bad to happen, so he asks the young men and girls to sing.

Stanza-19

Poet afraid of mishappening:

The poet wants to stop crying and wailing over sad things. His dislike of false words or any other sound that makes them feel scared wakes them up and makes them feel uncomfortable. He hopes they don't have any bad dreams or scary pictures that make them nervous. It shouldn't catch on fire or lightning strike, and no evil spirit should hurt them. They shouldn't have any witches or goblins putting charms on them or making noise with their evil. He wants to get away from everything. There shouldn't be any scary sounds or Raven's yells. Vultures and ghosts shouldn't hurt them. He wants to choke all the frogs so he doesn't have to listen to their croaking. Lastly, the author doesn't want any dull accents, which means they don't want any annoying sounds to bother them.

Stanza-20

Poet asking for help from Cupid:

He wants people to be quiet all night long so that they can be at peace. The author wants to go to sleep soon. He talks about Cupid as a hundred little angels flying all over the bed on feathers that look like doves. No one could speak against his desire to be with his bride at night. He wants to enjoy the wedding night like a thief, which makes everyone happy. It should hide their secret night. Now the artist wants Cupid, the son of Venus and the god of love, to help him. He asks him to help him with his wedding night so that he can give his wife endless pleasure in the paradise of joys. He doesn't care if the game is good or not; he just wants to keep playing because dawn is coming. He wants to sing a song that won't get in the way of them..

Stanza-21.

Poet seeks the help of Cynthia:

The poet can now see Cynthia, the goddess of the moon, from the window. Her pretty face makes her shine. She walks through heaven all night and never sleeps. She should not be jealous of their marriage on their wedding night, he tells her. He talks about her relationship with a Latmian shepherd. She fell in love with him and had fifty children with him. So, he asks her for a favor: she helps women get pregnant, which makes their family bigger. The artist asks her to bless his wife and her reformed womb so that they can have a child. He is going to sing to her until he hears good news.

Stanza-22

Poet-seeking Gods & Goddess help:

He asks Juno, the Goddess of marriage, to bless them. Juno's name is in the law of marriage. In all the ceremonies of marriage, her name is there. People often call her a "woman of art" because she is so smart. He asks Goddess Juno to bless and unite them. The poet asks the genius, who was a guardian angel who often prayed at weddings to assist the couple in getting pregnant, especially the men, to gently bless their fertility. Problems with getting married shouldn't come up. He asks them to give him a lot of pleasure and to bless them with children who will have lots of children. He tells them to bless the baby with those fruits on the night they get married. He asks Hebe, the goddess of youth, and Hymen to let them live together as a married couple. Until that happens, the couple will praise them.

Stanza-23

Poet seeking the blessing of all God and Goddess:

The poet asks all the gods and goddesses in heaven to bless him or her. He says that the temple of the gods has a lot of lights that put out bright light for people when they are in the dark. He wants them all to bless the couple so much that it rains from heaven, so that they can live forever and bring more people into the world. His prayer is for the Gods to bless their whole generation with happiness forever. They should get great rewards from heaven to help their people grow. He tells his wife to rest, and the two of them pray that God will bless them at the right time.

Stanza-24

The poem is immortal:

Instead of any decorations, the poet wants to show this song in which he talks about his true love. You can destroy or replace even landmarks because they only last for a certain amount of time. The poem he wrote in a short amount of time is a nice gift that he is giving her.

A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING – DONNE

About the Author

John Donne, (born *c.* Jan. 24–June 19, 1572, London, Eng.—died March 31, 1631, London), English poet. Donne was born into a Roman Catholic family. He entered the University of Oxford at age 12; he later transferred to the University of Cambridge and subsequently studied law. An adventurer in youth, he hoped for a high public appointment, but his clandestine marriage to his employer's daughter ruined his prospects. He converted to Anglicanism; ordained in 1615, he became a preacher of great power and eloquence and was installed as dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1621. The greatest of the English Metaphysical poets (Metaphysical poetry), he is noted for his love lyrics, religious verse and treatises, and sermons. His secular poetry, most written early in his career, is direct, intense, brilliantly witty, and daringly imaginative. Later his tone darkened with works such as the *Anniversaries* (1611–12), two long poems meditating on the decay of the world. His 19 famous *Holy Sonnets* (written 1607–13) were published posthumously. Among his prose works, many as dramatic and intimate as his poetry, the most enduring is *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624).

Summary of the Text

In the beginning, the speaker paints a picture of good men dying quietly while softly telling their minds to leave their bodies. The dying men's friends can't agree on whether or not the men have stopped breathing yet because these good deaths are so subtle.

The speaker says that he and the lover he's leaving should be like these people who have died and quietly say goodbye. Even though they want to cry and sigh a lot, they shouldn't give in. So publicly grieving would actually lower their private love by letting everyone see it.

Natural changes in the ground, like earthquakes, hurt and scare people. Normal people see these things happen and wonder what they mean. Most people don't notice the moves of the heavens, even though they are bigger and more important.

People who are boring and normal feel a kind of love that can't handle being apart because it depends on physical connection. Their love rests on being able to touch each other, but being apart takes away that ability.

However, the speaker and his lover have a more unique and rare kind of relationship. They don't even know it, but they are mentally connected and sure of each other on a level that isn't physical. So, when their bodies are apart, it doesn't mean as much to them.

Love brings the lovers' souls together. There will be no breaking of their souls even though the speaker has to leave. Fine metal swells when hammered, so they will grow to fill the space between them.

Even if their souls are separate, they are still connected in the same way that the legs of a compass are connected. The lover's soul is like the compass's "stationary foot," which doesn't move on its own but does react to the movement of the other foot.

This compass foot is not moving and is in the middle of a piece of paper. As one compass foot goes farther away, the other foot changes its angle to lean in that direction, as if it wants to be closer to its partner. As the foot that was moving closes the compass, the foot that was not moving stands straight up, looking alert and excited.

He says that the speaker's lover will be like his still foot, while he has to go around in a roundabout way. Because she is in the same place, he is stable enough to make a perfect circle that stops where it began, which brings the speaker back to his lover.

Critical Analysis

'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning's' first stanza starts with a picture of death. The man he is talking about died and was "virtuous." Because he was a good person, he dies

quietly. In this case, Donne says that death is like “whispering” one’s soul away. There’s nothing scary about it. “Whisper” is a great example of this style of writing. The word looks or sounds like the noise it stands for.

The man who is dying is not by himself. There are “sad friends” around his bed who can’t decide if he’s still alive or not. There are no signs to let people know that he has died because his last moments are so quiet. They talk to each other and ask if “the breath goes now” is true.

People who aren’t used to Donne’s complicated use of conceit might find the second stanza bit strange. It doesn’t say what the first stanza was about; instead, it gives more details. The speaker is comparing the good man’s quiet death to his love for the person he is talking to. They don’t have the “tear-floods” and “sigh-tempests” of the shallow when they split up. The speaker in Donne’s poem can see how other couples treat each other and knows that his are better.

He and his partner would never be so rude as to show how they feel to “laity,” or regular people. They don’t talk about it with anyone else. He says that telling everyone about it would be a “profanation,” or an insult to their “joy.” They are going to “make no noise” and stay above people who are in less important relationships.

The third stanza uses the phrase “Moving of th’ earth,” which means an earthquake, to describe another natural disaster. It’s something strange and hard to explain. When there are earthquakes, there are also “harms and fears.” Adding these lines makes the point that it’s silly to make a big deal about the speaker’s leaving even stronger.

‘A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning’s’ next two lines are a little less clear. They mean the spheres, or concentric rings, in space where the moon, stars, and planets move. Even though they are divided, they still move and shake when other things happen. This way, the person talks about their “trepidation,” which means they are shaking. It’s shaking more than an earthquake can, but you can’t see it and it’s not dangerous. This is another figure of speech that shows how the speaker sees his relationship. That’s not the impressive earthquake; that’s the much stronger shaking of the heavenly spheres.

In the fifth line, the speaker goes back to talking about other people’s less-than-perfect love. It’s “Dull” and “sublunary,” which means it’s under the moon instead of in the sky. It is the senses that drive people in these interactions. What a person can feel is what the “soul” of the connection is. For these loves, being physically together is the most important thing. They “cannot admit / Absence” because it “takes away” the whole relationship. Touch and sight are the only things that shallow mates do with each other.

'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning's' fifth stanza is different from the fourth. His own relationship comes up again, and he calls himself and his wife "we." It's a "refined" or highbrow friendship. Their love goes beyond the real world so much that it's hard for them to understand. "They don't know what it is." The next two lines say again that the speaker and his wife love each other in a spiritual way. More than anything else, it's mental. They are "Inter-assured of the mind" and don't care about "eyes, lips, and hands." These are not the things they will miss about each other when they split up.

The first line of the sixth stanza makes a clear and recognized statement about marriage. They may have two different souls, but for now they act like they are "one." This is why, when they part, they won't "endure" a "breach, but an expansion." If you beat gold very thin, it will stretch like their love does. No matter how hard you push it, it stays the same. Also, it's important to remember that Donne picked gold to stand for their love. He sees the parts of his relationship that make it strong and beautiful.

At this point in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," the compass picture we talked about earlier starts to play a big role. First, Donne goes back to what he said before about how they were "one." He knows that there may be some doubts about their "inter-assured" relationship, that's why he gives in. He meant himself and his wife. If they are "two," then they are like the two points on a map.

For Donne, his wife is the "fixed foot" of the machine. There is something stable about her "soul" that never "shows / To move." His wife will only move if "the other do," which means he does. The eighth line of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" goes into more detail about how the set foot moves. At first, it's the most important thing to them; everything else swirls around it. Then it leans if the other leg, the one that looks like Donne's, goes off to "roam" far away. In this picture, his wife only moves this way. She "grows erect" or "hearkens" after him when he needs her to and doesn't bend over until he gets home or back to the set point. In case there was any doubt about any part of the compass metaphor, the last four words explain it all. It sounds like the speaker is talking to his wife in these lines. He tells her that she is the one who will bring him back. "Firmness" in her makes his "circle just," or keeps it in a certain area. She will always get him back to where he started, no matter what he does or where he goes.

“THE CANONIZATION” – DONNE

About the Author

John Donne (24 January 1572 — 31 March 1631) was an English poet, scholar, soldier and secretary. He is considered the most prominent member of the metaphysical poets, with his works noted for their metaphorical and sensual style. His works include sonnets, love poems, religious poems, Latin translations, epigrams, elegies, songs, and satires. Donne became a cleric in the Church of England as well as Dean of St Paul’s Cathedral in London (1621–1631) and is known for his sermons. His poetry work often covers the theme of religion, something about which he often theorised, as well as showing a great knowledge of English society, which he often criticised. Donne married Anne More and had twelve children. Donne and his family lived in poverty for many years, and he was not really celebrated as a writer until the 20th century. Donne died in 1631, at the age of 59.

Summary of the Text

Introduction:

“The Canonization” makes the case that love’s ability to bring people together is better than the world’s tendency to divide and fight. People like the pictured outsider, courtiers, soldiers, and lawyers trade peace for trouble when they want to reach their own goals in business or at court. And the speaker says this poem proves his point. He says that an ideal love that is both physical and mental can help clear up the world. Some scholars connect the song to the coronation of James I in 1604 because it talks about the king in the first line. Donne had put an end to his plans to become a courtier three years before when he ran away with Ann More, who was the ward of his boss, Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Seal. For several years, Ann More’s father effectively “blackballed” Donne, and the couple was in a lot of financial trouble.

So, this poem could be seen as an explanation or even an excuse for the way he seemed to act without thinking. It must have been a disappointment for Donne that King James didn’t respond to his song because it would be another ten years before his luck changed. But it looked like they had a good marriage, and Ann Donne had nine children before she died in 1617. John Donne didn’t get married again. An Outline of the Text This person tells the other person to be quiet and let him love. The speaker tells the addressee to blame the other person for things other than his tendency to love: his palsy, his gout, his “five gray hairs,” or his lost fortune. (“Observe his Honor, or his Grace, / Or the King’s real, or his stamped face /

Consider.”) He tells the person he is writing to focus on himself, his money, and his place, and to copy the other nobles.

As long as the other person loves him, the speaker doesn't care what he says or does. “Who's hurt by my love?” the speaker asks in a rhetorical way. His sighs and tears have not sunk ships, flooded land, or cooled the spring. He also says that the heat in his veins has not added to the number of people who have died from the plague. No matter how the speaker and his lover feel, soldiers still find wars and lawyers still find guys who sue them. They tell the other person, “Call us what you will,” because love makes them that way. He says, “Call her one, me another fly,” and that they are also like candles (“tapers”) that burn by eating themselves (“and at our own cost die”).

The lovers find the eagle and the dove in each other, and together (“we two being one”) they solve the phoenix's puzzle because they “die and rise the same,” just like the phoenix, but love kills and raises them. He tells them that love can kill them if it can't save them. If their story isn't good enough for “tombs and hearses,” he says, “it will be good enough for poetry, and we'll build pretty rooms in sonnets.” A well-made urn is just as proper for a dead person's ashes as a huge tomb. In the same way, the songs about the speaker and his lover will make them “canonized,” or elevated to the status of love saints. Invoking the lovers, everyone who hears their story will say that countries, towns, and courts “beg from above/A pattern of your love!”

“The Canonization” is one of Donne's best-known papers. It has been criticized by Cleanth Brooks and others, which has made it a central point of the debate between formalist and historicist critics. Formalist critics say the poem is what it seems to be: an anti-political love poem; historicist critics say it is actually a kind of coded, ironic reflection on the “ruined fortune” and dashed political hopes of the first stanza, based on events in Donne's life at the time it was written. It's mostly up to the person making the decision which case to follow. The poem is a funny and passionate speech-act that defends love against the corrupting values of politics and power. Unless you are only interested in Donne's life, this is probably the best way to understand it.

Critical Analysis

“The Canonization” is technically atypical of Donne because it isn't based on a brilliant, extended premise that dominates the poem as a whole, as is so often the case with him. Instead, Donne gives us a bunch of short, less important metaphors, kind of like a random collection. In quick order, Donne and his mistress are two bugs, two tapers, an eagle

and a dove, and the Phoenix. He says of their love, “We can die by it, if not live for love.” In the Italian Renaissance, writers often used the word *morire*, which means “to die,” to mean “sexual climax.” The English took this metaphor and used it in their own language. And if we can’t prove a piece of history, we’ll build pretty rooms in sonnets. In Italian, “stanza” means “room.”

There are more quick-fire metaphors, like comparing a “well-wrought urn” to “these hymns” (the poems Donne and his love will “build”). Finally, Donne uses a figure he has used before, where the eyes reflect the outside world and create a personal microcosm: Love used to bring you peace, but now it brings you anger. You made the world’s soul shrink and drove into the glasses of your eyes (so they could be mirrors and spies for you). Places, cities, and courts. As always, Donne thinks that his love for one person is more important than everything else in the world. In this and other works by him, he seems like a bit of a snob.

No matter how he says what he’s thinking, the content of the song makes it clear that Donne is at least “protesting too much.” He often acts defensive and angry about love and sexual issues, and he gets angry when people say mean things about him. Or maybe he’s making fun of this stance as the way most men act: “For God’s sake, hold your tongue, and let me love,” or “Don’t criticize my palsy or my gout.” In other places, he makes funnier comments about the big, impersonal force that he thinks is against his wants and needs when it gets in the way of them: A busy old fool and a wild sun, Why do you act this way? We can hear you through the windows and the blinds. He might also be criticizing the person he loves, and get angry when she doesn’t seem to be able to follow his reasoning: “Mark but this flea, and mark but well in this, How little that which thou deniest me is.”

While Donne seems sarcastic and even aggressive, he often comes across as a slightly (or more than slightly) arrogant man who talks too much about how great his love is. The same theme shows up in “The Canonization,” though maybe not as strongly as in other songs. That most of his peers wrote very differently is interesting, even though we can partly write that off as a sign of the times. The Cavalier poets, like Lovelace, tried to bring back a more courtly approach to women. Other Metaphysical poets, like Marvell, may have been just as obsessed with love (or sex) as Donne, but they wrote in a much more playful way, without the angry or defensive tone. There is one thing we can say about “The Canonization” and Donne in general: he is honest, and his writing is always incredibly clear and powerful. Makes the case that love’s ability to bring people together is better than the world’s tendency to divide and fight. People like the pictured outsider, courtiers, soldiers, and lawyers trade peace for trouble when they want to reach their own goals in business or at court.

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Instead, Donne gives us a bunch of short, less important metaphors, kind of like a random collection. In quick order, Donne and his mistress are two bugs, two tapers, an eagle and a dove, and the Phoenix. He says of their love, “We can die by it, if not live for love.” In the Italian Renaissance, writers often used the word *morire*, which means “to die,” to mean “sexual climax.” The English took this metaphor and used it in their own language. And if we can’t prove a piece of history, we’ll build pretty rooms in sonnets. In Italian, “stanza” means “room.” There are more quick-fire metaphors, like comparing a “well-wrought urn” to “these hymns” (the poems Donne and his love will “build”). Finally, Donne uses a figure he has used before, where the eyes reflect the outside world and create a personal microcosm: Love used to bring you peace, but now it brings you anger. You made the world’s soul shrink and drove into the glasses of your eyes (so they could be mirrors and spies for you). Places, cities, and courts.

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Paragraph Questions

1. What is the central theme of Spenser's *Epithalamion*?
2. Explain the structure of *Epithalamion*.
3. What is the meaning of Donne's poem *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*?
4. How does Donne describe spiritual love in *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*?
5. What is the central idea of Donne's poem *The Canonization*?

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the celebration of marriage in Spenser's *Epithalamion*.
2. Analyze the theme of spiritual love in Donne's *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*.
3. Examine the metaphysical elements in Donne's poetry.
4. Discuss the theme of love and devotion in *The Canonization*.
5. Compare Spenser's and Donne's treatment of love in their poems.

UNIT III
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY POETRY
“PARADISE LOST” BOOK IX – JOHN MILTON

About the Author

John Milton was born on December 9 in London, England to a middle-class family. Milton's father was banished from his home by his father for reading protestant books in a very Roman Catholic home. Milton too was very religious growing up, inspired to become a priest. He attended Christ's School in Cambridge. His time spent in school was not pleasant. Being made fun of and called names was a common occurrence for his different skin complexion and odd manners he developed from his home growing up. Originally he planned to become a priest but instead, after school he went home for 6 years where he began to look into different languages and styles of writing. Also during his time at home he wrote a few of his well-known works such as "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" and "On Shakespeare". May of 1638 Milton began a 13 month journey to France and Italy. He eventually returned with his wife, Mary Powell, who bore him three daughters. During the civil war, Milton supported Oliver Cromwell in the cause of Puritans. During this he wrote pamphlets about radical politics. After the restoration of Charles II in 1660, Milton was arrested as a defender of the Commonwealth. When he was released he decided to live in seclusion which is where he wrote his most famous work, the epic poem "Paradise Lost" in 1667. Milton started to have more health issues as time went on and eventually passed away on November 8, 1674.

Summary of the Text

The fall of man, which happens in Book 9, is the best part of Adam and Eve's story. The story starts with Satan, who has been hiding since the Garden of Eden tells him to leave. In the form of a mist, Satan sneaks back into the Garden. He changes into a snake once he gets into the Garden. He has one last moment of doubt about what he's about to do to Adam and Eve, but his anger at them pushes him to go ahead.

Adam and Eve fight in the morning over whether they should work in the Garden together or separately. When Eve suggests that they work alone, Adam feels apprehensive because he thinks that they are more likely to give in to temptation when they aren't with each other. However, Eve says there is a lot of work that needs to be done and that she can't really be called good if she is always safe and her goodness is never put to the test. So they go their different ways, not knowing that this is the last time they will be able to be innocent together in the Garden.

When Satan finds Eve by herself, he talks to her as a snake. His answer to Eve's question about how he learned to talk is that eating fruit made him able to talk and understand everything. She says she will show her where the food is, so he takes her to the Tree of Knowledge. Eve knows it's the tree that God told her and Adam they couldn't eat from. Satan tries to convince her that when he ate the fruit, it told him that Eve should disobey God to show Him that she can think for herself. He says that he ate from the tree and is still living. Assuring Eve, he says that God will never punish her for something as small as eating fruit. Satan also tells Eve that if she eats the fruit, she will probably learn everything she needs to know to become a goddess.

Satan makes a case, and Eve thinks about the fact that the snake ate it and didn't die. The fruit looks and tastes good, and she finally gives in and takes a bite because she wants to learn more and be smarter. Even though Satan has gone into the bush, Eve is still eating the fruit. Eve thinks about giving Adam some of the fruit because she thinks that eating it has made her equal to him and she loves the idea of being on the same level as him. She finally chooses to share the fruit because she wants Adam to die with her if she has to die for disobeying God. When she finds Adam, she tells him what happened and how she got to eat the fruit. Adam is shocked and angry, but he decides to eat the fruit too because he doesn't want to be without Eve. He eats the fruit, and he and Eve have sex because they are physically interested in each other, not because they love each other. Once they wake up, all they can do is feel bad about what they did. They start to fight and blame each other for what happened.

Critical Analysis

Milton calls what's happening in Book 9 a tragedy. By this, he doesn't just mean what happens to Adam and Eve is tragic; he also means that *Paradise Lost* itself is a tragedy in the same way that the epic dramas that came before it were. As Milton saw it, *Paradise Lost* was the greatest tragedy of all time because it was about how people lost their way. From a classical point of view, a tragedy has a main figure with a tragic flaw who is important in society. This flaw is what brings the character or characters down. In a tragedy, the punishment for the fall must be worse than the crime, making the viewers feel sorry for what happened. The sad thing about *Paradise Lost* is that both Adam and Eve have terrible flaws that cause them to fail and everyone else to fail too.

The way Satan thinks about God has gotten worse since the beginning of *Paradise Lost*. He doesn't believe that God made angels and thinks that God made people to get back at him of his sins. Satan seems to believe his own story of what happened, but he doesn't seem to have any good reasoning of his own. He just seems crazy. In this poem, Milton shows how the free will that God gave people can be a double-edged sword that makes them their own worst enemies.

Satan's temptation of Eve feeds her narcissism, which is why she looked at her image when she was made. His way of getting her attention is by telling her how beautiful she is and how much he loves her. Eve's desire to keep the fruit for herself instead of giving it to Adam shows how her thought is changing. She is losing her innocence and keeping secrets, and she might even be trying to get Adam to love her more by tricking him. The only reason she shares the food with Adam is because she doesn't want Adam to be with another woman after she dies. Adam has a different reason for choosing to eat the fruit than Eve did. He wants to stay with Eve no matter what. If he puts Eve above God in this way, he is disobeying God and putting Eve above God, as Raphael told him.

“TO HIS COY MISTRESS” – MARVELL

About the Author

Andrew Marvell (March 31, 1621 – August 16, 1678) was an English metaphysical poet, who was largely ignored during his lifetime. He rose to prominence over the centuries and is now considered to be one of the most remarkable poets of the seventeenth century. Marvell's reputation was overshadowed for a long time by his revolutionary politics, which included a stint as a parliamentarian. Most of his verse, unfortunately, consists of satires

written for political ends, and suffers as a result. His lyric poetry, however, unfortunately took no subject but himself. While the result consists of beautiful, effortless, flowing verses that roll off the tongue and through the mind with an ease unequaled among poets of his era, his writings offer little to the beauty of the world in which we live.

Summary of the Text

Andrew Marvell wrote “To His Coy Mistress” in iambic tetrameter, which means that each line has four iambic feet. Most of the time, people use iambic pentameter, which has five iambic feet. A stressed syllable comes after an unstressed syllable. There’s also something interesting about the way “To His Coy Mistress” is written: it starts with the problem, then moves on to the current situation, and finally ends with the solution, all from the point of view of the lovelorn gentleman who is trying to win the love of his beloved.

In the first line, there are ten couplets, which is a traditional structure. However, even though the poem is in the form of a love poem, it doesn’t try to be too high-minded; the man only wants his lady to give in to his sexual advances, so the use of the traditional love elegy structure (also called “carpe diem” poetry) might seem ironic. But since this was written at a time when people didn’t easily show their feelings like this, the poem was quite ahead of its time because of the beautiful language and the strong focus on the woman’s beauty.

The man starts by telling his lady how he would worship her if he had unlimited time. He makes their love much bigger than the poem can handle by using phrases like “love you ten years before the Flood” to describe it in almost Biblical terms as “vegetable love,” which shows how slowly and steadily it grows (always a hint at a huge step forward). He then says that he will spend “a hundred years” praising her eyes and forehead, “two hundred years” praising her breasts, and “thirty thousand” praising the rest. To His Coy Mistress also doesn’t make fun of or insult the woman’s looks, like Shakespeare did in “My Mistress’ Eyes Are Nothing Like the Sun.” That’s not how philosophical poetry works. The use of an erotic blazon, which comes from Petrarchan love poems, elevates the woman the speaker loves; this is the most real kind of love the man thinks he can handle.

The mood of To His Coy Mistress changes quickly in the next few lines. In the first, there wasn’t much hurry or haste. The author took his time describing the woman’s beauty and all the reasons why she should be worshiped. The result is a smooth, languid poem that doesn’t rush to the end. But in these lines, the poet changes the tone. He is begging and rushing at the same time when he tells the lady that he hears “time’s winged chariot hurrying near,” which is a reference to Greek mythology and another way of honoring his love.

Even though the artist still says how beautiful his woman is, he tells her that he doesn't have time to worship her the way he wants to because time is always running out. They will face "deserts of vast eternity," and she will lose her beauty. Her virginity and honor will also "turn to dust," and it seems like all the waiting will have been for nothing. Even though it's not heavy, the feeling of dread is there.

On the other hand, the last few lines make things better; the poet has an idea! They shouldn't think about the future. Instead, they should hold each other now, while they still have time, and enjoy being young and beautiful together. It was normal in the 1600s for people to use the word "sport" to mean sex, so the poet tells his lady love, "Now let us sport while we may." He says they are like "amorous birds of prey," which shows how natural and spontaneous their desires are. They are both higher than and lower than people.

It sounds like raging passion is in the last few lines: the author wants to "tear our pleasures with rough strife / through the iron gates of life," which means they put their passion above life itself. It's important to note that the last few lines are the most beautifully poetic. Even though the mood is one of begging them not to waste their time, the author keeps the tone light until the end.

Critical Analysis

Andrew Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress" uses a number of literary methods to make the poetic persona's points more convincing and emotional. In the poem, too, the author links "coyness" to "crime" without saying it directly. It's a figure of speech. If the woman is too shy, the artist thinks, it might kill his romantic side. "Long Love's Day" uses both alliteration and description. This is an interesting way for the artist to personify love. The author uses a lot of exaggerations to court his lady love. Here's another line with an over-the-top tone: "Till the conversion of the Jews."

The lines "Love you ten years before the flood" and "Till the conversion of the Jews" are references for the poet. The "flood" is Noah's flood. In the second line, there is a religious reference to the Jews receiving Christ. "Vegetable love" is a figure of speech or a metaphysical assumption in the song. "Time's winged chariot" is an example of the author using personification. It's also a reference and a symbol. Avengers: Endgame's last line makes the sun into a person and says that they "will make him run."

"Seize the day" is the main idea of the song. "Seize the day!" is what the Latin term "carpe diem" means. Marvell loved this idea and used it in many of his works. The author of this song says that waiting for the right time to make love is just a waste of time. Before their

bodies start to get old, the poetic character and his love should make love touch. The main idea of the song is to forget about the future and enjoy the present. There isn't anything coming up. In the poem, the man asks his lady love to take the moment and make love like they've never done before.

Time is another big idea in the song. In this poem, the author makes time an enemy of the lover and the beloved. It's always there to wash away their youth and energy. Time doesn't wait for loves. It goes away along its path. Time never waits for lovers, so they shouldn't push off their plans. Because his reason is so good, the poetic character tells his love to make love as soon as possible. To help the gentleman, the author uses the idea of time and how it changes in this way. People who read it will decide if he wins or not. But his points are good!

Paragraph Questions

1. What is the significance of the temptation scene in *Paradise Lost* Book IX?
2. Describe the character of Eve in *Paradise Lost* Book IX.
3. What is the central theme of Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*?
4. Explain the concept of "carpe diem" in *To His Coy Mistress*.
5. How does Marvell use imagery in *To His Coy Mistress*?

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the theme of disobedience in *Paradise Lost* Book IX.
2. Analyze the character of Eve in *Paradise Lost* Book IX.
3. Examine Milton's portrayal of the Fall of Man in Book IX.
4. Discuss the theme of time and love in Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*.
5. Analyze the metaphysical elements in Marvell's poetry.

UNIT IV
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY POETRY
“ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL” LINES (150-476) – DRYDEN

About the Author

John Dryden, (born Aug. 9, 1631, Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, Eng.—died May 1, 1700, London), British poet, dramatist, and literary critic. The son of a country gentleman, Dryden was educated at the University of Cambridge. His poetry celebrating the Restoration so pleased Charles II that he was named poet laureate (1668) and, two years later, royal historiographer. Even after losing the laureateship and his court patronage in 1688 with the accession of William III, he succeeded in dominating the literary scene with his numerous works, many attuned to politics and public life. Several of his nearly 30 comedies, tragedies, and dramatic operas—including *Marriage A-la-Mode* (1672), *Aureng-Zebe* (1675), and *All for Love* (1677)—were outstandingly successful. His *Of Dramatick Poesie* (1668) was the first substantial piece of modern dramatic criticism. Turning away from drama, he became England’s greatest verse satirist, producing the masterpieces *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) and *Mac Flecknoe* (1682). He also produced extensive translations of Latin poetry, including Virgil’s *Aeneid*.

Summary of the Text

The poet John Dryden wrote this satirical poem with noble couplets. The book came out in 1681. The fake Achitophel is smart, funny, restless, and has morals that change all the time. He won’t stand for shame and always wants more power. “Fiery soul” and “daring pilot

in extremity” describe him. He loves storms more than calm. Without a doubt, the author says, “Great minds are sure to go crazy soon; and thin walls do their bounds separate.” Achitophel works hard and puts up with chaos; all he wants is to destroy or rule Israel. As he plans, he breaks the triple bond, puts the safety of the people at risk, and lets a foreign power into Israel.

Of all the people who work for the Jewish High Court, not even one of them is as clean and honest as Achitophel. He would have been happy to serve David if the weed hadn’t killed the good seed. “Wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,” I guess, and Achitophel is bored and restless. Because he wants to be famous, he “lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.”

He gets back to the old sins and goes against his prince while saying he wants what the people want. He hides behind the law and speaks loudly to the crowd. Even though this is a weak case, it is easy for him to get people to agree with him. The scribes write that it looks like the Jews get a new lord every twenty years. But Achitophel needs a leader, and Absalom seems like the best choice. In these words, Achitophel starts to spew his poison.

In the beginning, Achitophel praises Absalom’s birth, calling him a second Moses and a hero that the kingdom loves (parents even teach their children to lisp his name!). Achitophel isn’t sure how long Absalom will keep the Jews without a king. Soon, his glory will fade, and his young fruit will rot on the tree. Heaven wants this “lucky revolution” to happen. If it isn’t, luck will slip away, leaving only “repenting folly” behind. Absalom should learn from the young David in how to take power. David knew when to do it.

But it’s important that he doesn’t look at David right now. People don’t like their king; they see him as Satan falling and losing his light. A public plan let him down, and he shouldn’t be in power anymore. He won’t be able to stand up to Absalom, Achitophel says, because he has no friends but enemies. David could ask the Pharaoh of Egypt for help, but Achitophel is sure that Egypt would not really be his friend.

Because he is king, Absalom is the “champion of the public good.” There is no real reason for David to be king; his only claim to power comes from “the moldy rolls of Noah’s Ark.” It’s risky to flatter someone, and young Absalom wants to be famous too much. His friend Achitophel helps him turn away from virtue, getting him “drunk with honor” and “debauched with praise.”

But Absalom is still having trouble, so he asks Achitophel why he should take up guns. He says that his father is a good leader who protects the Faith and the people. David has done no harm to anyone and has even forgiven millions of people. He is “mild, easy, humble,” and kind. He doesn’t like to kill people. Why should David be wrong for being mild, which is

good in God's eyes? Egypt may have a proud leader like Pharaoh, but Jerusalem doesn't need that.

Absalom then asks himself why he should rebel. His dad isn't a tyrant; he doesn't hurt Jews and teach Jebusites. He freely gives Absalom everything but his crown. In fact, David told Absalom that he wished he could give him the crown. That's too bad that when David takes a break, his brother will take over the throne. But even though his brother is mean, he is loyal to the king and has the right to rule. Absalom then asks himself why he should try to rebel against Heaven when he doesn't "pretend to be a king"?

But a moment later, he thinks that he wishes he hadn't been born in a shameful way. He believes he was born to rule, and he wants to be great. When Achitophel sees that Absalom is weakening, he "pours fresh forces in" by telling the young man that God gave him his gifts on purpose. David is very gentle, which is good, but the throne needs "manly force." People will think a king is stupid, careless, and weak if he gives out too many gifts and handouts.

Achitophel tells us what the plan is. It will cost a lot of money to fight Achitophel, so David will have to look for friends. Achitophel will make sure that people think David's friends are Jebusites and Pharaoh's men. Everyone will look down on David and leave him naked. Achitophel will then make his replacement, whom he hates, a pain for everyone. The elders will hate the new king or queen and sell off his rights. David will have to ask Absalom to "make his uncertain title law."

The people will be fine with this change, and it will be better for Israel as a whole. It turns out that the Jews are smart after all—they got rid of God and put Saul where they wanted him. Achitophel tells Absalom not to let David charm him or make him feel good with love and kindness. Also, he says that David loves Absalom because God loved David and gave him Israel. Absalom should love David because David loves him. Why should his brother win and Absalom get land that isn't useful? He is already envious of Absalom because he knows how much people love him. He "marks [Absalom's] progress in the hearts of the people" and waits for his meal like a lion. He is going to wait for the right time to attack Absalom.

So, Absalom needs to try for the title now. He has no power if David is not there and his brother is on the throne. To defend David, he must say that he will take up guns and keep him safe from all the plans that will start to come after him. He has to act like he is loyal and "protect David's person to protect his cause."

Critical Analysis

Dryden's poem is interesting enough if it were a retelling of the biblical story of David, Absalom, and Achitophel. But that's not what he's doing here; he's writing a satirical, brilliant, and damaging song about King Charles II, Monmouth, and Shaftesbury. In the end, his allegory proves Charles's right to the throne by telling the story of the Popish plan, the Exclusion Crisis, and what happened after it.

First, let me quickly talk about the characters in this part. First, David is Charles II, who is famous all over the country for having sexual relationships and having children outside of marriage. Catherine of Braganza is David's wife, Michal. Both of them "failed" to give their husband a child. Absalom is James, Duke of Monmouth, Charles's oldest son who is not his biological child. The fame in other areas comes from Monmouth's battle with the Dutch in the 1670s. Anthony Ashley Cooper is Achitophel. He is the first Earl of Shaftesbury.

This part talks about the historical background of David's (Charles's) reign and how he behaved. He introduces the charming and handsome Absalom (Monmouth), whom everyone, including David (Charles), loves. He also talks about some of the problems that the Jews (the English) were having and makes a reference to the Popish plot. He also talks about how angry the Jebusites (Catholics) were and why the Jews might be afraid of them. Finally, he talks about Achitophel's (Shaftesbury's) reasons for wanting to bring David down and his a

Many writers at the time didn't think it was wrong to use scripture to comment on current events, but Dryden "ignores the implications of scriptural text that he presumably draws upon and, indeed, changes the traditional meaning of the text when it seems useful to do so," says Leon M. Guilhamet, a critic. Dryden also uses the song to criticize the Church of England, implying that the Jewish priests don't care about the wrongdoings of the Jebusite priests and that it should be under the control of the government. That the Church is only important "as a principle of order insofar as it is subordinate to the king and the law" and "the king himself becomes the most important figure, outdoing God instead of relying on Him for support; and the Church is pushed into the background as a mere appurtenance of David-Charles's authority." All actions and power are based on reasons, which means that God's Will is not enough.

Even though Dryden released his poem without giving his name, people quickly figured out that it was him. Censorship of both Tory and Whig writing made this widespread, and as critic Randy Robertson points out, it could even help the writer. Aside from giving Dryden "at least the veneer of objectivity" and "fostered impartiality in the reader," remaining anonymous gave him more than that. Most readers thought that only Dryden, as Charles's

laureate, could have written such a brilliant song. This means that “in effect, Dryden got the fame and fame he deserved for his poem without having to pay the price in a London courtroom.” Since the introduction makes it clear that Dryden is anonymous, “he sets up a puzzle about who wrote the poem that he wants readers to solve.”

The first lines of Dryden’s poems are some of his most famous. He points out right away that Charles is having a lot of affairs, but he says it wouldn’t be a problem if he were born in a different time. It wasn’t thought wrong to have more than one wife in David’s time because priestcraft hadn’t started yet. Some experts think that Dryden was trying to draw attention away from how wrong Charles was acting, but Robertson thinks that he was actually emphasizing it: during the Exclusion Crisis, some of Monmouth’s followers said that Monmouth was really Charles’s real son. Dr. Dryden wants to fix the issue: Monmouth is not a legitimate heir, so he should not have the throne. The crisis over succession should end.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that the main lines in the poem have a classical oratory style. This will also be a part of the other analyses. We will talk about four speeches: Achitophel’s two-part speech to Absalom, Absalom’s response, Absalom’s speech to the people, and David’s last speech. According to critic W. Gerald Marshall, all of them are classical orations because they have the main parts of exordium, narration, claim, formal proof, and peroration. However, Absalom and Achitophel are “false” orators while David is a “true” orator. David’s speech is meant to “sustain the state and to maintain political order,” while Absalom and Achitophel, who are like Milton’s anti-Christ figures, use their speeches to stir up discontent and rebellion. We’re going to look at Achitophel’s first speech now. As we already said, it sounds a lot like Milton’s Satan.

Achitophel starts with the insinuation to make Absalom feel good about himself and boost his pride. In line with the exordium form, he tells him about the chance to be king and “introduces the argument in a manner that will gain the favor, good will, and interest of the audience [i.e. Absalom].” Then he gives the “facts” that show David is not fit to be king and says Israel needs a strong, armed leader. The formal statement that comes next is Achitophel’s suggestion of the logical conclusion that follows from his claim: Absalom needs to step up.

Achitophel stops talking to give Absalom a chance to respond. This is part of our critical analysis of the traditional speeches in the text. Absalom says that David is a good king who rules with clear authority. Achitophel then “agrees that David is a mild man and says that he doesn’t normally dislike mildness.” But he quickly reminds Absalom that being soft and gentle is not what a king should be like. He says that David’s enemies can get to him

easily because of these traits. Additionally, he says that the people have the power to remove a king and that legal succession is not always the best option. He makes Absalom even more afraid of his uncle and tells him that everyone loves him. He also tells him to act quickly. In his peroration, or closing remarks, Achitophel tailors his words to the people he is speaking to in order to get them to do what he wants. For example, he tells Absalom to defend the King and be sure that taking over the throne would not be a bad thing because David loves his son.

Absalom gives his own official speech to the people, which critic W. Gerald Marshall thinks might be even better than Achitophel's. Absalom draws attention to himself by using emotional language, which makes people feel sorry for him. He tells the people that the state is in a bad place and that all he has to give them is his tears. In his speech, Absalom "repeats his hope that his countrymen will escape the suffering that monarch may impose and makes it clear that he cares about and loves his countrymen." It's great classical rhetoric, and it works very well, especially since he knows that the people will respond to his weak plan with a stronger one—one that asks him to stand up for them.

Even though Achitophel and Absalom gave great talks, Marshall calls them "false" orators who "corrupt classical rhetorical principles." People believe that oratory is linked to morality and good character, and that "the use of classical form demands—in the classical humanist tradition, at least—ethical content." To speak to the people, the orator must be morally good, and most ancient orators said that the point of these speeches was to promote the common good and protect the legitimate government. Achitophel and Absalom, who were both bad people, definitely don't fit that description.

Some of the things that Dryden does in his poem are to point out some of Charles' flaws while also making the case for the good things about him. There is a case for Charles's valid claim to the throne because these good traits outweigh the bad ones. Dryden is very honest about Charles's problems, as reviewer K.E. Robinson points out; at the end of the poem, Charles only gets better after he admits to having problems. Robinson says that Charles's kindness to Monmouth is also an example of him ignoring more important fatherly or family responsibilities. He took too long to respond to Monmouth's progress, which puts the "Hereditary Paternal Monarchy of England" at risk. David/Charles has "contained his natural impulses" by the end of the poem. He no longer lets all of his natural urges run wild. Charles wasn't perfect in Dryden's eyes, but he did believe that Charles' claim to the throne was fair and right, and others should not question it.

It's interesting that Absalom doesn't want to kill David; he just wants to replace him as a Messiah-like figure. Some critics, like Thomas E. Maresca, say that Dryden gives Absalom a lower, more natural version of David. Like David, he follows nature and is "all accompanied with grace" (29), but David and the reader don't see his creator's picture in him. They see David as a person, not as a god. He is not real, has flaws, and is likely to mess up "the dominion of grace in David's kingdom, just as it did in the garden." God's representative, vice-regent, and king by divine right is David, and "rebellion against him equals apostasy from God—setting up the golden calf of a state." When Absalom turns against David, he is like Adam when he turns against God.

"ODE TO A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE" – GRAY

About the Author

Thomas Gray, (born Dec. 26, 1716, London—died July 30, 1771, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, Eng.), English poet whose "An Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard" is one of the best known of English lyric poems. Although his literary output was slight, he was the dominant poetic figure in the mid-18th century and a precursor of the Romantic movement. Born into a prosperous but unhappy home, Gray was the sole survivor of 12 children of a harsh and violent father and a long-suffering mother, who operated a millinery business to educate him. A delicate and studious boy, he was sent to Eton in 1725 at the age of eight. There he formed a "Quadruple Alliance" with three other boys who liked poetry and classics and disliked rowdy sports and the Hogarthian manners of the period. They were Horace Walpole, the son of the prime minister; the precocious poet Richard West, who was closest to Gray; and Thomas Ashton. The style of life Gray developed at Eton, devoted to quiet study, the pleasures of the imagination, and a few understanding friends, was to persist for the rest of his years. He buried himself in his studies of Celtic and Scandinavian antiquities and became increasingly retiring and hypochondriacal. In his last years his peace was disrupted by his friendship with a young Swiss nobleman, Charles Victor de Bonstetten, for whom he conceived a romantic devotion, the most profound emotional experience of his life.

Summary of the Text

In "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," Thomas Gray writes about the school he went to as a child. The first line paints a beautiful picture of Eton College. The peaks, towers, and crown make it look like a castle and give it a royal look. The name Henry (King

Henry VI, who built Eton in 1440) and the word “Windsor Castle” add to the picture of a king. The speaker also uses pastoral language and pictures of nature to paint a picture of the grove, yard, and flowers in the background. Finally, in Line 9, the person talks about “Thames,” which is short for the River Thames, which runs through Berlin.

In Stanza 2, the person talks about how they feel when they look at Eton College. These thoughts make the speaker “happy” (Line 11) and remind them of their “careless childhood” (Line 13). This person speaking is not a child, though; they are an adult who feels “pain” (Line 14) and has a “weary soul” (Line 18). The speaker can take a break from their problems and “breathe a second spring” (Line 20) when they look off into the distance at Eton College. They remember a happier and more productive time.

The next line continues to talk about how easy childhood was. In this part, the speaker talks about some of the things that kids do outside on the “margent green” (Line 23). To play games, they can “chase the rolling circle’s speed” (Line 29) and run after a hoops or “urge the flying ball” (Line 30). The speaker in Stanza 4 says that being a kid isn’t all fun and games. The kids have “earnest business” (Line 31) because they need to go to school. But these “graver hours” (Line 33) don’t change how positive the speaker is about their youth. The responsibilities of school “sweeten liberty” (Line 34) and make their free time even more fun. The speaker makes a reference to something that will happen in the future that will affect the children at the end of Stanza 4. The speaker says that the kids need to “snatch a fearful joy” (Line 40), as if they won’t be so happy for long.

In Stanza 5, the speaker talks about how easy childhood is. The kids don’t hold on to happy times or worry about their problems; they just go with the flow. They won’t remember their tears “as soon as shed” (Line 43). The kids are naturally healthy and funny because they don’t have to deal with adult problems, feelings, or worries. They don’t have scary thoughts that keep them awake at night, so “the slumbers light” (Line 49).

In Stanza 6, the speaker talks about the “doom” (Line 51) that the children will face. The kids are innocent and clean, so they don’t know the terrible things that happen to adults yet. The kids don’t know about “black Misfortune’s baleful train” (Line 57), which will soon “ambush” (Line 58) and “seize” (Line 59) them because they are living in the present.

Now the speaker changes the subject to the bad feelings that many people have at this point in their lives. “Vulturs” (Line 62) take over an adult’s mind and fill it with feelings like shame, love, envy, hopelessness, and sadness. These feelings are “rankling” (Line 66) and “piercing” (Line 70), which are not at all like the relaxed feelings that kids have. In Stanza 8, the speaker keeps talking about how bad things are in the adult world. Adults live in a world

of lies, desire, and apathy. Adults don't happily forget their tears when they cry. Instead, they make fun of their own sadness because they don't have real feelings anymore. The speaker says that when a person becomes an adult, their "blood defil'd" becomes impure (Line 78).

Stanza 9 is where the speaker talks about the body parts of being an adult. As people age, their bodies also age, which "racks the joints" (Line 85). For them, becoming an adult "strains" (Line 86) their bodies and leads them to death.

In the last stanza, the speaker says that this bad result is inevitable. In lines 91–92, the speaker says, "To each his sufferings: all are men, condemned alike to groan." But the teacher won't tell the kids about their scary future because "why should they know their fate?" (Line 95). People in the poem want the kids to enjoy their happiness while it lasts, and they don't see a reason to "destroy their paradise" (Line 98). Also, "ignorance is bliss" for the children (Line 99), while the speaker's knowledge and experience are "folly" (Line 100).

Critical Analysis

If you want to write poetry that shows deep feelings and thoughts, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" is a musical ode. In this poem, Thomas Gray thinks about his feelings and experiences as he remembers how quickly time goes by and how innocent he used to be. In Gray's time, this type of poetry—melancholy odes about the nature of life—was very popular. It also influenced many Romantic writers who wrote vivid, emotional reflections on high and holy topics.

Indeed, this poem is full of examples of the sublime, a word that refers to the feeling of awe that comes from seeing something truly amazing and beautiful. Gray uses vivid descriptions of Eton College and the nature scenery around it to make the reader feel awe and respect. The tall buildings, green meadows, and meaningful river all add to a beautiful scenery that stands for the innocence and happiness of youth. This beautiful theme emphasizes the deep link between nature and the human experience, showing how the beauty of nature mirrors the beauty of the human spirit. The famous school Eton is a real place, but the accounts of it and the land around it are full of meanings. The school's big buildings stand for both education and the hopefulness of young people. Moving water in the River Thames stands for how time goes by and how short life is. Putting these symbols next to each other makes a rich web of meaning that puts teen experiences in the bigger picture of life. Gray brings these ideas to life even more by using metaphor in many ways. The "grateful science," "happy hills," and "pleasing shade" all represent the spirit of youth. Gray's "Grim-visage," the "shame that skulks," and the "hideous" family of death are similar to Despair's in that

they all show how people become more sensitive to bad feelings and hardships as they get older, and these things become more pronounced and grotesque as people get older.

The framework of “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College” is like that of a Horatian ode. It has ten quatrains, and each quatrain has lines that switch between iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter. The structured format of the poem creates a pleasant musical quality that is pleasing to the ear. The structured format also fits with the reflective nature of the poem, allowing for a slow and thoughtful study of its themes. It’s easier for readers to understand and think about the poet’s thoughts because each stanza is its own unit of reflection.

Gray chose this structure on purpose so that he can make a clear difference between the organized world of Eton College and the chaotic and unpredictable world outside of it. Five of the ten stanzas are about the happy lives of children, and the last five are about the problems that come with being an adult. Some might see this song as a warning for young people, but its real purpose is to make you think about how time goes by. Some parts of the poem are sad, and they make you think about how short youth is, but they are not meant to be a standard cautionary tale or warning. However, it doesn’t tell young people what to do or tell them to avoid making certain mistakes. Gray thinks that young people should enjoy their freedom and happiness while they still can, “Since sorrow never comes too late, and happiness too quickly flies.”

Paragraph Questions

1. What is the political theme of Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel*?
2. How does Dryden use satire in *Absalom and Achitophel*?
3. What is the central theme of Gray’s *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*?
4. How does Gray portray childhood in the poem?
5. What is the tone of Gray’s poem about youth and future suffering?

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the political satire in Dryden’s *Absalom and Achitophel*.
2. Analyze Dryden’s portrayal of characters in *Absalom and Achitophel*.
3. Examine the theme of innocence and experience in Gray’s poem.
4. Discuss the reflective tone of *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*.
5. Evaluate the poetic style of Dryden and Gray.

UNIT V
MODERN POETRY
“THE SOLDIER” – RUPERT BROOKE

About the Author

Rupert Brooke’s (1887–1915) most evocative and poignant poems—and an example of the dangers of romanticizing World War I, comforting the survivors but downplaying the grim reality. Written in 1914, the lines are still used in military memorials today. Rupert Brooke had traveled, written, fallen in and out of love, joined great literary movements, and recovered from a mental collapse all before the declaration of war, when he volunteered for the Royal Naval Division. He saw combat action in the fight for Antwerp in 1914, as well as a retreat. As he awaited a new deployment, he wrote the short set of five 1914 War Sonnets, which concluded with one called *The Soldier*. Soon after he was sent to the Dardanelles, where he refused an offer to be moved away from the front lines—an offer sent because his

poetry was so well-loved and good for recruiting—but died on April 23rd, 1915 of blood poisoning from an insect bite that weakened a body already ravaged by dysentery.

Summary of the Text

From Brooke's War Sonnets, which were about the start of World War I, "The Soldier" was the last piece. As Brooke neared the end of his series, he turned to what happened when the man died in battle while he was away from home. A lot of the time when "The Soldier" was written, soldiers' bodies were buried close to where they died instead of being brought back to their home country. During World War I, this led to huge cemeteries for British troops in "foreign fields." Brooke uses these graves to show a part of the world that will always be England. Brooke predicted in his writings at the start of the war that many soldiers' bodies would stay buried and unknown because of how the war was fought. Their bodies had been torn apart or buried by shellfire.

The country wanted to make the senseless deaths of its troops something that could be dealt with and even celebrated. Brooke's poem became a key part of the process of remembering and is still used a lot today. People have said, and they have a point, that it idealizes and romanticizes war. It is very different from the poems of Wilfred Owen (1893–1918). In the second part of "The Soldier," religion is very important. It shows that the soldier will wake up in heaven as a way to make up for dying in battle.

The poem also uses a lot of patriotic language. The man who died is a "English" soldier, because it was written at a time when being English was seen as the best thing in the world. The soldier in the song is thinking about his own death, but he isn't scared or sad about it. Instead, faith, patriotism, and romance are what keep him from focusing. Some people think that Brooke's poem was one of the last great ideas before the world realized how horrible modern mechanized warfare really is. But Brooke had seen action and knew that English soldiers had been dying on adventures in other countries for hundreds of years when he wrote it.

Critical Analysis

One way to describe the beginning of the song is as a feeling of dread. If anything, this should point out how dishonest the poem is, since it pretty much supports death in war instead of condemning it. That saying by General Patton that "the subject of war is not to die for the nation you love but to have the opposing bastard die for his" seems to go against this. The first line of the poem sets the mood. It almost sounds like the author is confessing something in a writing or notebook.

After his second and third lines, the narrator quickly turns the fact that he is going to die into a good thing. Unfortunately, there were no jobs for women in the service when the First World War started, so it seems likely that the narrator is a man. Since he talks about dying in an alien field, this is possibly a battlefield.

In the fifth line, the poet builds on the picture of dust by talking about how England made and shaped that dust. He wants to get across the idea that he is the very essence of England. However, what he really means is that every person who gives their life for their country is comparable. That troops spread Englishness like seeds because they are “shaped” by England when they die abroad.

The last three lines of the Octave are full of patriotic ideas. They really do a great job of making England look good. Using the natural world to do this works. When we talk about rivers, flowers, and the air, they all make England seem like a beautiful place to live.

The storyteller says that if a soldier did that, he or she could help bring the exact parts that made that beauty to another country. If this ever happened, it would definitely be a very honorable thing to do.

A lot of the time, the second line of a sonnet brings up a new idea. In this case, the first line makes it sound like the speaker is adding another thought, while “and think this” makes it sound like he has had a revelation.

These four lines are the last ones in the song. Speaking highly of English society again. Invoking the senses gives this a deep emotional connection. It’s not enough to just like how England looks; people also like how it sounds. Because of these explanations, the claims in the first stanza are pretty much justified.

“Look, this is what you’d be dying for, isn’t it great?” asks the second stanza to back up the first stanza’s claim that it is okay to die in war if it helps your country. That last line is very smart. It uses very positive language to get across the idea that death on the battlefield leads to peace.

He thinks that just his blood will be the right gift because of all the wonderful things his dear country has given him and how she has made him who he is. For the soldier who speaks in the poem, making a sacrifice in defense of the country is his way of finding forgiveness.

The movie “The Soldier” looks at the bond between a British soldier who loves his country and himself. Through this soldier’s passionate description of his ties to England, the song suggests that people are shaped by their home cultures and environments and that their country is something worth protecting with their lives. It praised the bravery of fighters and the good things people have done. The Soldier keeps using this theme.

It refers to the heart, which is connected to infinity and has no bias or bad feelings. And it will keep existing, enjoying the wonderful memories that the English country gave him. So, the beauty and meaning of the sonnet come from a sense of belonging to England.

“ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH” – WILFRED OWEN

About the Author

Wilfred Edward Salter Owen was born on March 18, 1893. Owen was regarded by many as the leading poet of the first world war and was mostly known for his war poetry based on the horrors of trench warfare. Wilfred Owen was influenced early on by such authors as John Keats and the writings of the Bible. Born the oldest of four children, Owen was raised as an Anglican of the evangelical school. After leaving the school, he briefly attended the university of London where he worked as a student-teacher at Wyle Cop School teaching to pay his way for tuition. He was on the Continent teaching until he visited a hospital for the wounded and then decided, in September, 1915, to return to England and enlist. “I came out in order to help these boys— directly by leading them as well as an officer can; indirectly, by watching their sufferings that I may speak of them as well as a pleader can. I have done the first” (October, 1918). Owen was injured in March 1917 and sent home; he was fit for duty in August, 1918, and returned to the front. November 4, just seven days before the Armistice, he was caught in a German machine gun attack and killed. He was twenty-five when he died. The bells were ringing on November 11, 1918, in Shrewsbury to celebrate the Armistice when the doorbell rang at his parent’s home, bringing them the telegram telling them their son was dead.

Summary of the Text

William Owen wrote the well-known song “Anthem for Doomed Youth” in 1917. It has seven lines. This song is about how war changes people. The poet writes about how people who died in the First World War were buried. The poem is sad about the soldiers who died in the war. This poem shows how sad the men were during some very bloody battles. The artist also writes about the pain of families whose loved ones died in the wars. Song sung for the soldiers who died in the war is what the title of the piece means. This song is about how awful war is. He writes about how sad it makes him that so many men died in the First World War. A national anthem is what “anthem” refers to in this case. It’s a song to honor big events in our country. When stripped down, it’s just a war poem about soldiers and war. The author wrote this song in a hospital in Scotland while getting help for gun shock.

He wrote this song in 1917. In the fall of that year, he died in a fight. They didn't want the war to happen. He talked about how war is bad. The artist said that killing a young man in war is like killing a lot of animals at once. Usually, the sonnet is about love and romance, but this time, the writer picked a different subject. This poem isn't about love like the other one. This song is about war. Another important idea in this song is that the artist doesn't like war. He says the war isn't important for the country. That's when he says guys who die in such a bloody war are bad for the country.

He says it's terrible that so many soldiers have died. You think about why wars happen and what happens later when you listen to this song. The artist doesn't understand why nations don't know what happens and how it impacts people after a war. No country should forget the problems and sadness of people who have died in wars. In a beautiful way, the song shows how the fight was not like the quiet and peaceful Church services.

Critical Analysis

In this poem, the artist talks about how important church bells are when someone dies. In the Christian faith, a church bell is a bell that is rung in a church for events like weddings, funerals, and other times. A funeral service also rings the church bell in this way. The poet says that when someone dies, the church bells ring. But what sound does it make when men die in battle? In this line, the poet wants to make it clear that when people die in war, they die like cattle because there are no church bells to mark their deaths. This is not at all polite to them. There are no church bells rung for them. The artist sees them as animals that are dying on the battlefield. The poet makes holy images to help him understand why soldiers are dying.

The artist talks about the bad things about war. He says that people kill men in battle in a cruel way. Is killing them there like animals a good idea? "Passing bells" refers to the sound of church bells at a funeral to mark the death of a person, and "die as cattle" refers to people who are brutally killed all at once. "Cattle" is what the author calls the soldiers. It refers to a group of animals. In this poem, though, the word "cattle" refers to a group of troops who are all brutally killed at the same time. "Only the monstrous anger of guns" in the second line refers to how bad guns are in war. However, it works the opposite way of the church bells that ring when someone dies. The poet wants to say that when troops die, no church bell rings, but they face the hellish anger of guns on the battlefield. It means that troops are dying on the battlefield because of the thunderous sound of the guns. The poet goes on to say that the fast noise of the guns is a prayer for the troops who have died. The poet is saying that the

sound of the guns and the fire on the battlefield sounds like a prayer for the troops who are dying there.

In this poem, the author talks about how fighters die very quickly and not naturally. It means they don't die naturally like other people do. The poet has already said that dead soldiers are like dead animals. Now, the poet says that the prayer of the church is like the noise of guns on the battlefield. The artist doesn't want war. It looks like the unsteady guns are praying or singing psalms for the troops who have died. It's a very important question when it comes to war whether the effects are really important or not. So many men have died. Is it really fair that they died? Let's all think about it here. Does everyone have to die in a war, or can they choose not to? Here, the poet gives the guns personalities. The poet says these weapons are a tribute to the soldiers who died in battle.

The artist also says that there is no honor for soldiers who have died. Soldiers deserve a special funeral because they protect us from danger. But they think it's funny that we don't give them at least a proper funeral, which is what they deserve for all they did. There are no special prayers or bells to ring to calm their soul. We are ashamed of ourselves, and it's terrible that they die like cattle on the battlefield. It's almost like making fun of their life. In this poem, the poet says bad things about wars and fights. On top of that, the poet says that no one feels sorry for the men who died on the battlefield. But the artist thinks that the sound of guns is like the sound of funeral singers singing about someone's death. In this line, the artist wants to make it clear that the guns are a tribute to the soldiers, like funeral singers on the battlefield. In this line, the poet says that the group of funeral musicians sounds like shells.

No church bells, singers, or psalms ring out to honor the troops who are dying in battle. Instead, the noise of guns and shells is what honors the soldiers as they die. This poem uses the word "choirs." It refers to a group of singers who play sad music at a funeral. There is also the word "bugles" in the poem. The word "bugle" refers to a brass instrument. The army and military use it, and it looks pretty easy. It looks like a little horn. People play it at the graves of soldiers to honor them. The poet says that bugles are played in a nearby village to honor troops who are being buried or having a funeral. There is no candle burning for the troops, the poet says next. Usually, when someone dies, candles are lit to honor or remember them. But here, no candles are lit to honor the deaths of troops to bring them peace.

It makes us feel terrible that we can't honor them in any way, not even by lighting lights in their honor. For the poet, the light is not in the hands of the people who hold them, but in the eyes of their kids and family. The eyes of soldiers' kids and family members are filled with anger or sadness. Lighting candles is a rite that people do to remember people who

have died. The artist goes on to say that the families of the soldiers who died are seeing pure light. They're very sad that someone close to them died. The poet says that holy shine is like the tears that come out of the eyes of fighters' sons. They say goodbye to their loved ones for good.

“ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF W. B. YEATS” – W. H. AUDEN

About the Author

Wystan Hugh Auden, known more commonly as W. H. Auden, (February 21, 1907 – September 29, 1973) was an English poet and one of the most influential poets of the twentieth century. Younger than William Butler Yeats and T.S. Eliot, the two titans who had dominated English turn-of-the-century verse, Auden assimilated the techniques of these and the other modernists, becoming a master of poetry that was both rigorously formal and radically new. Auden was a poet of prodigious talent and output, living at a time of immense transition both in the world at large and in the poetic scene in particular. During the decades in which he lived, the ambitious, Modern poetry of Ezra Pound, Eliot, and Yeats would give way to a flood of contemporary poetic schools—from the Confessionalism of Robert Lowell to the formalism of Philip Larkin to the postmodernism of John Ashbery—all of which have competed for dominance in poetry ever since. Auden lived right at the center of this major sea-change in poetic development; his double-life as a British and American citizen only heightened his impact on the Anglophone world; and his influence, both as a beacon of poetry's traditional past and a harbinger of its radical future, is virtually unmatched by any other twentieth-century poet. He lived a double-life in another sense: His interests changed dramatically, as he turned from his early political orientation to a more inward focus as a result of a religious epiphany.

Summary of the Text

An elegy written by W.H. Auden on the death of W.B. Yeats, whom Auden admired and also deeply influenced by him. There are three sections to the poem. Auden discusses the poet's passing in the first half, and in the second, he addresses the poet directly and shows compassion while acknowledging the poet's irreversible loss. In the epilogue, Auden summarises Yeats' remarkable accomplishments in spite of his numerous flaws. All his shortcomings and mistakes have been pardoned by time. Consequently, “In Memory of W.B. Yeats” differs greatly from the other elegies. Unlike traditional pastoral elegies, the sadness expressed in the poem is genuine and unforced.

It contains all the expressions of sorrow of a modern civilized man at the loss of a loved one. Instead, Auden cleverly withholds his grief and recounts Yeats' death at a time when all of Europe was in the grip of a cold winter and political paralysis worldwide. The elegiac convention of universal sorrow is introduced with political and humanistic overtones, exactly in harmony with Auden's style. So there is a certain majesty, power and dignity in expressing grief. Grief is poignant, inevitable and real. Auden is a great poet after T.S. Eliot of the 20th century. Auden's poem "The Unknown Citizen" is the trend of this century. His poem "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" is a precious and powerful tribute to the memory of Yeats. Auden cleverly creates a Yeatsian impression by using colloquial language. "What instruments have we agreed upon. The day he died was a sad cold day," poetry does nothing; he became her admirer; Come on, mouth' is all typical Yeatsian style.

The poem begins with a loose description of the circumstances and place of the poet's death. The frozen state of the physical world in the cold winter and the dead cold of the poet's body are juxtaposed. Many rural and urban images are brought out of the paralysis of European politics just before the world war. "Mercury sank into the mouth of death" and "snow disfigured the public figures", frozen streams and deserted airfields suggest that the day Yeats died was a bleak cold day for the world. These powerful images suggest the elegiac concept of universal mourning.

The poet is dead, but his poetry survives his dying body and all its limitations, weaknesses, and failures. It is transmitted from generation to generation and has an independent existence apart from his personal history, dreams and thoughts. It can even be changed or interpreted by the living. But his poetry is eternal. The poet's death does not affect the daily life of the world. It continues its normal activities and hobbies. The poor continue to suffer and accept their suffering without question. Human freedom is still threatened and people still talk about freedom, equality and democracy. But in the midst of all this, few remember the poet and his masterpiece. It also reflects the loss caused by the death of the poet. The day of his death was a really dark and cold day for all sensitive people. The inevitability of death and the continuation of life are juxtaposed in an authentic elegiac manner.

In the second section there is an intensely personal and compassionate address to the dead poet. The man Yeats was silly like all poets and suffered like all sensitive and silly people. But his poetry survived all his weaknesses. Yeats spent a lot of time and energy for Irish nationalism. But Ireland still remains the same. Auden painfully thinks that great poetry cannot correct the course of history. The futility of poetry in the material world is very clear.

Poetry belongs to the spiritual world. It has nothing to do with the material world. But great poetry survives and continues to inspire because it comes out of the sufferings of the poet.

The poem ends with an impressive summary of Yeats' achievements. It is a funeral and the author calls on the country to receive the body of William Butler Yeats and complains that Ireland is empty of poetry. Time is a villain that destroys the brave, innocent and beautiful, but loves the poet and time forgives all the poet's weaknesses, shortcomings and failures. Time has forgiven Rudyard Kipling, or will forgive Paul Claudel, and it will certainly forgive all the political and private faults of Yeats and praise his poetic achievements. The memory of Yeats will be installed in the minds of future generations of readers. Yeats is a beacon of light in the dark world of Europe, and his poetry turns the curse of fallen humanity into a vineyard of human freedom. May his poetry expand our senses and enable us to live a better life. Thus the poem ends on the optimistic note that Yeats's life was not lived in vain and that poetry has power in the spirit world.

Critical Analysis

Everything was frozen in the middle of winter, and airports were almost empty. Public figures were covered in snow, which made the day seem even shorter. Which tools do we both agree on? The day he died, it was cold and dark.

The wolves kept running through the evergreen forests, and the trendy quays didn't make the farmer river give up. His songs didn't talk about the poet's death because they were too sad.

But it was his last afternoon as himself for him. An afternoon of nurses and rumors made his body hurt, left him with nothing to think about, and quiet filled the suburbs. His emotions stopped flowing. He started to like him.

He is now in a hundred different places and giving in to feelings he has no idea what they are. Different kinds of trees will make him happy, and different morals will punish him. What a dead person said Changes in the hearts of live things.

But tomorrow is important and loud. There will be a few thousand people who remember this day when the stockbrokers are yelling like wild animals on the floor of the Bourse and the poor are going through the pain they're used to. Everyone in their own cell is almost certain they are free. As someone thinks back to a day when they did something different.

We thought you were silly, and your gift lived on through the church of rich women, your own fall in health, and us. Irish Fire will make you write poetry. It's still crazy in

Ireland, and it's still bad outside. Things don't change because poems live on in the valley they made and flow south. Directors would never want to mess with them. From the lonely farms and busy grief farms to the rough towns where we live and die, it lives on as a way of being and a voice.

Earth, please take a seat. Funeral services for William Yeats have ended. Leave the Irish ship alone and let it rest. As night falls, all of Europe's dogs bark, and the countries that are still alive wait, each locked in its own hate. Everyone has a look of intellectual shame on their face, and below them are seas of sadness. locked and frozen in every eye. Following the performer until the very end of the night, You can still make us happy with your free words; By putting down a line Turn the curse into a garden, In a fit of sadness, sing about how unsuccessful people are; let the healing spring begin in the heart's deserts; teach the free man how to praise while he's in jail.

“DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT” – DYLAN THOMAS

About the Author

Dylan Thomas, (born Oct. 27, 1914, Swansea, Wales—died Nov. 9, 1953, New York, N.Y., U.S.), Welsh poet and prose writer. He left school at age 16 to work as a reporter. His early verse, as in *The Map of Love* (1939), with rich metaphoric language and emotional intensity, made him famous. In the more accessible *Deaths and Entrances* (1946), with “Fern Hill,” he often adopts a bardic, oracular voice. *In Country Sleep* (1952), containing “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night,” and *Collected Poems* (1952) followed. Thomas's prose includes the comic *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* (1940); a play for voices, *Under Milk Wood* (1954); and the reminiscence *A Child's Christmas in Wales* (1955). His sonorous recitations contributed greatly to his fame. Debt and heavy drinking began taking their toll in the late 1930s, and he died of an alcohol overdose while on tour.

Summary of the Text

Dylan Thomas wrote “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” in 1951. He was a well-known author. The son wrote these words for his father right before the father died. People can't stop death or guess when it will happen. In his own life, the author died too soon, and in the poem, he talks about and explores the tension of dying. It is one of Dylan Thomas's most popular poems, and students all over the world study it. The author uses metaphors and figures of speech in a clever way. The poem also has a moving message about life and death. The author wrote this poem, five years after the first edition came out, but

most people think he wrote it for his dying father, who died in late 1952. Instead, Thomas passed away in November 1953.

Poet starts their poem in a strong voice, telling the nameless audience to fight death. The Poet tells an unknown listener that he shouldn't try to avoid death calmly, but should instead fight it hard. For death and life, the poet uses night and day as figures of speech. The poet of this poem divides men into four groups to make the reader think about what kind of men they are getting close to death: wise, good, wild, and grave. Thomas imagines his father's death and compares it to the words "good night," which creates the main image of the poem.

The poet either insists or begs so desperately that you fight death rather than give up and die. No matter how easy or hard your life is, he thought, you shouldn't refuse to give up when you're about to die. The poet said that wise men know they are going to die, but they still feel like they haven't made a difference in the world, like someone who can't change the world because of lightning or forks.

The argument goes on to say that even good men who made the world a better place during their lives are angry about the light going out. that is, a good person to fight against death for the same reasons. But their goodness doesn't work right because their actions are still "frail" and haven't stood strong enough, like a huge wave in a quiet bay. It means that good men's values are less valuable if they don't have a great evil to fight against death. While good men want more time to live, wild men refuse to accept that they will die and want to live forever in this very moment. Good men can fight death because they think they have done more. Their past life seems to have gone by quickly because they were sad about small things that could make a big difference in the world. Old men hold on to life with their knowledge and wisdom because they know how valuable life is.

Another line from the poem is about "wild men" who choose to live their lives to the fullest. Though they enjoy life's beauty and complexity, they've been noticing that the sun is setting behind them. Because of this, they refuse the peaceful coming of death and have to face the fact that they will die. Poet talks about "grave men" in the next line. These are people who are serious about life and close to death but have to fight death.

The poet finally got personal and told his father, "Please don't give up so soon and don't accept it as your fate. You must fight once for a living." So that his father can understand what kind of life he wants, he uses the song to show four different kinds of men who "rage" against death. He hoped that these examples would show his father how to fight

finality in the same pointless way they did. The Poet tells his father that he should feel anything when he thinks about dying.

Poet wants everyone to find the point and meaning of their life while going about their daily lives. People lose their sense of purpose and meaning in life when it gets dark or night. After hearing about both day and night and how they are different, he asks his dad to pick light. Being able to change time makes this quote even more important: “Having a purpose in life is very important.” Last but not least, everyone should fight when it’s old and dying.

The strong poem “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Nigh” urges people to fight death and live their lives to the fullest. It’s a kid telling his father not to let go of the situation, even though the father can’t change it. Poet uses examples to show that youth is irreversible and that life is always short. This poet got ideas from the poem because he had a sad and difficult life and worked as a radio host for many years. This poem uses literary methods very skillfully to bring out its theme and tone of defiance, which runs through the whole thing.

Critical Analysis

Dylan Thomas’s song “Do not go gentle into that good night,” which came out in 1951, is a son’s plea to his dying father. The speaker wants to show his father that all men will die, but they still have to fight for their lives. There are six stanzas in the song. Five have three lines each, and the sixth has four lines. Let’s look at it one line at a time to get a better sense of what it means and what it says.

Stanza 1

The main idea of this song is almost “Old age should burn and rave at the end of the day.” Thomas sorts men into four groups to help his dad understand that there is a reason to live, no matter what he does, how it turns out, or who he is. Thomas might use these categories to say that his father has no excuses, no matter what he did in life.

Stanza 2: Wise Men

It’s the “wise men” that Thomas talks about first. “Though wise men at their end know dark is right,” the first line of the stanza says. This line suggests that the wise know that death is a normal part of life and should accept it. In spite of this, the next line says that they are still fighting death because they feel like they haven’t become famous enough in life. For Thomas, “Because their words had forked no lightning” means that they want to stay alive so that they can leave their mark on history and keep their places as great thinkers or scholars.

Stanza 3: Good Men

Thomas moves on and calls the next group of people “good men.” As the end draws near, they too think about their lives: “Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright.” There are two parts to this line. Thomas may be saying that there aren’t enough good guys in the world and that he thinks the world would be a better place with his father by saying “the last wave by.” Second, “crying how bright” could mean guys telling their stories in public. As Thomas continues with the next line, “their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,” he laments the thought of men knowing that their actions, no matter how important they seemed at the time, will not be remembered.

Stanza 4: Wild Men

Thomas moves on and calls the next group of people “good men.” As the end draws near, they too think about their lives: “Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright.” There are two parts to this line. Thomas may be saying that there aren’t enough good guys in the world and that he thinks the world would be a better place with his father by saying “the last wave by.” Second, “crying how bright” could mean guys telling their stories in public. As Thomas continues with the next line, “their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,” he laments the thought of men knowing that their actions, no matter how important they seemed at the time, will not be remembered.

Stanza 5: Grave Men

The last group Thomas talks about are “grave men”: “Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight.” In this line, the word “grave” almost has two meanings: it can mean both men who are sad and men who are close to dying.

They know that living a long time is hard on them and that their bodies are breaking down. Their eyes are failing along with the rest of their body, but even though they are weak, they still have a burning desire to live. “Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay” is a phrase that describes how hard it is for men to stay alive. The speaker says that his father might be okay with living longer even though he is very sick.

Final Stanza

In the last stanza, the person finally says what they want to say. He says that all guys fight for more time, no matter what they’ve been through or where they are now. He tells his dad to do the same thing. “Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray” shows how much pain and emotion he is in as he begs his father not to die. The speaker asks his father not to give up as he sees his father die.

“WHITSUN WEDDINGS” – PHILIP LARKIN

About the Author

Philip Larkin is widely considered as one of the greatest English poets of the second part of the twentieth century. He was born on August 9, 1922, in Coventry, England, to Sydney Larkin (1884-1948) and his wife, Eva Emily Day (1886-1977). His sister Catherine, also known as Kitty, was ten years his senior. His father introduced him to the works of Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and, most importantly, D.H. Lawrence. His mother was a tense, passive woman. His first collection of poems, *The North Ship*, was published in 1945, followed by two novels, *Jill* (1946) and *A Girl in Winter* (1947), but he rose to popularity in 1955 with the release of *The Less deluded*, followed by *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964) and *High Windows* (1965). (1974). From 1961 to 1971, he was *The Daily Telegraph*'s jazz critic, and he authored essays that were collected in *All What Jazz: a Record Diary 1961-71* (1985), and he edited *The Oxford Book of Twentieth-Century English Verse* (1973). He received numerous honours, including the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. Following the death of John Betjamen in 1984, he was given the title of poet laureate but declined.

His poems are distinguished by what Andrew Motion calls a “very English, glum accuracy” about emotions, places, and relationships, as well as “lowered sights and diminished expectations,” as defined by Donald Davie. Eric Homberger referred to him as “the saddest heart in the post-war supermarket”—Larkin himself stated that deprivation was to him what daffodils were to Wordsworth. W.H. Auden, W.B. Yeats, and Thomas Hardy have all affected Larkin. His poems are written in highly structured but adaptable poetry styles. Jean Hartley described them as a “piquant mixture of lyricism and discontent,” but anthologist Keith Tuma thinks that there is more to Larkin's writing than its reputation for bleak pessimism.

Summary of the Text

This is the title poem from Philip Larkin's collection of songs from 1964. The poem is about a trip from Hull to London over the Whitsun weekend, and Larkin sees wedding parties getting on the train at every stop. It is one of his longest and most famous great poems.

‘The Whitsun Weddings’ is about a train trip from Hull to London during the Whitsun weekend (Whit Sunday is the seventh Sunday after Easter). However, the poem was based on Philip Larkin's own train trip between Hull and Loughborough, the midlands town where his mother lived, over the August Bank Holiday weekend in 1956.

Larkin turns this real trip into a story and changes the starting point of his trip from Loughborough to London, so he and we both end up in the nation's capital. Larkin began writing the poem in 1956, but he didn't finish it until October 1958.

On a sunny Saturday during the Whitsun weekend, Larkin writes about how he left Hull and then took the train. The first two lines talk about the beginning of the trip, with Larkin listing the things he saw from his train window. It's not until the third verse that Larkin realizes that every time the train stops, newlyweds get on, with friends and family cheering them on.

In those days, many newlyweds would take the train from their wedding to London so they could start their honeymoons. They might have taken a connecting train in London to a resort on the south coast, or, in the less common days before cheap package holidays, they might have taken a plane at Heathrow to their honeymoon destination abroad.

Larkin admits that he thought the happy sounds of the wedding guests were actually whoops and other noises from the station porters. It takes him a while to figure out that there are wedding parties at every train station.

In the next few lines, Larkin continues to list the things that are at the weddings, but this time it is the people who are there that catch his attention: the fathers with their "broad belts," the mothers who are "loud and fat," and the uncle who is "shouting smut."

This may be high poetry, but it sounds a lot like a Peter Kay stand-up comic routine about wedding guests that everyone knows. "Unreally from the rest" refers to the colors of the women's dresses. This is similar to Larkin's criticism of women's clothes and how we see beauty in "The Large Cool Store." At the end of the poem, the train gets to its goal in London.

Critical Analysis

Larkin uses to talk about marriage shows that he wasn't sure about it: the guests wave goodbye to the departing train as if they were saying goodbye to "something that survived" the wedding service itself (the word "survived" might make you think of another of Larkin's great love poems, "An Arundel Tomb").

As if weddings and funerals were more than just religious events, people call the wedding "a happy funeral." The wedding is also a farewell service. What are we saying goodbye to? Back to being single, to being young, and maybe even to the bride's innocence. Marriage, or maybe more specifically, the consummation of the marriage on the wedding night, is "a religious wounding," after all.

There are a few more secrets in the poem than this, though. The first two of these “bad” sentences about marriage are subjunctive words that say things like “as if out on the end...” and “like a happy funeral.” What Larkin’s speaker seems to say is not that marriage is like an upside-down funeral, but that it could be seen that way.

As with many of Larkin’s other works, “The Whitsun Weddings” is a memorable look back at England after the war thanks to its small, local details. In his wonderful book *How*

Fiction Works, James Wood talks about a teacher friend who would give his students Larkin’s poem but would black out important words. What word is missing? The kids would have to guess. During the sentence “A hothouse flashed uniquely,” the teacher covered up the last word. His students never chose that adverb: “uniquely,” as Wood puts it, is one of a kind.

This detail makes it clear that this Whitsun weekend is a one-of-a-kind event for all of these people who are getting married this Saturday. Larkin gets a sense of this feeling of being unique and something special happening just by riding the train with them. When you look at the “unique” parts of “The Whitsun Weddings,” you can see how much care and thought went into picking them out.

From the window of the passing train, the reference to “someone running up to bowl” gets something that many of us have seen but may not have paid much attention to. In his book *Philip Larkin: Life, Art, and Love*, James Booth writes about Larkin: “Everyone who has traveled on a train in England in the summer has seen this bowler, snatched from sight before his run-up is complete.”

Booth goes on to say that only the artist can see the meaning in these times. It’s another take on the main idea of the poem, which is about being a part of other people’s lives but only getting a glimpse of them, like a few frames from a movie of their lives.

Beyond the wedding day, we never see what happens to that cricket ball or learn what happens to all of those marriages. Larkin said on *The South Bank Show* in 1982 that in the early drafts of the poem, he started to think about what the different couples would do after their wedding, but he dropped that line. The trip to London near the end of the poem keeps this idea of how different lives can come together by chance when two people happen to be on the same train on a Saturday.

TED HUGHES: “HAWK ROOSTING” SEAMUS

About the Author

Ted Hughes was born on 17 August 1930 in the Yorkshire town of Mytholmroyd. He was a poet, translator, and children’s author. Hughes served in the Royal Air Force before going on to study anthropology and archaeology at Cambridge. At Cambridge, Ted Hughes developed an interest in mythology, which later went on to influence his work. In 1956, Hughes married Sylvia Plath, the American author and poet. In 1957, Ted Hughes won the First Book Contest. The competition was run by the Poetry Center and judged by esteemed poets such as W.H. Auden and Marianne Moore. *The Hawk and the Rain* (1957) won Hughes international acclaim and commercial success. Ted Hughes’ success continued throughout his long career, in his poetry collections, such as *Lupercal* (1960) and *Birthday Letters* (1998), children’s literature *The Iron Man* (1968), and anthologies such as *The Rattle Bag* (1982). Ted Hughes was also the executor of Sylvia Plath’s literary estate, editing much of her work. Ted Hughes had a troubled personal life. His first wife Sylvia Plath committed suicide shortly after their separation in 1963. The woman Hughes left Plath for, Assia Wevill, also took her own life and, tragically, the life of their young daughter Shura. Ted Hughes married again in 1970 and spent the remainder of his life writing and farming in Devon. He was Poet Laureate from 1984 until his death in 1998 from cancer.

Summary of the Text

“Hawk Roosting” is a poem by Ted Hughes, who was one of the most famous writers of the 20th century. Hughes’s second collection, *Lupercal*, has a poem in which a hawk can talk and think. This makes the reader think about what it would be like to have the feelings, attitudes, and behaviors of such a creature. This explicit work relies on personification—the bird talks to itself like a person, describing violent scenes and claiming dominance. This means that the reader has to deal with ideas that go beyond animals and into the human realm, along with related psychological and political issues. Some critics say that the hawk’s cruel behavior, like that of a despot or tyrant who only cares about power, is a sign of fascism. In a very strong way, the poem wants to show that violence is not a moral flaw in the hawk’s world, but an inevitable part of life.

Hawk “Roosting” is told from the point of view of a hawk. It tells the hawk about all the things he can find in nature. He sleeps in the tall trees and looks for his food while he’s there. He thinks that everything around him is there just for him. Embracing his aggressive side, he

has no fears and stakes his claim on everything. He thinks of himself as almost godlike, and everything around him is the way he thinks it is.

There is no evil in the first line. This picture shows the hawk getting ready for bed at resting time. His spot is safe; he's high up in the trees and can see everything. There is one thing for sure: this hawk has its own thoughts. It can guess, just like a person.

The second line will also make the reader think. That long, four-syllable word "falsifying" means something bad. Right now, this term, which means to mislead, doesn't have a clear meaning, but it points to a connection with people, who can mislead each other. It is impossible for this bird to be anything else.

This hawk has worked out all of it, from the tree to the ground, his body suits. When you're up high, you have a clear view and control. The upward force and warmth of the air are there for you to use. Even the earth is moving in the right way, so a close study is a given.

One more time, look at the feet as they close in on the tree bark. Keep in mind that the first lines of 5 of the stanzas are complete on their own. Stop at the end. This means certainty and gives you power right away.

We're still talking about mastery, and this time we're talking about the idea that this very powerful person controls all of creation. Some of the most important lines in the song are lines 10–12. They say that Creation itself helped make this hawk, and now the roles are turning around. The hawk is holding Creation and becoming the ruler of everything.

The point of view changes because the hawk keeps talking, which isn't a dream as we know it, but live comments.

Now that the hawk is in the air, it is watching the earth spin while getting ready to kill. It's that four-letter word that came up in the first line of the poem again: "kill." That act is so common and normal in the world of predators, but it's so shocking and hard to deal with in the world of humans. The words are simple, but they are full of arrogance and anger.

The hawk offers appropriate deaths; that's the goal of the steady path when it's about to strike "through the bones," which is a scary but accurate phrase. It kills without meaning to; the bird world doesn't allow it; environmental rules don't apply.

The sun is all a hawk wants. The sun is going down right now. From the hawk's point of view, nothing has changed and never will. Anytime the hawk fixes its all-seeing eye, its determination to stay the same will last. From the hawk's point of view, this last line sums up life and death. When it talks, it's kind of like a pure ego—unmixed, real, and true to itself.

Critical Analysis

According to its most precise interpretation, Ted Hughes' poem "Hawk Roosting" is about a hawk sitting on a tree and thinking about how powerful it is at destroying things, how it can stop change, and how arrogant and proud it is of itself.

But because it's easy to see that the bird has human traits, we can easily see that the poem is a subtle jab at a ruler that the bird stands for. It is more common to say that the bird represents the bad things in people, like arrogance, destructiveness, an immodest and egotistical point of view, an obsession with energy, and tyranny. In short, the hawk represents inhumanity.

The poem tells a story from the first-person point of view and represents the ideas through the thoughts of the hawk or the poet, if the poet thinks that the words of the poem move through the hawk's thoughts. Hawks, which are birds of prey, are mean, cruel, and proud animals. The poem gives us a strong picture of the hawk's spirit, or personality—of how the life force that we see in it actually shows itself.

The hawk says something short and sharp. I'm sitting on top of the woods. There, I closed my eyes and did nothing because I thought that was the right time to relax. The ground is firm under my feet and head. I think about how great I am at killing and eating even when I'm asleep. The poem can be summed up like this: "I am the being perched on the overgrown trees." The sun's rays and the way the air floats are good for me. The earth shows me its face up so I can look at it. I am paying close attention to all of the above problems. God actually planned for these problems to happen.

I can't move my feet off the tree's bark now. I'm a beautiful creation of God. For God's sake, it took a lot of time and energy to give me my feet and feathers. God made me to kill different birds for my own good—"Now I hold creation in my foot." I'm a free spirit in the sky. I slowly spin around as I fly up. I can kill wherever and whenever I want because they are all mine. There is no trickery or fraud in me. I become cruel and bloodthirsty, and whenever I want, I rip off their heads.

I give death. I am the embodiment of death. I take a straight flight by the house's bones. I'm not interested in arguing. I can restrain and kill anyone I want, and I will do so whenever I want. The sun is behind me as I swoop down to catch my meal. I've been doing the same thing for a very long time. Since I began, nothing has changed. I'd like to keep the same thing. I don't let any changes happen. I stand up for my energy and managing, which are pure to me.

The poem wants people to be active in responding to it. In this case, the author isn't just talking about the hawk. Hawk talks with a certain amount of confidence. This is how the cruel power of nature shows itself. As a result, it is a picture of the very strong, cruel, and deadly physical power that is not based on any kind of morals and has no mercy, humanity, or humility. It can also stand for cruel leaders who only know how to control and kill people. What makes the poem important is how it relates to real life. By describing the hawk's self-manifested will, the poet lets us condemn the cruel and heartless rulers of the world.

It's even more than that. As science and technology have helped humanity advance, people have tried to control everything around them. The poet makes fun of this by suggesting that it is man's hopeless pride, or "hubris." In the process, people have forgotten about the civilized ideals that could give their lives meaning. Man in the modern world is driven by crazy urges and unmet obsessions. Even though the poem doesn't use typical meter or figure of speech, the irony is clear because of how powerful the straight language is. Because the language is so simple and sparse, it gives the poem more ease and power and has a profoundly powerful effect on the readers' conscience.

"DIGGING" – HEANEY

About the Author

Seamus Heaney was born to a Catholic family on April 13, 1939, the eldest of nine children, on his family's ancestral farm in County Derry, Northern Ireland. His poetry was greatly influenced by the landscape and traditions of this region, as well as by the religious strife developing between Catholics and Protestants in nearby Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland. The landscape of rural County Derry is the setting and inspiration for much of his poetry. At age 12 Heaney received a scholarship to study at St. Columb's College in Derry, where he learned Latin and Irish. He went on to study Anglo-Saxon at Queen's University in Belfast. He earned a degree in English language and literature from Queen's in 1961. He then attended St. Joseph's Training College, also in Belfast. During this time he became inspired to write poetry, greatly influenced by the work of two contemporaries, English poet Ted Hughes (1930–98) and Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh (1904–67). In 2006 Heaney suffered a stroke. His last poetry collection, *Human Chain*, published in 2010, drew partly on the experiences of his illness. He died in Dublin on August 30, 2013.

Summary of the Text

“Digging,” the first poem in Seamus Heaney’s first book, says what he wants to do as a poet. At the start of the poem, the speaker looks at himself with his pen on the paper while listening to the sound of his dad digging outside the window. The speaker looks down, both at and away from his father, and talks about a slip in time. His father stays where he is, but the poem goes twenty years back in time, showing how long his father worked as a farmer. When the speaker talks about how his father’s movement never stops, the time changes from the present to the past.

The speaker then talks about his father’s tools, saying, “The rough boot cuddled up on the lug, and the shaft was firmly pressed against the inside knee.” These lines, which talk about how his dad’s shovel fits against his boot and leg, sound like the first lines of the poem, which talk about how the speaker’s fingers are on his pen. The speaker then talks about picking the potatoes using the pronoun “we,” which suggests that other people are in the memory. This could be Heaney’s brothers or his family in general. The tone is proud of the work and the potatoes.

The verse then goes back to being a pair of lines: “By God, the old man could handle a spade./Just like his old man.” These lines of the poem sound less formal than the ones that came before them. They sound more like something someone would say out loud to someone else. With an oath (“By God”), the speaker swears to tell the story, highlighting his personal link to rural Ireland.

In the next few lines of the song, the speaker talks about how his grandfather was a strong miner who dug for fuel. As a child, he remembers going up to his grandfather with a bottle of milk. His grandpa drank the milk and went back to work with even more energy. For the speaker, this moment still jumps out as an example of how hard his grandfather worked and how skilled he was. This writing is very clear, and the flow and words (like “nicking and slicing” and “going down and down”) make it sound like someone is digging.

The next line continues to use vivid language and lots of rhythm. People who grew up in the country say things like, “The cold smell of potato mold, the squelch and slap of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge/Through living roots awaken in my head.” At the end of the line, he says, “I have no spade to follow men like my father and grandfather.”

The last line, on the other hand, refers back to the pen from the first line, but this time the speaker is holding a pen instead of a spade. In the last line of the poem, “I’ll dig with it,” the speaker makes a promise to his family that he will do what they do, but in his own way.

Critical Analysis

The first couplet of “Digging” starts with a line and iambic pentameter. The trochee in “snug as,” on the other hand, breaks up the iambic pentameter, and the next line doesn’t follow the couplet form like the first one does. These three lines, though, all rhyme; Heaney rhymes “sound,” “ground,” and “down.” It looks like the simple, one-syllable rhymes in this and the previous stanzas set the stage for the rest of the poem, but Heaney stops using them in the middle of the poem, as if they had done their job. This choice is important because the poem is about the complicated feelings that come up when you break with custom.

The speaker starts the third stanza with the line, “I look down/Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds/Bends low, comes up twenty years away.” This marked the end of the second stanza. This line shows that the speaker’s father has always been digging, but now he’s digging in flowerbeds and in the past he was digging with potato drills. The reason for digging has changed, but the act of digging has not. The speaker changes to the past tense in the middle of a sentence to make the trip through time clear.

It’s clear that the next line has roots in the past. The first line talks about how the speaker’s father’s body interacts with the spade. However, the speaker’s voice separates the body from the father and sees it as an extension of the shovel. “The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft/Against the inside knee was levered firmly,” the person says. The speaker shows how deeply his father loves digging by calling his father’s boot and knee “the coarse boot” and “the inside knee,” respectively, instead of directly relating them to his father. While the speaker is talking about how his job as a writer is similar to his father’s job as a farmer, we can be pretty sure that the speaker is thinking about how important his job is to him.

There are more people in this third stanza, but they are not named. “He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep/To scatter new potatoes that we picked,/Loving their cool hardness in our hands.” The speaker never says who the other people are in the first-person plural, but the sad tone of the sentence makes it sound like “we” are the speaker and his brothers. It sounds like the speaker is nostalgic and childlike when he talks about how amazing it is to touch the potatoes. It’s clear that the speaker has a deep personal link to farming that comes from his own experiences, not just those of his father and grandfather.

The next line of poetry goes back to the couplet structure of the first line, but not to the rhymes. The first thing the person says is “By God,” which is much more casual than the first few stanzas. This expression comes out of the speaker easily, which suggests that he is truly impressed by how skilled his father and grandfather are.

The speaker makes it clear that he is talking about more than just the difference between his job and his father's by mentioning his grandfather. It seems like he's enjoying the way of life that his father and grandpa shared. The nostalgia in this poem makes it sound like the speaker doesn't have a clear opinion about his job as a writer.

It works to describe the speaker's grandfather, even though it's longer than the ones that came before it. "more turf in a day/Than any other man on Toner's bog," says the speaker about his grandfather. The speaker is very clear about how he sees his grandfather, but the tone of his statement is a little childlike, which suggests that the speaker still loves his father and grandfather like a child. For fuel, the speaker's grandfather dug for grass, and the speaker's father dug for potatoes. After that, the speaker talks about a time when he brought his grandpa "milk in a bottle/Corked sloppily with paper." This picture makes the speaker think of the rural area where they grew up.

"He stood up straight to drink it, then fell right away, nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods over his shoulder, going down and down for the good turf." These are the last words of the stanza. Looking for. A lot of the lines in this poem have a smooth, regular flow that makes me think of digging.

This line also brings back rhyme in a subtle way. "To drink it, then fell to right away/Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods" and "My grandfather cut more turf in a day/Than any other man on Toner's bog" rhyme, but there are other lines that don't rhyme between and around them. It is not fully clear why the speaker goes back to rhyme, but the return reminds the reader that the speaker is a poet. The speaker makes the action seem like a myth by putting the word "Digging" in its own line. He can't seem to get to digging, so he kind of imagines what it would be like to do it. But he seems to think that if he works hard enough, he can reach the same spiritual place that his ancestors did.

When I think about the next line, which is the second-to-last line of the poem, I can smell the cold mold on potatoes, hear the squelch and slap of wet peat, and see the sharp cuts of an edge through live roots. The speaker uses a lot of rhyming to describe the sounds and smells that make him think of digging. He then goes through those feelings and, almost at the end, brings the reader back to the present tense, just like the feelings bring the speaker back to the past. "But I don't have a spade to follow men like them," he says.

This could be a sign of a discouraging direction, but the speaker doesn't stop to think about the pros and cons of writing as a skill versus digging. He seems to think that they are exactly the same. Those "living roots" could be a metaphor for the speaker's family, who are

his “living roots.” Naturally, he talks about them in terms of how they are cut through. This seems to be a reference to the speaker’s decision to leave farming as a job.

The last line of the poem starts with the exact same words as the first: “Between my finger and my thumb/The squat pen rests.” He doesn’t compare the pen to a gun this time, though. He just says, “I’ll dig with it.” He says he will dig with his own tools, his pen. This is an important part of the picture because it shows that his point is not that digging is meaningful when it is like writing, but that writing is meaningful when it is like digging. For the speaker, both acts are holy.

Paragraph Questions

1. What is the theme of Rupert Brooke’s poem *The Soldier*?
2. How does Wilfred Owen portray the tragedy of war in *Anthem for Doomed Youth*?
3. What is the central idea of Auden’s *Elegy on the Death of W. B. Yeats*?
4. Explain the theme of resistance in Dylan Thomas’s *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night*.
5. What is the significance of the title *Digging* by Seamus Heaney?

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the representation of war in the poetry of Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen.
2. Analyze Auden’s elegy on the death of W. B. Yeats.
3. Examine the theme of death and resistance in Dylan Thomas’s poem.
4. Discuss the theme of memory and identity in Philip Larkin’s *The Whitsun Weddings*.
5. Analyze the theme of heritage and identity in Seamus Heaney’s *Digging*.