

The two main themes explored in 'in the attic' and 'stop the clocks' are love and...

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Both poets express their insight into the knowledge that the world will not stop regardless of the loss of mankind. This, however, is where the similarity ends. Both writers are expressing their own personal way of dealing with losing someone close to them. On Auden's side, there is bitterness in his loss, and an almost gothic romanticism of Bronte's writing despite its modern edge. With Motions however, there is more of stoicism in the writing. He writes so that we know there has been a great loss on his part, but this poem is not of the melodramatic substance, which Auden's is. Motions poem is a quiet resignation to the fact that a loved one has been lost. It has in its core, a nostalgic romanticism and sense of regret. It has in its essence a nostalgic romanticism and regret likened to that of Thomas Hardy's poetry. It is these two differences in writing style that I intend to explore.

Stop the Clocks is a poem that describes a person's loss and the deepness in which they suffer from their absence. Everything that happens around them feels as though it is ending, the clocks, and the telephones should all be stopped as in the same way that a life has stopped. Also as he says ' Silence the pianos and with muffled drum, Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come' it is as if they want the world to know what has happened to the poet, and that everybody should feel some pain like the pain Auden feels right now. The same is represented in the lines ' Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead, Scribbling on the sky the message He is Dead', it's the desire that everybody should know that Auden is in mourning and that nothing is going to change how he feels, should someone attempt to help him then he will simply send every message the same, I Mourn.

The fourth verse is amplifying what a person meant to Auden. ' He was my North, my South, my East and West' this shows how much of an impact a person has had on Auden, so much of an impact that they became everything to them. The poet makes it sound as though now that person is dead, there is no more north, south, east or west to them and that there could never be again. ' My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song' this is as though the poet is saying that there is no need for them to talk or sing in animation because they have been stripped of their muse. ' The line I thought that love would last forever: ' I was wrong" signifies that a person can be drawn into believing that eternity exists, but when something happens to end that belief it is as though their heart has been torn and that they might never believe that happiness could happen to them again. Auden likens the stars in the sky to the shining of a person's soul, now that the soul has gone there is no need for the stars to shine anymore.

The more they shine the more they remind them of their loss. ' Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;' that line shows that the intensity of the grief is enough to make even the sun and moon unworthy of shining. Which brings me back to where I said that the poet wants the stars that shine to be stopped for it is like a representation of the sparkle that their loved one once held. The final line ' For nothing now can ever come to any good' proves that the poet believes nothing can ever be right in their life, and that nothing will ever be perfect like it once seemed with their loved one alive. Auden writes in such a melodramatic way that makes the reader feel as though they have been given the grief that the poet speaks of. The tone of writing is such of

passion and description to a person's being and energy that every sentence describes the effect that the person has had on them through their life.

Motion's poem is of the same feelings and emotions of the loss of a loved one but he speaks more of realism and is less melodramatic in his writing. Where he writes 'Even though we know now your clothes will never be needed, we keep them,' Motion wants to have it known that he loved and lost and though knowing that they are no longer needed they still hold significance to what made the person who wore them. He also says 'Upstairs in a locked trunk,' the beginning letter in this line is capitalized whereas the previous lines weren't. It's as though the poet wants 'Upstairs' to stand out, the clothes were kept upstairs to hold them higher than everybody, and to show that they are as precious to the poet as the Bible might be to a Catholic. The symbolism is that the more you worship something, the higher you hold it in grace, that could be what he means by capitalizing the upstairs.

Motion describes how he can memorize and relive his loved one by the touch of clothing, though he mourns he doesn't over dramatize that the world is over for him. The second verse 'sometimes I kneel there, touching them, trying to relive time you wore them, to remember the actual shape of arm and wrist' is quite sorrowful. Motion doesn't capitalize the s, it's as though he doesn't want the attention drawn to the word. Sometimes can be a powerful word as in 'Sometimes I go to the supermarket' but in Motion's case he doesn't want it to be the strong word in the sentence, sometimes might not be enough times for him. 'My hands push down between hollow, invisible sleeves, hesitate, then take hold and lift' this sounds as though Motion is

trying to give them life again, though it may seem a soulless life he wants them to act as they did when they were a part of his loved ones life. The last verse ' a green holiday; a red christening; all your finished lives fading through dark summers, entering my head as dust' this is as though the poet is slowly remembering that although he can give life to the clothes, the memory of their owner is still just a memory in his mind at the end of the day.

Where Auden actually expresses his loss through description of the world and how it symbolized meaning to him about the person they lost, Motion actually describes his loss through something their lost one owned. Motion's poem is more personal; he takes something that was theirs and brings it back to life with his movements, whereas Auden relates more everyday things like the sun and the stars to the meaning of someone's life. They both write of mourning for their loved ones but Auden writes as though he believes that his world has ended, or will end shortly whereas Motion knows that he can carry on as long as he treasures a part of a living memory. Where one writes of deprivation, the other seems to write of starvation.

Motion writes more of deprivation, his writing shows that he has been deprived of his loved one, Auden however writes in a starved way. The way he phrases what he says is as if he is starved of beauty, like the stars and sun and doves, and of touch and sound like the voice of his loved one. Auden also writes as though he believes he shouldn't be the only having to suffer his loss, he wants the world to suffer with him by depriving the world of the things it needs like sunshine and beauty, he makes the simplicity and

fragility of life seem so difficult to come to terms with. Motion, however, wants to suffer in silence and keep his suffering to himself, he prefers to keep everything inside and mourn alone, shut out the world and keep his memories alive in the upstairs of his house.