

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF POEM “DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT (DYLAN THOMAS)

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Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqolada eng mashhur shoir va yozuvchilaridan biri hisoblangan Dilan Tomas Uels (Dylan Thomas Wells) haqida so'z yuritiladi. U 50 dan ortiq sherlar, romanlar, she'riy to'plamlar va shunga o'xshash bir qancha asarlar yozgan. Yoshligidan moddiy qiyinchilikda o'sganiga qaramay, she'r yozishga hech narsa to'sqinlik qila olmadi. U yoshligidan sherlar yozish bilan shug'ullanib, 20 yoshida mashhur shoirlar e'tiborini tortdi. Hatto ko'plab shoirlar ham o'z asarlarida yosh shoirni ulug'laganlar.*

Kalit so'zlar: *ruhlantirmoq, ta'sir, she'r, qofiya, shikoyat*

Abstract: *This article is about Dylan Thomas Wells, one of the most famous poets and writers. He wrote more than 50 poems, novels, collections of poetry and other similar works. Despite the fact that he grew up in financial difficulties from a young age, nothing could stop him from writing poetry. He was engaged in writing poems from a young age, and at the age of 20 he attracted the attention of famous poets. Even many poets praised the young poet in their works.*

Key words: *encourage, influence, poem, rhyme, refrain*

Thomas's early poetry was noted for its verbal density, alliteration, sprung rhythm and internal rhyme, and some critics detected the influence of the English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. This is attributed to Hopkins, who taught himself Welsh and who used sprung verse, bringing some features of Welsh poetic metre into his work. When Henry Treece wrote to Thomas comparing his style to that of Hopkins, Thomas wrote back denying any such influence. Thomas greatly admired Thomas Hardy, who is regarded as an influence. When Thomas travelled in America, he recited some of Hardy's work in his readings. Thomas's poetry is notable for its musicality, most clear in "Fern Hill", "Incountry sleep", "Ballad of the Long-legged Bait" and "In the White Giant's Thigh" from Under Milk Wood. Thomas once confided that the poems which had most influenced him were Mother Goose rhymes which his parents taught him when he was a child: "I should say I wanted to write poetry in the beginning because I had fallen in love with words. The first poems I knew were nursery rhymes and before I could read them for myself I had come to love the words of them. The words alone. What the words stood for was of a very secondary importance. I fell in love, that is the only expression I can think of, at once, and am still at the mercy of words, though sometimes now,

knowing a little of their behavior very well, I think I can influence them slightly and have even learned to beat them now and then, which they appear to enjoy. I tumbled for words at once.

“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” is a poem by the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, first published in 1951. Though the poem was dedicated to Thomas’s father, it contains a universal message. The poem encourages the dying—the sick and the elderly—to fight bravely against death. The poem also celebrates the vibrancy and energy of human life, even though life is fragile and short.

Theme 1: The Unstoppable Nature of Death

Like we mentioned earlier, "Do not go gentle into that good night" comes out of Thomas' experience watching his father pass away. As a result, the poem's primary purpose is to think about death—or more to the point, to think about dying. In many ways, this is also a poem about man's last mortal act, which is passing away. Given this, Thomas' poem is often taught as a grieving man's anger at death, which has come to take his father away. The phrase "good night" refers to death—where "good night" references both how we say goodbye to people and how a dying person slips into a final sleep that they never wake up from. But more specifically, Thomas' poem tells people to "not go gentle" into death. Here, the word "gentle" means "docile," or passive and without resistance. In other words, Thomas tells readers they should not accept death passively, but instead should fight (or "rage") against it ("the dying of the light"). But why is this, exactly? Why fight against death instead of slipping away peacefully? For Thomas, the best way is to face death with strength and power, like the "wild" heroes of old. In his poem, Thomas argues that this allows dying people to embrace the fiery energy of life one last time, and in many ways, serves as a small way to triumph something they have no control over in the end. Put another way: if you can't avoid dying, it's better to go down fighting than to not fight at all!

It's important to note that although Thomas tells readers to struggle against death, this isn't a poem about triumphing over death. The end result of fighting death isn't victory. The people in the poem don't cheat death in order to live another day. The truth is that the people Thomas mentions are dying and they will die no matter what. Thus, "Do not go gentle into that good night" focuses on a person's literal final choice: not whether or not to die, but how they will face the inevitable.

Theme 2: The Power of Life

In "Do not go gentle into that good night," Thomas creates tension between death which he speaks about symbolically through images of night and darkness and life, which he represents through images of light. For example, take a look at the second line of the poem. When Thomas says "close of day," he's referencing death. But he also says that people should "burn" against it and as we all know, things that are burning produce light! The act of putting two unlike things, like light and dark, in close proximity to one another is called juxtaposition. In this poem, the juxtaposition emphasizes the contrast

between life and death. If death is dark and inevitable, then the juxtaposition helps readers see that life is powerful and full of energy. Let's take a closer look at lines seven and eight to get a better understanding of how this works. The lines read, "Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright/Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay." There are two instances of light imagery in these lines: "bright" and "green bay" (water often appears to be green or blue on a sunny day). These words help describe the "good" man's life, which is full of light and energy. After all, even though his deeds are "frail" which means "minor" or "insignificant" in this instance they still might have "danced." In this passage, we can see how the living are full of a vital, powerful energy. Through this, Thomas tells readers that the true tragedy of aging and death is that it takes away the vitality of life.

Theme 3: The Limit of Time

The speaker of Dylan Thomas' "Do not go gentle into that good night" is an anonymous narrator whose father is dying, and he represents anyone who's ever lost a loved one. But the speaker isn't the only character in "Do not go gentle into that good night." Each stanza of the poem features a different person at the end of his life: the "wise" man in stanza two, the "good" man in stanza three, the "wild" man in stanza four, the "grave" man in stanza five, and Thomas' own father in stanza six. In each stanza, the type of man mentioned is looking back at his life. He's reflecting on what he did and what he didn't do. In most of the stanzas, the men express regret at what they didn't do. For example, the wise man worries that his "words had forked no lightning." In other words, the wise man a teacher, scholar, or some other educated person worries that his ideas will not live on. Each of the characters in this poem, in his own unique way, regrets the things he left undone. Thomas includes the idea of regret in his poem to show readers how short life truly is. When we are young, we have grand plans for everything we want to do, and we feel like we have all the time in the world to accomplish our goals. But Thomas argues that time goes by quickly. Too often, we "grieve" time "on its way," which is Thomas' way of saying that people often want for time to move faster. But if we do that, we miss out on the opportunities of life. Instead, Thomas is telling readers in a roundabout way that it's important to seize the day. Time is short and death waits for us all, so Thomas reminds readers to embrace life rather than let it pass them by.

A poetic device is a linguistic tool that a poet can use to help convey their message or theme. We've already talked about a few poetic devices already like imagery and juxtaposition but now we want to focus on two other poetic devices that are important to Dylan Thomas' "Do not go gentle into that good night."

The Villanelle

A villanelle is a type of poetic structure. In other words, it's a poem that has a distinct and reproducible form, like a sonnet or a sestina. The villanelle as we know it today dates back to the Renaissance, but the form didn't gain widespread popularity until the 1800s. Despite taking its name from the Italian word "villano," which means

"peasant," the villanelle was most popular amongst English poets. So what makes a poem a villanelle, exactly? In order for a poem to be considered a villanelle, it has to follow a very specific structure. First, a villanelle has to have nineteen lines. Any more or less, and the poem isn't a villanelle! Second, villanelles have five tercets and a concluding quatrain. That's a fancy way of saying that the nineteen lines are divided into five stanzas with three lines each (tercets) and one stanza with four lines (a quatrain). Third, a villanelle must have two refrains and two repeating rhymes. A refrain is a set of lines that repeats itself in regular intervals throughout a poem, especially at the end of a stanza. In Thomas' poem, the lines "Do not go gentle into that good night" and "Rage, rage against the dying of the light" are refrains. In villanelles, the refrain comprises the last lines of the poem. Repeating rhymes are words that rhyme the same way. Repeating rhymes occur throughout the poem, and ought, "sight," and "height." The "b" rhymes are "they," "day," "bay," with "way," "gay," and "pray." Thomas uses a villanelle because villanelles often dealt pastoral, natural, or simple themes. In this case, death although scary is a natural part of life. Since villanelles deal with nature, it makes sense that Thomas chose to use that form for his poem. Furthermore, repeated refrain echoes the way in which grief works. Even though we know our loved one can't escape death, our minds often find themselves returning to the possibility that they might not die. If only they fight a little harder, maybe they will live just a little longer. The refrain helps juxtapose the hope of the living against the inevitability of death. Thus, Thomas uses the villanelle to capture what death is like for a loved one, too.

Enjambment

Enjambment is the poetic technique where the line breaks in a poem happen in the middle of a sentence. (When a line ends with a punctuation mark, it's called an end stop. Enjambment works as a way for a poet to build both tension and motion within a poem. The tension comes from the fact that the poet's thought isn't finished at the end of a sentence. Each line with enjambment is a mini-cliffhanger, which makes the reader want to keep reading to find out what happens! (If you watch Game of Thrones), then you're really familiar with how cliffhangers work!) Because readers want to keep reading, enjambment gives the poem a quick and sometimes frantic pace. It's almost like the poet can't finish their thoughts fast enough. Sometimes enjambment can also create drama, especially when the following line isn't what the reader thought it would be. In "Do not go gentle into that good night," enjambment happens in about half the stanzas. One good example of enjambment and how it works comes in stanza five, where Thomas writes, "Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight/Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay." In these lines, enjambment creates drama and allows Thomas to play with words a little bit. In the first line, the grave men can see with "blinding sight," meaning they can look back on their lives and see it with extreme clarity. But instead of telling us what the men see, Thomas twists things in the next line. When Thomas says "blind eyes," he means literal blindness. In old age, people often lose their eyesight, but

it doesn't mean they can't see their past clearly in their own memories. Their memories "blaze" in their blind eyes; in other words, the joy of a life well lived reflects in their face, despite their age. In this instance, enjambment creates drama and lets Thomas a) put an unexpected twist into his poem, and b) reflect the rush of excitement and joy the "grave men" feel in the structure of his poem. More importantly, each instance of enjambment in "Do not go gentle into that good night" gives the poem a sense of forward motion. Even though the speaker wants to stop time - stop death both time and the and as a result, stop death both time and the poem march toward an inevitable conclusion.

Rhyme and Refrain Scheme

In general, the rhyme scheme of "Do not go gentle." (and all other villanelles) can be expressed as:

ABA ABA ABA ABA ABA ABAA.

Since refrains are used systematically as part of the form, the rhyme-and-refrain scheme can be expressed more specifically as:

A1bA2 abA1 abA2 abA1 abA2 abA1A2

Here, "A1" represents the first refrain, "A2" represents the second refrain, lower-case "a" represents words that rhyme with both refrains, and lower-case "b" represents words that rhyme with one another.

Iambic Pentameter

Every line in the poem has 10 syllables except for a single anomaly line 18 which has 11. Syllables alternate from stressed to unstressed, with five syllable-pairs per line. Therefore, the poem is written in iambic pentameter.

Each pair of syllables, or foot, is referred to as an iamb, and there are five iambs per line. Below is an excerpt from the poem with un-stressed syllables in lower case and stressed syllables in uppercase:

do-not-go-gent-le-in-to-that-good-night
 old-AGE-should-BURN-and-RAVE-at-CLOSE-of-DAY

Metaphor

The poem's primary refrain (and de-facto title) incorporates a metaphor. In the poem, death is referred to as "that good night." Since this metaphor is repeated four times, it is fair to assume that this substitution is important. So why, in a poem urging its subject to hold onto life, is death referred to as something so innocuous (and pleasant-sounding) as "that good night?" While the speaker clearly has a negative view of death (or at least of the impending death of his father), it's important to remember that the poem is not for the speaker it is a desperate appeal to its subject. The speaker knows that his father is tired after a long and full life and that death, to him, may appear as inviting as a good night's rest. He also knows that rest will inevitably come whether his appeals are successful or not; perhaps it is not his wish that his father live forever only that he battle against death valiantly rather than submitting to it as one would a warm bed after a long day. Perhaps the speaker knows that his pleas are in vain. Perhaps the

poem isn't really intended to convince his father of anything. Perhaps it is simply a tangible way for the speaker to exercise his rage and despair at the fading of a wise, good, wild, and grave man he knows well.

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