Dylan Thomas 2 Essay, Research Paper

Despite Dylan Thomas often obscure images, he expresses a clear message of religious devotion in many of his poems. He creates images that reflect God s connection with the earth and body. In And death shall have no dominion, Thomas portrays the redemption of the soul in death, and the soul s liberation into harmony with nature and God. Thomas best depicts his beliefs, though abstract and complicated, to the reader with the use of analogies and images of God s presence in nature. Appreciating the virtue of humility in Shall gods be said to thump the clouds, Thomas associates God with thunder, rainbows, and night only to remind us that He is even more present in a simple stone as He is in other great entities. In The force that through the green fuse drives the flower, Thomas again makes the connection of body and earth, implying that there is only one holy force that has created all motion and life on this planet. This force, because it is so pure and boundless, is present in the shadows and poverty of our world, as depicted in Light breaks where no sun shines. God s sacred presence in the body and earth is the ultimate theme within these chosen poems.

In The force that through the green fuse drives the flower, Dylan Thomas illustrates the connection between the earth, the body, and God. He discusses how both nature and man are propelled by the same holy force and therefore are united. He does not propose the question of how the stem grows to create a flower or how blood circulates within the body, but rather what is the ultimate force behind all motion and life on the earth.

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower / Drives my green age/ The force that drives the water through the rocks / Drives my red blood;

In these analogies, Thomas humbles the human race and depicts God s presence in all natural things, including humans. Thomas reveals that we are not a separate entity, but only part of a greater existence.

Aside from the holy force that propels the world, Thomas also examines how we alter the way our lives should naturally progress. Death is a stage of life; as a rose is bent or killed by the cold so should we age and eventually die in due time. However, Thomas analyzes human and natural death further when he writes, And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose / My youth is bent by the same wintry fever. The difference between the modification of the rose s life and man s is that our aging and death is sometimes avoidable, whereas the rose dies naturally when its season is over. Our chosen lifestyles sometimes impede the natural progression our lives should lead. We alter our lives with our own evil and envy, and, in turn, we destroy ourselves in ways God never intended.

And death shall have no dominion is another portrayal of life and death as mere stages within the universal process. Despite the poignant analogies in this poem, the refrain has the most significance. It is a reminder that life does not end in death, and that although death may be unmerciful, our souls will endure regardless and be redeemed. Dead men naked they shall be one / With the man in the wind and the west moon succinctly describes Thomas view of how, in death, we are as pure and naked as we are in birth, and how only our souls (without clothing and extraneous unnatural hindrances) are redeemed to become one with a greater existence. Once again, Thomas connects God with nature. He reveals that because God is present in nature, when we die our souls are given to God and therefore also given to the beauty of nature. Thomas also explores the grace and glory of the afterlife, where Though they go mad they shall be sane,/ Though lovers be lost love shall not;

In spite of the use of abstract ideas such as love, religion, and death in the other poems relating to this theme, Thomas s analogies of the gods with thunder, rainbows, rain, and night demonstrate how nature and the weather are affected by God s presence. In Shall gods be said to thump the clouds, Thomas asks whether the gods are thumping the clouds in thunder or weeping when it rains. Illustrating God s presence in all natural events, glorious or not, Thomas neglects to answer his own questions in the first three stanzas, but indirectly answers them in the last.

It shall be said that gods are stone. / Shall a dropped stone drum on the ground, / Flung gravel chime? Let the stones speak / With tongues that talk all tongues.

In this stanza, Thomas reveals his own portrayal of God s humility and universal domain. Because God is present in all of nature, He is present in the simplest stone as well as the tremendous thunder and brilliant rainbows. This poem illustrates God s message of humility. He claims the more humble and simple we are, the more holy we have become. As one of the Beatitudes states, Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth. (Matthew 5:4)

The other concise message of this stanza, one of the easiest to interpret, is the last verse. This verse suggests that not only does God love the devout, but He loves the sinful and impoverished as well. This line could also be interpreted that God loves all of creation, and His love is universal. No matter what language one speaks or land one lives in, God is present in his life. Regardless of race, gender, or age, God loves everyone everywhere. Thomas declares, in response to the theme and lessons this poem reveals, Let the stones speak. In these words he alludes to another message of the Bible where Jesus asks us to proclaim God s glory and spread His word to the people.

Light breaks where no sun shines is more melancholy than the other poems, but is also proof of man s capability of enduring life s hardships. This poem uses many contradictory analogies such as Light breaks where no sun shines;/Where no sea runs the waters of the heart/Push in their tides. This proves that God will shed His light on men who have blocked it from their hearts. But their hearts, blessed at birth, have kindness and enough of God s light to push in their own tides and endure without allowing His help. Although God never leaves them, some people endeavor to avoid His grace; God remains with them nevertheless. Thomas continues on to discuss the afterlife in the second stanza, and stating Where no seed stirs, / The fruit of man unwrinkles in the stars, he connects with spiritual renewal in heaven. Stanza three illustrates enlightenment, and, once acknowledged, the grace of God begins in the mind and soul and travels throughout the entire body. Bringing his poetry back to the Bible, Thomas writes, The film of spring is hanging from the lids. Alluding to the prophecy of Christ s return to human form, Thomas usage of nature in his analogies once again considers His holy presence on the earth. The final stanza declares that God will shed His light of intuition and morals onto secret lots, and waste allotments. This stanza is the most important because it claims that When logics die, / The secret soil grows through the eye, / And blood jumps in the sun. Making the final connection with the holy presence in the earth that grows up through the body and into the brain, Thomas conveys that God will save us and be there when we are empty and he will bless us at times when we need it most.

In these poems and many others, Dylan Thomas expresses God s presence and unconditional love for everyone. He has conventional spiritual views, occasionally alluding to the Bible, but his images are unique. He describes heaven with the stars and the wind, and connects God with thunder, rainbows, and gravel. Using the motion and life on the earth, Dylan Thomas facilitates these concrete ideas to describe his abstract spiritual beliefs. Nature is an ideal way to describe God because He is present everywhere on our earth. Whether it be the soul s redemption into heaven with God and the earth or God s great force that creates all motion on the planet, His presence is the theme that Dylan Thomas expresses best of all of his poetry.