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Poetry Explication of “Meeting Point”

Louis MacNeice was an Irish Poet who was well known for being in the Auden Group which was a group of British and Irish writers in the nineteen-thirties. He was popular in his lifetime due to his familiar yet contemporary tone in his individual poetry, along with his songs and playwrights.

Louis MacNeice wrote the poem “Meeting Point” in 1939, right at the beginning of the second world war. This was a time of slow demise and division. This Poem consists of eight stanzas filled with rhythm and imagery with lingering metaphors. The poem is about a relationship between two people that ultimately fails, but they find clarity in their separation. It expresses the cycle of love and is essentially a story from beginning to end, ups and downs, of this couple’s love. The overall theme in the writing is time; time passing and time slowing down, almost as if it were stopping, leaving the couple feeling trapped. This poem is interesting due to the subject of a failed relationship. In 1939, that is not popularly written about. The journey of a fictional relationship coming to an end over time, but while still being so relevant and realistic to modern day relationships.

MacNeice uses figures of speech to make his themes prevalent. He utilizes devices like the use of metaphors and repetition to create imagery. Also using rhythm, the author is able to

control the flow of the poem which aids MacNeice in relaying a sense of time slowing down. He also does this in the way he structures the poem. By starting a new sentence at the end of a verse creates a pause into the next verse while still being in the same sentence. By doing this, MacNeice is slowing down his reader just as time is slowing down and passing in the narrative.

He uses metaphors and imagery to advance the theme of time. By describing gestures related to time slowing down and stillness he paints a picture for his audience that aids them in understanding its purpose. For example he writes, “Her fingers flicked away the ash that bloomed again in tropic trees...” (MacNeice 26-27). These two verses display to the reader what is being written so you take time to visualize it yourself.

Louis MacNeice also utilizes repetition throughout the poem. The author starts and ends a few of the stanzas with the same verse. He writes, “Time was away and somewhere else. The waiter did not come, the clock forgot them and the radio waltz came out like water from a rock: Time was away and somewhere else” (MacNeice 21-25). By using this technique in his writing

MacNeice is able to utilize his theme of a cycle, just like the couple’s cycle in the poem, from beginning to end.

Lastly, the author uses rhyme and rhythm to structure his poem and give the themes deeper meaning. MacNeice uses a format of rhyme that mirrors and reflects other verses called a “ABCBA” format. He does this, for example, in the second stanza when writing, “And they were neither up nor down; The stream’s music did not stop Flowing through heather, limpid brown, Although they sat in a coffee shop And they were neither up nor down” (MacNeice 6-10). This format of writing can be translated into the poem when looking at the couple’s journey and their reflection of it. Also, their reflection of each other.

This poem paints a beautiful yet unfortunate picture of a fallen love. MacNeice's use of metaphors, imagery, repetition, and rhyme help him in doing so. It makes every component of the piece relevant to the themes and purpose of the poem itself.

Work Cited

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