

Lonely heart



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ Lonely Hearts” by Wendy Cope is a statement on the disconnectedness and isolation of modern city living. By showing the reader five different people all searching for love, all in the same area of North London, all of whom have different but very basic needs in a love interest, Cope is highlighting the fact that current societal means of meeting ones mate have changed. In addition the use of the villanelle style of closed form poetry gives this the presentation of a Greek chorus.

Lonely Hears is a modern poem which with its individual narrators for each verse, followed by a final chorus, which appears to be spoken by all of the narrators, gives the presentation of a Greek chorus (Campbell 66). This pattern adds to the loneliness of each speaker, almost as if they step out of the darkness, state their plea and retire to the shadows. By utilizing this style of narration Cope is highlighting the disconnectedness and loneliness of these urban dwellers, all of who reside in a relatively small area of a large city but are unable to meet people without placing a personal ad.

Using the closed form rapid tone and rhythm Cope is following the path of many English poets who use this style of poetry to tell serious stories as well as comic ones. Cope focuses on loneliness and the search for love in several of her poems “ Lonely Hearts” and “ Bloody Men” focus on the search for and the difficulty of finding love and “ Rondeau Redouble” which tells of what happens when one the narrator meets the wrong man.

But like so many English poets Cope shows that she understands the darker side of love and loneliness in “ Spared” a poem about 9/11. Loneliness and isolation in Metropolitan areas is not a new problem, indeed loneliness

anywhere is itself not a modern problem; but with the growing worlds of social media and internet living, people are connecting less one on one.

In a research study commissioned by the BBC in 2008, 30% of Londoners classified themselves as being lonely, in contrast to the more rural Northern Ireland where only 21% reported feeling lonely. Researchers also identified large numbers of people living alone, unmarried people, recently relocated people and people privately renting accommodation, all of which they felt contributed to the social isolation and loneliness respondents reported (Dorling, Vickers, and Thomas 2008).

Studying Cope's poem it is apparent there are cultural differences between the narrators; a Jewish single mother, a gay vegetarian, and a biker, Cultural differences also contribute to inner city isolation and loneliness, be they religious, sexual orientation, lifestyle or ethnic. In a 2011 study by the Vancouver Foundation, the highest ranked social issues among 275 charitable foundations and 100 community leaders, of a widely diverse selection of communities and cultures, was social isolation and disconnectedness.

Repeating the study in 2012, but instead of polling institutions individuals were polled and again; as in the UK study, 30% of respondents reported loneliness or difficulty making friends beyond the superficial "hello" (Takeuchi 2012). Two cities 4700 miles apart highlighted commonalities among lonely individuals; people who had recently moved to the city, who lived alone and who rented their accommodation privately.

But in both cities this group of people, while having few friends would see them more frequently and be more likely to use social spaces and social media to spend time with them. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter
<https://assignbuster.com/lonely-heart/>

has become a common way for people to connect with friends and family; an often person have hundreds of “ friends” on Facebook with people reconnecting with lost loves and finding new ones; but is this modern version of a community or is it just another form of social isolation?

Academic arguments have been made for both sides of the story, with social networks being blamed for increasing disconnectedness and on the other side of the coin social networks are being credited with leading to more diverse and wider groups of friends (Hampton , Goulet , and et al). Social media has also become a common way for people not only looking for friends but love as well. Looking for love in the Twenty First century has progressed from the simple newspaper ad lonely hearts as found in Wendy Cope’s poem, but is it any more sophisticated?

Love is still love, people are still reaching out to find a person with whom they have something in common and loneliness is still unchanged over the centuries. Love, attractiveness and loneliness and all three combined have often been the focus of poets over the years from the short and pointed work of Frances Cornford “ To a Fat Lady Seen From the Train” who the narrator deems as unlovable based solely on her appearance “ O why do you walk through the fields in gloves Missing so much and so much?

O fat white woman whom nobody loves,” (Cornford 34) to William Butler Yeats “ Loves Loneliness” which deals with the fact that love does not guarantee an end to isolation and loneliness (Yeats). In the classic poem of Edgar Allen Poe ‘ The Raven”, Poe deals with the loneliness of having loved and lost, the sense of desperation and a slow decline into what appears to be

madness on the part of the narrator gives this poem a dark and gothic feel, combined with the appearance of the raven.

The underlying theme of this poem is one of undying devotion, even though the narrator is alone, he has lost his beloved Lenore, he believes the Raven will leave his life as "other friends have flown before"(Poe), he will not give up the memories of Lenore and clings to the hope that he will be reunited with her in heaven, leading the reader to believe that Lenore is dead.

The classic English poet W H Auden also deals with the loss of love and the loneliness of bereavement in one of his most famous poems "Funeral Blues" in which a lover demands "Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone, Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone," insisting that the world stop and stand for a moment to recognize what is occurring, what a great loss she has suffered, "He was my North, my South, my East and West, My working week and my Sunday rest, My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song; I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong."

To have loved so deeply and to be bereaved leaves the narrator with a sense of loneliness so deep it is apparent that nothing will ever be the same again "The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;..... For nothing now can ever come to any good." (Auden) These two poems bring us to the age old question is it better to have loved and lost or never to have loved at all? In the case of "The Raven" the narrator's lost love drove him into despair and insanity and in the case of "Funeral Blues" the death of her loved one meant life could never be good or happy again.

So in the case of Wendy Cope's "Lonely Hearts" what would happen if they found their loves? Wendy Cope addresses loneliness in many of her poems <https://assignbuster.com/lonely-heart/>

but in “ Rondeau Redouble” she tells us of what happens when the unwitting heroine continues in her futile search for love despite meeting a variety of wildly unsuitable men “ There are so many kinds of awful men -One can't avoid them all.

She often said She'd never make the same mistake again; She always made a new mistake instead” (Cope) Instead of a litany of lonely hearts searching for love, here the reader is witness to a parade of depressingly awful men, each with their own foibles and idiosyncrasies, making it seem as if being single and alone is in fact preferable. Perhaps in the end the “ Lonely Hearts” should take some advice from modern American poet Lloyd C Taylor; who in keeping with the changing world of literature and the growing world of social media is primarily a web published poet.

One of his better known poems “ Looking for Love” asks the question of all people looking for that elusive perfect relationship, “ So, you're looking for real love and companionship; You're disappointed no one has taken your hand. ” and when it becomes apparent to “ Lonely Hearts” worldwide that the perfect mate is not out there, that that one ideal relationship does not exist; Taylor has the perfect suggestion for finding that undying love and devotion for which they search, an answer which will end thoughts of loneliness “ Stop going round and round on your merry-go-round, My advice, friend, go out and get a good dog! ”(Taylor).