

# A stylistic analysis of 'under milk wood' by dylan thomas

Profession, Writer



The object of this paper is to stylistically analyze Under Milk Wood ( 1954 ) by Dylan Thomas. I aim to determine what Thomas's influences upon his work were and how he uses literary techniques to make a piece of literary art that is so appealing to the senses. I will besides associate these repeated stylizations to Thomas's historical and cultural background in order to derive a full image of his life at the clip of composing. Dylan Marlais Thomas was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 1914 in Swansea, Wales. Thomas is responsible for an immense organic structure of work during his short life; nevertheless, his most celebrated piece of authorship is Under Milk Wood which was published in 1954. Under Milk Wood is non merely Dylan Thomas' most celebrated piece of work, but it was beside his last.

During his childhood, Thomas spent the bulk of his life in his place town, nevertheless, each summer he was sent off to his aunt's house in Carmarthenshire farms. This allowed Thomas to see the contrasting side to that of his busy town life and proved to hold an immense impact on the manner in which he wrote. Thomas attended Swansea Grammar School from 1925 and whilst at that place, he began to maintain diaries of poesy which he had written, and his first verse form was published in the school magazine. By the clip Thomas left school at the age of 16, he had already written over 200 verse forms. ( Poemhunter: 2014 )

As a kid, Thomas frequently had reoccurring eruptions of bronchitis and suffered from terrible asthma ( Bio: 2013 ), as a consequence, he was seen as excessively weak to contend in World War II and was alternatively used to compose authorities books. However, Thomas found it hard to populate off

the little rewards and seeking employment with a company named Strand Films. Strand Films created short productions for the Ministry of Information and Thomas wrote five of these in 1942. During this clip, Thomas was rolling using an aggregation of verse forms, one of which was subsequently published in 1946 as *Death and Entrances*. This aggregation of verse form was inspired by World War II and trades with the effects which arise from war and was dubbed as the devising of his calling. Critic Walter J. Turner said that ' this book entirely, in my sentiment, ranks him as a major poet' ( 1946: 176 ). In 1941, Swansea was bombed by the German Luftwaffe, and Thomas saw the devastation of the streets which he held beloved to his bosom and this inspired him to compose about this experience in a wireless drama which he called, *Return Journey Home*( 1958 ). The Second World War appears to hold been a big influence upon *Under Milk Wood* and the creative activity of Llareggub was Thomas's manner of making ' a picturesque sense of the past' ( 1995: 19 ) where clip had been at a standstill as ' the custodians of the clock have stayed still at half-past 11 for 50 years' ( 1995: 28 ). This gives the audience the vision of a town where clip does non count and war has non been a calamity that the citizens have been forced to meet.

In 1950, Thomas was invited to New York by John Malcolm Brinnin in order to tour the humanistic disciplines Centres in America, over a three month period. Two old ages subsequently in 1952, Thomas embarked upon the humanistic disciplines tour one time once more, this clip with his married woman, Caitlin Macnamara. Whilst in America, Macnamara discovered that Thomas had been unfaithful on his old trip to the States and the brace began

to imbibe to a great extent and reason unrelentingly ( Poemhunter: 2014 ). The heavy imbibing caused Thomas's wellness to deteriorate and he shortly found himself enduring from urarthritis and external respiration troubles. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1953, whilst in America, Thomas preformed an unfinished Under Milk Wood ( 1954 ) atHarvardUniversity on his ain. He so performed once more, this clip with a full dramatis personae of histrionics, at ThePoetryCentre in New York on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 1953. Upon his return to Wales, Thomas completed the drama and it was performed to the full for the first clip at The Lyric Theatre in Carmarthen, Wales on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 1953. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1953, Thomas flew back to America in order to execute the finished drama, nevertheless, unluckily, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1953; Thomas was admitted to St. Vincent's infirmary after a tally of bad wellness, with ' acute alcoholic encephalopathy' ( Poemhunter: 2014 ) and slipped into a coma before go throwing off on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1953. The calamity of his passing besides meant that the BBC was now unable to get down with the cinematography of Under Milk Wood with Thomas as the voice ( 1954 ).

' A Play for Voices' is the caption of Under Milk Wood and this helps to determine the genre of it highly good. Although the drama was specifically written to be a wireless production, it is non a typical drama. The most important divergence from the normalcy of a drama is that it is unusual for a drama to hold a storyteller. In a phase drama, the ideas, feelings, and scenes are conveyed straight to the audience via the characters utilizing duologues and monologues. It is obvious that the drama is a dramatic production and

contains all of the properties which we would anticipate happening within a dramatic text. A play is a text which is written to be performed on stage, telecasting, or wireless and will include: staging notes, character lists, notes for costumes, and is written to be performed in the signifier of a dramatic book. Under Milk Wood does incorporate all of these characteristics, but besides contains facets of poesy and narrative which are unusual characteristics of serious play.

Under Milk Wood is set in a fancied town in Wales which is called Llareggub. Although the town name really sounds Welsh, it is in fact the backward spelling of the term sodomite. The drama illustrates the life of Llareggub's occupants over the infinite of a dark from 'spring, moonless night' (1995: 3) to 'the thin dark darkness' (1995: 62). The drama contains no existent action but does incorporate different episodes that are connected by the two omniscient storytellers, the 'first voice' (1995: 3) and the 'second voice' (1995: 4). These two voices displace from character to character but they do not truly belong to the citizens of Llareggub. The voices merely present the characters to the hearer so in consequence; they are mediators for the audience and the dramatic subdivisions of the drama.

The drama contains many different poetic effects, which are largely spoken by the 'First Voice' (1995: 3) and 'Second Voice' (1995: 4). The two voices use similes repeatedly in order to compare one thing to another. An illustration of a simile within the drama is when Mrs. Cherry Owen defines Mr. Cherry Owen as being 'as rummy as a deacon' (1995: 26). The consequence of this simile is that it highlights the inebriation of Mr. Cherry

Owen and draws the audience in because the audience would be shocked at the innuendo of a deacon being rummy. Under Milk Wood besides contains many metaphorical statements. For illustration; ' the small pink-eyed cottage' ( 1995: 8 ). This metaphor gives the bungalow life qualities and personifies it letting the audience care and link to the object despite it being inanimate. Alliteration is besides often used in order to add accent and deepness to Thomas's descriptions of the small town and its milieu. For illustration; the first voice speaks about Bessie Bighead being asleep, and the voice says

' sleep until the dark sucks out her psyche and spits it into the sky'  
( 1995: 55 ).

Here, Thomas is utilizing alliterative and onomatopoeic sounds for the old lady in order to pull attending to the line.

A farther poetic technique that Thomas uses is strong images that are built up utilizing different semantic fields in order to make images in the head of the audience. An illustration of this is when the first voice says: ' Now, in her ice-berg white, holily laundered, crinoline night-gown, under virtuous polar sheets, in her spruced and scoured dust-defying sleeping room in trig and spare Bay view' ( 1995: 12 ). The consequence of this image is to demo us how to clean Mrs. Ogmore Prichard's house is with the usage of statements such as ' ice-berg white' and ' dust-defying bedroom'. Although Thomas could hold merely said that the house was really clean, he chose to give the audience an image in their heads to assist with clearly visualizing the scene.

A farther illustration is ' the sloe black, decelerate, black, crow black, fishing boat-bobbing sea' ( 1995: 3 ). The usage of such complex images and poetic linguistic communication which is used by the first and 2nd storytellers gives effectual contrast to that of the ordinary, mundane linguistic communication of the citizens of Llareggub. The inclusion of poetic techniques in a piece that is meant to be dramatic creates centripetal feelings for the audience to go immersed in. They besides give Llareggub a dreamlike and charming feeling which leaves the reader with a feeling of admiration and child-like phantasy.

Thomas does non merely convey ocular images through descriptive linguistic communication, but he allows the audience to see the town by listening to the sounds which the storytellers are invariably directing us towards. The first and 2nd voices often invite the audience to ' listen' as ' only you can hear' ( 1995: 4 ). There are no sound effects in the drama; hence, sounds must be created by the descriptions which Thomas gives to us. For illustration: ' the sea interruption and the chitchat of birds' ( 1995: 20 ), ' shrill miss giggle ( 1995: 45 ) and ' the clippety-clop of Equus caballus... pigs are grunting, chop goes the meatman, milk-churns bell, boulder class ring, sheep cough, Canis Familiaris shout, saws sing' ( 1995: 34 ). Again the consequence of this is to let the audience visualize the town utilizing sound as a concomitant to the ocular images which he invariably feeds. Thomas uses the Welsh poetic construct of ' cynghanedd' ( 2009 ) throughout Under Milk Wood which is the internal sound agreement utilizing beat, riming, vowel rhyme, and speech pattern. The usage of this device creates velocity and energy which drives the twenty-four hours into the dark once more. A

good illustration of this is ' There's the cartridge holder clunking or Equus caballus on the sun honeyed setts of the humming streets, hammering of horse-shoes, gobble quack and cackle, tomtit chirrup from the bird-ounces boughs' ( 1995: 34 ).

' The voice of a Guide-book' ( 1995: 19 ) storyteller is intended to give compared to the first and 2nd voice storytellers. The usher is impersonal and distant in comparison to the two voices; it does not look to cognize the town really good and does not talk to the audience in the same mode as the first two voices do. It abuses the town and the occupants whilst looking down upon their manner of life and doing the town seem drilling and uneventful.

For illustration: the guide-book voice describes the little houses as ' prinking themselves out in petroleum colors and the broad usage of pinkwashing' ( 1995: 19 ) and describes the town as ' this little disintegrating watering-place' ( 1994: 19 ). The Guide-book is highly negative with respect to Llareggub and uses cliches such as ' cobbled streets and its small fishing harbor' ( 1995: 19 ) to do the topographic point appear worn out and antique.

Thomas's usage of neologies is outstanding throughout the drama and are largely in the signifier of compound nouns and participle adjectives such as ' fishing boat-bobbing sea' ( 1995: 3 ) and ' jellyfish-slippery' ( 1995: 4 ). The usage of these is to enable Thomas to maintain the beat in flow with the remainder of the text and give ' interesting ideological effects' ( 2010: 18 ) which paradox human linguistic communication. Page 9 through to page 12



sees Thomas use an ancient Hellenic technique called stichomythia ( 1975: 143-176 ). This is a technique that was besides famously used by Shakespeare throughout his work ( 2009 ) and comprises two or more characters prosecuting in a quick-fire address. This is besides repeated on page 28 and pages 35-36. This speedy exchange of address gives the audience a sense of velocity and picks up the gait until the conversation is over.

There is a noticeable sum of innuendo nowadays in Under Milk Wood along with dual entendre and boylike temper. For illustration: on page 60, Mr. Waldo says:

' nobody's swept my chimbley

Since my hubby went his ways

Come and brush my chimbley

Bring along your chimbley brush' ( 1995: 60 )

and

' Lie down, lie easy.

Let me shipwreck in your thighs' ( 1995: 52 )

Despite the boylike insinuation, there are illustrations of descriptive and mildly titillating lines. An illustration of this is

' The Sun hums down through the cotton flowers of her frock into the bell of her bosom and bombilation in the honey at that place and sofas and buses, lazy-loving and boozed, in her red-berried breast' ( 1995: 46 ).

The consequence this has upon the text is one of temper and visible radiation - hearted screening of the characters making a threading bond between the audience and the citizens of Llareggub.

The inclusion and intermingling of all these techniques have allowed Thomas to make an improbably sensuous piece of literary art that flows swimmingly with the carefully crafted rhythmic linguistic communication and crisp pacing. Richard Burton considers Under Milk Wood to be ' an amusing masterpiece' ( Rees: 2014 ), one that will populate everlastingly in the immortal voices of his far-out characters.

### **Bibliography:**

1. Biography of Dylan Thomas.( 2014 ) hypertext transfer protocol:  
[//www. poemhunter. com/dylan-thomas/biography/](http://www.poemhunter.com/dylan-thomas/biography/) Accessed  
( 01/04/2014 )
2. Drabble, M. ( 2009 )The Oxford Companion to English Literature.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Jeffries, L. ( 2010 ). Critical Stylistics: The Power of English.  
Basingstoke: Macmillan.
4. Jeffries, L. & A; McIntyre, D. ( 2011 ) Teaching Stylistics. London:  
Macmillan

5. O'Toole ( 1975 ) Analytic and Man-made Approaches to Narrative Structure in Style and Structure in Literature. United Kingdom: Blackwell.
6. Thomas, D. ( 1954 ) Under Milk Wood. ( The Definitive edition - 1995. ) London: Everyman.
7. Thomas, D. ( 1958 ) Return Journey Home. Hammersmith: Lyric Theatre.
8. Thomas, D. ( 1946 ) Death and Entrances. United kingdom: Jackdaw Books.
9. Turner, W. J. ( 1946 ). The Spectator. Pg. 176. The Spectator.
10. West, J. ( 2009 ) . Welsh Poetry - Part I: Cynghaneddhypertext transfer protocol: //allpoetry. com/column/7546199-Welsh-Poetry -- - Part-I-Cynghanedd -- by-Welshbard ( accessed 30/03/2014 )
11. Rees, J. ( 2014 ) Why Under Milk Wood is the greatest wireless drama of all time. The Telegraph.