

# Beautiful old age and winters tale essay sample



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In this essay I am going to be looking at two poems by the late D. H. Lawrence. Although an accomplished poet, Lawrence is sometimes said to have a cynical and negative outlook on things, this is evident in the poems that he wrote. By studying the two poems " Beautiful Old Age" and " Winters Tale" I am going to comment on D H Lawrence's attitude to old age and Death. The First verse of the poem " Beautiful old age", is potentially quite a positive out look but, almost instantly there is a negative shadow cast upon it. Lawrence has added the word ought. " It ought to be lovely to be old" but it isn't is what the poem says in not so many words.

The word " ought" says, it should be this but it's not. This changes the readers out look on the poem straight away and it shows Lawrence's cynicism. This first line sets the mood for the rest of the poem. The words " peace" and " fulfilment" in the last two lines of the verse suggest that Lawrence thinks that you should be satisfied with old age but he, is bitter because he's not going to make it and he'll never know what it is like to be old. The first part of the second verse gives the reader the impression that Lawrence has had a hard life and to some extent is quite bitter about it.

In the middle part he is saying that people take so much rubbish on board in their lives that it becomes a kind of twisted normality, Whereas if they didn't take so much rubbish and accept so many lies then " they would ripen like apples, and be scented like pippins in their old age". This shows that Lawrence doesn't like the way that things happen and the way people are, he thinks that if people grew old without bad memories and without false truths, then they would be able to mature and die with complete contentment and peace in their old age and would be more satisfied.

The word “ would” like “ ought” changes the tone of the poem, it would be this but it’s not. It has the same effect as ought but is not quite as dramatic. Lawrence uses metaphoric language in this part of the poem. He compares the human ageing process to that of an apple. This shows that he knows what the human ageing process is like. He is dying and doesn’t like it. “ soothing, old people should be, like apples” Lawrence opens the third verse with a negative note again, should saying that it’s not.

It is almost as if he is saying that this is the way things should be (pleasant and nice) but they’re not because of the world and also they are not allowed to be because he’ll never experience getting old. He is very resentful of the fact that he is going to die prematurely. The use of the season of Autumn represents decay, the season when things die and go to sleep but do so in a peaceful and quiet way. People should be happy and content with the fact that they are going to die but he isn’t and wrestles with the idea. The fourth verse has that negative element like all of the others but is not as bitter.

The word should, again denotes that it’s not, but the second line “ It must be wonderful to live and grow old. ” shows that in his heart he is hurting and is longing to know what it would be like to live and grow old. The last line of the verse “ look at my mother, how rich and still she is! ” He will never get that, he is going to die young and people will not think about him like that. The last part of the line “ how rich... ” I don’t think that he is talking about money he is talking about the love and affection from friends and family, even though they are old they are still loved.

The last verse although still with the negative shadow is much like the one before. It shows that Lawrence has had a hard life and it wasn't really enjoyable but now he wishes that it had been or that he realises that he should have made it enjoyable for himself. D H Lawrence believed that we as humans are intrinsically linked with nature. This is shown in the poem by him referring to a ripening apple as a representation of old age. Maybe this is why Lawrence is so bitter, nature goes through the process of being born, maturing and dying but not before time so why must he die before time?

The way the poem is set out also shows death, the first verse has 3 lines- the poem is being born. The second verse has 5 lines- it has reached maturity. After that the verses count down. verse 3 - 4 lines, verse 4 - 3 lines and verse 5 - 2 lines. there is a count down 5, 4, 3, 2, fading away to death. The poem "A winters tale" is much the same as "Beautiful old age", Death is inevitably approaching and it is quite harsh. The season of winter encourages you to think of death and nothingness as does the use of the autumn in BOA.

In Winters Tale Lawrence is still bitter about death but he accepts it more he actually states "She's only nearer to the inevitable farewell" he has accepted that he is going to die and knows that it is coming soon. The last line of "A Winters Tale" is more of a heart felt plea just like the ending of "Beautiful Old Age". He asks "Why does she come, when she knows what I have to tell?" He is saying Why take me now? I have experience that will help others and so much more to live say and do. The fact that Death is referred to as her/she some how makes it more real but gentler at the same time.

D H Lawrence as a person was very depressed when he wrote these poems, he was very negative about life probably because of the bitterness he had about dying so young. Dying young is tragic enough but knowing you are dying and just waiting at a young age must be torture. Lawrence is forced to accept that he is dying and that he is going to die early but doesn't want to. He wants to grow old to complete the course of life and be able to experience what he's always imagined it to be like. He wants more from life, he realises that he didn't enjoy what he had of life and he's not going to get anymore.

You don't know what you've got until it's gone. D H Lawrence's attitudes to old age and death were unfortunately very depressing and cynical. He thinks that like nature, we live and die old but his idea has been smashed by the fact that he is dying young and can do nothing about it. Lawrence wanted more out of life but kept looking to the future that he didn't have rather than the next few hours, days, and weeks and how he could make them enjoyable. He had all but given up. If D H Lawrence had lived to be old then maybe he would have had a different outlook on life, old age and death and found more positive things about death.