

The unattainable  
force in do not go  
gentle into that good  
night



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Dylan Thomas expertly investigates notions of reality and higher power as he reflects on life and death in his poem Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night. Seemingly a rejection of religion and God altogether, the poem never directly states a presence of a higher power. It does address the constancy of life in death in society and the approach humanity has to each. Thomas' poem suggests a new notion of religion that describes a force that is both unattainable and unstoppable to humanity as evident in the end rhymes, diction, symbols, and images of the poem. Thomas employs the traditional structure of a villanelle in order to reveal that life and the forces that drive it are not as simple one may believe. The villanelle stays true the classic formula in rhyme the rhyme scheme ABA ABA ABA ABA ABA ABAA. Additionally, the repetition of the first two A lines are utilized as the structure typically calls for. This tight formula first suggests that life, like the poem is clearly understood and defined by the ideologies that humanity holds. However, upon a close look one realizes that the end rhymes suggest a completely different notion about tradition. The A end rhymes include words like " night," " light," " right," " sight," and more. Each of these end rhymes highlights the theme of the poem itself. Day and night, light and dark, growth and knowledge are proposed and contradicted throughout. By rhyming these words together at the end of each line the poem finds a pattern not unlike the pattern of life and death. Traditional religious values indicate that death is not the end of life, but only the next step to heaven or a life beyond earthly matter. The end rhymes in this poem do not extend beyond the close of night, or death. Instead, each time that darkness comes, the light ends, and a new light emerges elsewhere. This pattern suggests that life is continuous, but one single life follows the predictable pattern of <https://assignbuster.com/the-unattainable-force-in-do-not-go-gentle-into-that-good-night/>

rising, growing, and then ending definitely. Nature or whatever unknown force drives this cycle of life does not extend beyond the grave. This traditional notion is cast aside and a new notion is embraced. Death is still inevitable to life, which indicates that life is not something controlled by humans, but by a greater force. This force dictates the cycle of life and defines it in the pattern described. A simple poetic form and rhyme scheme is revealed as a complex message of the truth in religious revelation. End rhymes appear to be simple and whimsical, but in the reality of the poem nothing is what it seems to be. There is a force that incites the opening and closing of “light” and “night” that the structure humanity attempts to place on life cannot control. Instead, the structure truly allows the inevitability of the force to be recognized. Each end rhyme is like the last, another revolution of a day, another life that comes and goes. Traditional religious values contradict and hide the reality of what is, as the poems traditional structure masks the indication of a new force driving humanity. This new force, new religion, only appears at the end of every line, as the force seems to be apparent at the very end, when it is too late, of every life. The poem’s thematic diction also reveals fruitful contradictions that indicate new religion and ideas in the face of traditionalism. On hand simple, direct, and definitive words are used quite often. Words, such as “night,” “day,” “curse,” “bless,” “right,” and “sight” are exactly what they seem. Each of these words, whether now or action, is concretely defined. The words demonstrate the clarity in which one may lead his or her own life according to the Christian ideals and religious proponents the world favors. Traditionally, a clear line defines the good and the bad, the living and the dead. However, this simplification of the poems dictions leaves much unexamined. Clear

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indicative words are interrupted and infused with words of passion, movement, and intensity. Words carrying this enthusiastic diction include “lightening,” “blaze,” “fierce,” “blinding,” and “rage.” The opposing dictions are interwoven throughout the poem. The dance of these words suggests that the tradition and definitions of life as humanity understands it may be motivated and controlled by a driving force hidden to the man of traditional faith. This force is inescapable, which is why every actor in the poem is driven to impassioned action. The force, fills life itself and defines death, but cannot be understood or attained as long as the simplicity of current religious values remains intact. One must realize that life and death is not the black and white that some diction may suggest, but rather the whirlwind of unknown that driving superior forces control. This notion become evident in the phrase that indicates a dying man sees “with blinding sight.” The word “sight” is clear and definitive. This describes the ability of one to visually interpret his or her world. The diction is clear. This would hold true if it were not paired with the contradicting word “blinding.” The diction of this word is far more interpretive and mobile. The diction implies action and force. If one has sight, then the capability of physically seeing is possible. Here, the sight is blinding, indicating that some aspect of impassioned life or death disables the literal sight in order to reveal a truth that simplicity cannot describe. One near the grave comes to realize that all he once viewed as truth and fact, the traditional moirés of Christianity, is a falsified reality. The force that he cannot control and has not seen before, due to his traditional view, comes into focus at the moment in which he dies. The man never has control of his situation, his life, or his death. The superior force, the new religion, enabled and disabled his sight and recognition. Even <https://assignbuster.com/the-unattainable-force-in-do-not-go-gentle-into-that-good-night/>

in a revelation of new religion, he cannot share the knowledge with humanity, as the life he lived is spent and nothing follows. The clear and concise words that fill this poem and regulate humanity are driven by traditional religions that hold no value to the truth of the higher power responsible for life and death. The revelation of new religion and forces appear again in the diction of the phrase in which “ good men” are found “ crying how bright.” The diction of the words “ good” and “ bright” indicate simple and definitive notions. The complexity of statement is introduced when the passionate and emotive word “ crying” interrupts the clear-cut nature being presented. The diction of this word contrasts the diction of the “ good” and “ bright.” A traditional view of God and religion can be clearly defined and indicated in the words of “ good” and “ bright.” Religion, as a positive and well-understood aspect of humanity bodes promising futures for those who employ the traditions they are presented with. This clarity fails to address the emotive and constantly changing nature of life itself. In breaking the rhythm of diction with the passionate word “ crying,” one is lead to believe that easily defined and understood moirés do not explain all. Life is driven, interrupted, and ended in passion and movement. As the actor is brought to an emotive state, the religion of tradition is challenged by a new thought. Traditional gods cannot explain away the force of nature. Suffering pains, passionate encounters, and more are left unaddressed and overlooked. These forces, the ones that drive the thoughts and actions of every life, are the direct result of the new religion proposed. This religion, like the diction, is constantly moving, ending, and driving life. A force more complex than can be described simply, like traditional religions, is the source of the few truths of passion that humanity does recognize. Another aspect of <https://assignbuster.com/the-unattainable-force-in-do-not-go-gentle-into-that-good-night/>

the poem that reveals a new way of religion or view of the higher power manifests itself through symbolism. The poet explores usage of traditional ideological symbols to bring about the notions of God and religion. These ideological symbols of God and heaven include “light,” “day,” “dark,” and “night.” These are commonly used to symbolize death and life or awareness and ignorance. “Light” is often used as a representation of heaven or the afterlife. In imploring these ideological symbols the poem allows one to interpret the message as one of faith. However, the traditional view of life is shattered through these symbols. The idea of heaven of life after death is obliterated in the usage of the symbols of darkness and night as ignorance or death. They convey finality in the ideological symbol they serve and indicate that the traditional views of heaven provoked by religion are falsified ones. A different force, one that traditionalist are ignorant of, controls the pattern of life and death that is described here. Furthermore, the exploration of personal symbols suggests that there is more to religion than tradition can explain. Personal conscious symbols like “words,” “deeds,” and “eyes” are representative of the reality that humans are familiar with and can explain. They represent the items and aspects of life that humanity holds as fact of knowledge. These are the venues in which humanity controls itself. People have the freedom to act and experience the world as individuals in charge of their own destiny. The symbols of “words...deeds...eyes” act as the representation of one’s ownership over their own life. The ideas that this symbolism provides is destroyed by the personal unconscious symbolism in the poem. Aspects of life, the modes in which people control life, are driven by things like “lightening” and “meteors.”

These words symbolize the uncontrollable, unattainable, and inevitable  
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aspects of humanity. One may use his or her words to articulate thoughts, but these words can never be used to control the impact of a lightning strike. Likewise, a meteor blasts through the atmosphere indifferent to the eyes that view it. Life and death are driven by the forces that people have no control over. Therefore, faith as a concrete explanation of reality is false. The new religion suggests that the force that defines and controls life and death is one that cannot be fully understood or articulating by humanity. It is truly a higher power and traditional values fail to interpret it. In addition to the symbolism provided, the impact of imagery can be noted as yet another testament to the fostering of new and radical religious notion. The poem takes advantage of visual and autonomic imagery throughout the text in an attempt to bring new ideas to light. The visual imagery reveals things like, “light...dark...bright...sight...blind” and more. These images allow one to reflect on life and death, birth, renewal, sin, and ends. The images are something that one views. A person has the opportunity to view what lies before them. He or she cannot create or destroy anything, but a greater power dictates when they see and when they are masked in darkness. Traditional views of religion provoke the blindness described. One fails to use his or her sight when false religions are practiced. The sight is taken away in death and given in life, but deceiving ideas of religion is refusal to use the light given. The new force cannot be seen, but sight and the lack of it, are testaments to power of the unknown force. The exploration of autonomic imagery reveals that the guts feelings and desires of humanity know more than the mind can explain. The entire poem centers around autonomic aspects like “burn...rave...rage...crying...grieved...gentle...fierce.” These notions are rooted from the way a person feels about a situation or reality

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that he or she may face. They are the actions and descriptions that only a gut can interpret. Each autonomic image works to fight against the traditional notion that death should be easy and comforting, as it is not true end of all. This idea is false, and though traditional religion may limit one's ability to cognitively realize this, the autonomic feelings recognize the truth of the new religion. When death approaches, the finality of life manifests itself. The new religion suggests no afterlife, therefore life should be lived fully and death should be feared. In recognition of this truth, the gut is moved to action, passion, and an internal fight against death. However, despite the gut's reaction and correctness, the force unknown the mind of the man takes hold, regardless of the autonomic warnings. Even in the imagery that realizes a new religion, no force is strong enough to withhold the one that drives nature and the autonomic reactions of life. The symbolism, images, diction, and end rhyme scheme of Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night clearly indicate that while traditional religion is false, a new religion in unrealized force of nature exists in the world. This force is unknown to mind of humanity and so superior that humans can never fully understand it, but merely participate as pawns to the force's immense powers. In light of this awareness also comes the notion that life is driven quickly by force and comes to a definite end. Each individual is given one life to spend before the force rips it away, only to create a new life the next day. One should strive to live fully, fear death, and disband from the distracting popular notions of religion and God.