

Mr. flood's party by edwin arlington robinson

Literature



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Assignment Mr. Flood's Party by Edwin Arlington Robinson Introduction The poem Mr. Flood's Party depicts the life scene of a lonely man with the aid of a collage that describes his past and present. The literary collage has no reference to his future, which suggests he has grown old and bitter experiences have filled up the vacuum of expectations and hopes.

Question:

In Mr. Flood's Party, it is clear that Mr. Flood is not a mere "ne'er do well" drunk. There are details provided in the poem that give us a sense of his background and his former regard by others before he lost his place in society. Discuss the details that show the "before" and how they contrast with the "after" or "now".

Description of the "before"

The "before" or past scenario of Mr. Flood's life is not a mere reconstruction of his past from his lonely recollections. However, recollections are important. The poet appears to be using a twofold literary depiction of Mr. Flood's past.

Firstly, we learn about Mr. Flood's own thoughts about himself, certain portions of which are referencing to his past. He says that "we have the harvest moon/ Again" (Robinson, stanza 2), this probably implies to an analogy for a prosperous past. And now when Mr. Flood is alone, he says that "many a change has come" (Robinson, stanza 5). Clearly, if the life situation of this person has changed to loneliness and social isolation now, previously it was better.

Secondly, the reader has to look for clues. When Mr. Flood says "For auld lang syne" (Robinson, stanza 6) quoting from the famous folk poet Robert Burns, the reader is convinced about his literary sense and liking for creative
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works. Further, the poet writes, “ Where friends of other days had honored him” (Robinson, stanza 3). This shows that in past, Mr. Flood used to be a socially active and respected figure in the town.

Contrast with the “ after” or “ now”

Now, when Mr. Flood is walking toward his hilltop abode overlooking the Tilbury Town, he is talking to himself. He is so lonely that he is cheering up with a glass of drink with his own self. In this way, there is a clear indication of mental imbalance, probably due to frustration and old age. This mental imbalance can further be attributed to multiple personality syndromes, where Mr. Flood is thinking of and talking to himself as if he were two persons. He cautions himself in the following words:

“ Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon/Again, and we may not have many more;” (Robinson, stanza 2)

So now Mr. Flood is a drunk, old, and friendless man, probably awaiting his death. This situation starkly contrasts his past; otherwise he would not be so frustrated now and have had lost his mental balance at least to some extent.

Conclusion

Even in contemporary western society, there are thousands of old people awaiting their end silently in some old home. This is a general situation, glimpses of what Robinson has tried to depict in Mr. Flood’s Party. The poem has ample scope for psychoanalysis and related reflection on how to tackle loneliness, which is quite typical to old age and continuous isolation.

Work Cited

Robinson, Edwin A. “ Mr. Flood’s Party.” The Poetry Foundation. 1921 (date

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