

# Yellow palm analysis essay sample



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Yellow palm is based on scenes gathered from Palestine street, Bagdad, according to the poet, Robert Minninick. It explores the way the conflict which is ever present, affects the civilians there. During the first stanza we find the first example of this, as Minninick describes a 'normal' day in Palestine Street, 'I watched a funeral pass, all the women wearing lilac stems', but then reveals that the body is within a glass coffin, which brings the feeling of death one step closer.

We also learn that the man has died from inhalation of a poison gas, which we all automatically recognize as being an un-natural death, perhaps even a sign of conflict! The second verse of the poem again begins with Normal surroundings, where Minninick stops at the 'door of the golden mosque, to watch the faithful there', a mosque being a highly sacred building to Muslims, where cleanliness and respect are taken extremely seriously.

However, Minninick then notes that there was 'blood on the walls, and the muezzin's eyes were wild with despair' from this we learn that it is not only the odd person out on the street who is affected by the attacks, the conflict is even present inside the most sacred of places, and the muezzin's eyes of desperation implies that he feels threatened and helpless against the onslaught from 'enemy' missiles, and i feel this represents the feelings of the civilians as a whole, not just the individual. In the next section, Minninick meets two blind beggars, and passes them one hundred black dinars, which as I'm sure you'll agree is an act of kindness and compassion, the last thing you would expect to find in a warzone.

However it is then revealed that the two beggars were once men of the imperials guard in the mother of all wars, which again leads back to the conflict and chemical attacks. In England for example, ex soldiers are looked after and supported for years after their physical service, however it appears that in Iraq, once soldiers have 'served their purpose', they are thrown on the metaphoric scrap heap, to rot with each other. These men now rely on passersby to live off, which is sad considering they put their lives and ironically their eyesight, on the line for their country, and it is a great shame, no debt can be paid back to these brave men.

In the fourth stanza, we first hear about the natural side of Minninick's Bagdad, when the line: 'But down on my head fell the barbarian sun that knows no armistice' Twice personifies a perfectly natural, neutral thing being the sun, as a Barbarian which knows no armistice, which translates as an uncivilised savage, who is uncooperative and is unwilling to agree to a pause in the conflict. This personification excellently creates a vision in the reader's mind of a sun which is shining down on the backs of the civilians all day long, which could be almost as unbearable as the physical conflict itself.

During yellow palm, Minninick has a way of turning everything in the poem, even the most natural or innocent of things, into symbols of war. The penultimate verse is in my opinion the more moving of six, with conflict even being show through the oblivious eyes of a child, where he blesses a soaring cruise missile with a smile, clearly unaware of its deadly intent. Minninick choses to inform us that this is a beggar child, which leads us to imagine that perhaps a form of conflict has facilitated this?

Finally, we discover where Minnick got the title 'yellow palm', it refers to the trees which bear yellow dates, which when falling could link to the falling civilians and soldiers who are dying all around because of the conflict. The very first line of 'Out of the blue' sets the whole nature of the poem, the line 'you have picked me out' is very directly aimed at the reader and is understated considering the scale of the disaster in which both the subject and Simon Armitage find themselves in. Through a distance shot of a building burning, you have noticed me now' the adjective 'burning' brings a sense of reality and immediacy to the poem, which is backed up further with the 1st person narration.

The final line of the stanza 'a white cotton shirt is twirling, turning' begins to form a sequence of adjectives ending each stanza, which as mentioned before creates a real sense of reality. The next stanza is an emotional one. Armitage instantly makes any reader feel excessive pity for the man in the tower, with the lines 'does anyone see a soul worth saving?', the rhetorical question also adds to the sorrowful affect. And just as in the first verse, the adjective 'waving' appears to create an image of a desperate individual, metaphorically holding on for dear life. In the third verse, a sense of annoyance or even impatient can be detected, 'The lines do you think I'm pegging out washing or shaking crumbs' is a sarcastic remark made to say 'I'm here.'

You can see me. Why are you not helping me? the adjectives 'watching, watching' found in verse 3, which almost makes me as both a reader of 'out of the blue' and a witness of many 9/11 recording tapes, feel slightly guilty, that millions of people were watching the live tapes at the time, and yet not

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a soul can do anything to save the thousands of people in the upper floors. Verse four describes how the distant figure in the window, is half considering giving up, and throwing himself out of the building. We can tell this from the line, ' the heat behind me is bullying, driving' but he is determined to soldier on, ' but the white flag of surrender is not yet flying'.

The line, ' i am not at the point of leaving, diving' again include the adjectives to outline his eventual fate of hurling himself out of upper north tower. The fifth verse again, makes you feel pity towards the stranded figure, where he spots a nearby bird, longing for wings he describes possible friends and colleagues ' wind-milling', ' wheeling', ' spiralling', ' falling' to their guaranteed death. The final verse in Out of the Blue, is where the man gives up, he has nothing left to hang on to ' my arm is numb and my nerves are sagging' so he decides to take the quicker route to death which is jumping from the tower.

The two above poems can relate to each other in several ways, one similarity for example is the way conflict is show through the eyes of not just one, but multiple parties. Both poems are based around attacks, and in both situations, terrorism play a huge role. In ' Yellow palm' we see how conflict affects civilians on Palestine street, from many different angles, including a funeral gathering, a Muezzin, two blind ex servicemen, the natural surroundings and a beggar child.

However ' out of the blue' only focuses on one particularly person, a man in the burning north tower, moments, after the 9/11 attacks. out of the blue' uses the constant use of adjectives such as twirling, turning, watching,

bullying, driving, wind-milling, wheeling, spiralling and eventually, failing, flagging, to describe the desperate situation this man finds himself in, they bring a sense of reality and urgency to the poem and give graphic descriptions of fellow workmen and women are being burnt alive, or how they are falling to their unavoidable death. Alternatively, in 'yellow palm' Minnick uses a far more subdued method of approach, which i personally think is more beneficial to present conflict in an understated yet concise manor.