

Poetry analysis: william shakespeare, william wordsworth, sylvia plath

[Literature](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Poetry Essay First Draft

Whether it's the transcendentalism, romantic, classic, or modern time period, poetry has made its way through the ages in an endless amount of ways. I chose to write about and analyze the poems of the great William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth, and Sylvia Plath.

William Shakespeare wrote his plays and his poetry during the English Renaissance/ Elizabethan Era. During the late 16th and early 17th century in England, sonnets swept through and became extremely popular. The works of Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare were on the rise. William Shakespeare wrote more than thirty plays and more than one hundred sonnets, all written in the form of three quatrains and a couplet that is now recognized as Shakespearean. The first poem I chose to analyze was a sonnet by William Shakespeare called, "That time of year thou mayst in me behold". Shakespeare's poetry is incredibly hard to understand and analyze because of the five hundred year history behind the poem and the presentation of the sonnet. The meter of Shakespeare's sonnet is written in iambic pentameter. In order to really grasp and understand what the poem is saying it is important to paraphrase the poem's theme and subject. It will also help to mark the rhyme scheme and determine whether it is an English or an Italian sonnet. In an Elizabethan sonnet, 14 lines of the poem are divided into four parts. There are three quatrains, or groups of four lines, and a final set of two lines called a couplet- this was the typical form for a sonnet in the era. This particular sonnet by Shakespeare includes many metaphors, a comparison between two unlike things that describes one thing as if it

were something else. Shakespeare refers to a series of metaphors to describe in detail the nature of what he perceives to be his old age. Shakespeare states that his age is like a “time of year,” (p. 763) late autumn, when the leaves have almost completely fallen from the trees, and the weather has grown cold, and the birds have left their branches. The narrator of the story has many anxieties over his growing age and is implying to us that no one loves twilight because it will soon be night; instead they look forward to morning. Time changes quickly throughout this sonnet as the quatrains go from the season of a year, to the length of a day, to the amount of time it takes for a fire to go out. The representation of time shortening is the speaker getting closer to dying and the end of his life. Unfortunately, despite the beautiful writing in the sonnets that Shakespeare wrote, even before Shakespeare’s death in 1616 the sonnet was no longer fashionable. Two hundred years after his death, there wasn’t much interest in either Shakespeare’s sonnets, or in the sonnet form itself.

The Romanticism period started in the late 18th century but existed largely within the nineteenth. Romantic literature concentrates on emotion, nature, and the expression of “nothing.” Romanticism in general was the “rejection of established social conventions” and focused on human emotion and nature to describe how people felt in language. The romantics’ message was clear: life is centered in the heart, and the relationships we build with nature and others through our hearts defines the rest of our lives. Romantics’ “planted” the seeds for free verse, transcendentalism, and countless other artistic, musical, and poetic expressions. Unfortunately, the Romantic movement could not expand further into the 19th century because of the

<https://assignbuster.com/poetry-analysis-william-shakespeare-william-wordsworth-sylvia-plath/>

premature deaths of the younger romantic poets. William Wordsworth, the key figure of Romanticism and the second poet that I researched and analyzed was one among many of romantic poets during this period. The Romantic movement, which originated in Germany but quickly spread to England, France, and beyond, reached America around the year 1820, some 20 years after William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge had revolutionized English poetry by publishing *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth had a strong passion for nature. Wordsworth grew up near the beautiful river Cocker, and this caused Wordsworth to develop a deep appreciation of nature. Once he started writing, nature was the main and central theme for his work. Wordsworth would celebrate and imagine nature in the most romantic way possible. As a founder and leader of the Romantic poetry movement, Wordsworth's appreciation for nature made this an important element of the genre. In 1770, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge invented a new style of poetry in which nature and the wording of the common man outshined formal, stylized language. I will be analyzing "The world is too much with us" by William Wordsworth. "The world is too much with us" is a sonnet with an abbaabbacdcdd rhyme scheme. The atmosphere/mood of this story is a very harsh one. In the poem, the narrator whines about how "the world" is too "overwhelming" for us to appreciate it. Our main concerns are for money, working, and wasting our time and energy. According to Wordsworth we have sold our souls. Humans, the speaker says, "have given their hearts away" (p 1019), and the gift is a morally degraded one. I agree with Wordsworth when he in general defined poetry as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," intense "

emotion recollected in tranquillity.” The speaker ends the poem by saying that he would rather be a pagan attached to a worn-out system of beliefs than be “ out of tune” with nature.

During the twentieth century, Sylvia Plath arose among “ The Confessionalists” who were American poets that emerged in the 1950s. The Confessionalists drew on personal history for their artistic inspiration. Poets in this group include Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, John Berryman, and Robert Lowell. Sylvia Plath’s poems were written during the modernist period and her poetry was very confessional, dark and deep. Plath published her first poem as a child and continued writing throughout her short lifetime. One of her most famous poems, a poem about her father called “ Daddy,” which was published in 1962. Daddy is the poem that I will be analyzing. This poem displays the feelings that Plath felt towards her father and how frustrated she was with their lack of communication. I realized that the poem has German backgrounds by noticing the use of the term ‘ swastika’ instead of God and the reference to the Jews ‘ Chaffing me of like a Jew.’ Plath describes herself as a small person compared to her father by showing us with imagery and metaphors. Imagery is the representation through language of sense experience and is what gives us a sense of the father being a dominant, scary figure. “ Big as a Frisco seal And a head in the freakish Atlantic Where it pours bean green over blue,” (p. 992) Plath saying that her father’s toe is as big as a San Francisco seal is an example of simile, because of the use of the word “ as.” Towards the end of the poem in the last few paragraphs, Plath often refers to her father as being a vampire who drank her blood, just as her husband later did. I think that her mentioning <https://assignbuster.com/poetry-analysis-william-shakespeare-william-wordsworth-sylvia-plath/>

this is a metaphor for her relationship with men in her life, and her all-consuming disrespect for them, only drained her of energy and life.

Poetry groups and movements or schools can be identified by the poets that form them. There are many different 'schools' of poetry to learn about. No matter what era they were from Plath, Wordsworth, and Shakespeare all wrote beautiful poetry and accomplished many things in their life.