

# The naked and the nude essay



**ASSIGN  
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In the clever yet relatable poem by Robert Graves, "The Naked And The Nude," the narrator compares and contrasts the words "naked" and "nude." In order to prove his point of how semantics can change the feeling associated by a word, which is normally subjective, Graves persuades the reader with structure, allusions, and tone to make a distinction between "naked" and "nude." The intricate and very well developed structure, much like Shakespeare, in "The Naked And The Nude" demonstrates the complexity of the poem and hides the underlying meaning to the reader.

In respect to the meter, Graves uses iambic tetrameter and the poem is structured as four sestets with rhyming couplets. The way this poem is structured is like a puzzle that Graves is giving to the reader to piece together. For example, the parenthesis used as an after thought to the subject give a basic Webster's definition of the words "naked and nude." This is used to compare the two words but at the same time, the narrator suggests the words "stand as wide apart / As love from lies, or truth from art."

This notion expresses that while some people believe love is extremely dissimilar than lies, that others could view it as very analogous. As well as the structure, the very unusual references used in this poem contribute greatly to the meaning. The lovers who look upon naked bodies with passion explains that there is a overzealous meaning to nakedness. In Graves allusion to Hippocrates, a Greek physician of the 400 B. C. era, nakedness is viewed as unemotional and detached through his study of anatomy. In the narrator's last illustration of the naked body, it is observed as divine and holy through the allusion to a Hindu goddess.

All of these instances of the naked body put it on a pedestal solely because the poet's word choice. This sets up the contrast to the word nude. In the third stanza, the poet creates an insecure and raw tone. He describes the nude as "bold, sly, treasonable, tricky, and mock-religious." Using these words chips away at the pure meaning of the word nude. Graves depicts the nudist's as being overconfident which implies that they are compensating for the dirty connotation that they stand for. The narrator does this to set up a contrast to the word "naked." In doing this, he exhibits the cut and dry line between "naked and nude."

In reality, these words are synonyms and he is trying to stress that semantics play an important role in how we communicate. The tone a word gives off can completely change how we interpret it. Robert Graves' "The Naked And The Nude" compels us as human beings to question the importance of word usage. Next time, the reader will be more careful when choosing words to communicate with someone. The implied meaning could prove to be negative or positive based on the structure, allusions, and tone the author uses. So next time, let's not argue over semantics.