

The Shield of Achilles

W.H. Auden

The title is taken from Homer's the Iliad.

Achilles's mother is the goddess Thetis. He has lost his armour and needs another one to fight. Auden introduces a different world contrary to Homer's heroic and beautiful world. The poem is an account of the modern situation. It represents a world void of morals and principles. This is shown through the juxtaposition between the modern world and the heroic world of Achilles. In the heroic world, wars were waged for just causes, and life at peace was full of prosperity. In the modern age, life is chaotic in both peace and war.

Auden employs the techniques of modern poetry such as the use of myth, irony and free verse.

The white Man's Burden

Rudyard Kipling

The poem is seven stanzas with traditional rhyme scheme. it exhorts the reader to take up the white man's burden by sending the best of their country to the dark , uncivilized places of the earth.

The poem smacks of cultural imperialism . The stress is on the white man's responsibility to his brothers.

Racism is quite manifest. This cannot be ignored, but it seems that Kipling was offering warnings to those who sought to undertake such actions. The title if the poem becomes a euphemism for imperialism.

Keith Douglas

Simplify me when I am Dead

It was written within the same years of the World WarII.

The poem has a strong emphasis on one's death.

The poet was a soldier stationed in the Middle East during WWII. He shows sympathy with soldiers who fought the frontier wars.

The core of the poem is the idea that the only thing that can be done for the dead is to remember their existence in a modest fashion.

It embodies the author's notion of the simplicity of life, how easily one enters and vanishes while the only thing to be done is to remember the deceased.

Time is very important to stress upon because life on earth is completely measured upon time.

As I walked up

W.H. Auden

It is an allegorical conversation between time and love as they discuss the power of love to conquer eternity.

The poem highlights modern themes like "time" .

One cannot conquer time; time will get what he wants either tomorrow or today.

It is a lyric poem. There are three speaker in the poem:

The narrator, the singing lover , and all of the clocks in the city speaking as one.

The poem has a typical ballad opening for an English pastoral or folk song. It is written in simple diction.

The structure reinforces a temporal universality , undermining the lover's song as the poem darkens .

The poem ends by noting that "the deep river ran on," suggesting a broader timelessness .

Themes: love makes the world go round . love's ability to conquer time.