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WW3

Ellis Rivera

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death, especially the death of the poet's father. The obscurity of the poem lends itself to this assumption. This assumption clouds other factors that may have influenced Thomas's writings, namely, world events. The central event of that time was WWII, which inspired a plethora of war poems.

Thomas is credited with publishing only a "few war poems" (Magill 2882). "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" is not classified as a war poem. However, WWII greatly influenced Thomas's life and art. WWII's arrival "fostered an apocalyptic spirit among poets" (Kershner 118). The war's effect manifests itself in many of the

poet's broadcasts during and after the war. For example, in the January 1946 broadcast on Welsh poetry, Thomas notes how Alun Lewis, a fellow poet, died while serving in India during the war. Thomas comments on how Lewis acknowledged that "in war, poetry is in the pity... and, like Owen, he could never place himself above pity but must give it tongue" (Maud, *On the Air* 46). Thomas writes of the bombings of London in his play "The Londoner" recorded in July 1946 (82). In "Return Journey," he precisely reports "about the bomb damage from the air raids of February 1941" that occurred in his childhood town of Swansea (177). Thomas felt strongly about the war and circulated an anti-war petition in 1940 (Kershner 243). Considering the timeframe during which Thomas wrote "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night," evidence suggests that the poem primarily references events specific to WWII, and that Thomas, by the end of the war, recognized the war's necessity and encouraged the world to fight for freedom and peace.

The first line of the poem addresses an individual characterized as "gentle." The archaic word "gentle" indicates a person of an upper, or superior,

class. The Axis nations committed great atrocities against weaker national groups, demonstrating that they embodied a debased, barbaric disposition. Conversely, the Allies liberated those oppressed like knights in shining armor. Thomas commands "gentle" not to enter "that good night." Thomas juxtaposes "good" and "night," indicating a paradox (Napierkowski, et al. 51). The oppressive governments of the Axis powers, as previously mentioned, exercised their power with evil intentions. Their rule brought darkness upon their subjects, essentially night. Hence, "good night" contradicts itself, proving false. Clearly, from the first line, Thomas addresses the political issues during WWII.



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