

Date 12 / 31 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / Lyric

Title "The Passing of the Year"

Author / Director / Robert Service

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I found this poem while browsing Shmoop, and it especially caught my attention because today is New Year's Eve, the end of the old and eventful year and the beginning of a new and hopefully great year.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc?)

"The Passing of a Year" begins with the speaker relaxing on New Year's Eve at home while he awaits the coming of the new year. While waiting, however, he wants to reflect on the affects of the year on the various people in the room. The Old Year "upon the Stage of Time" is up to take its last bow when the speaker begins observing the emotions of all the people in the audience, contemplating the reasons behind them and imagining the things that may have happened to them throughout the year. Finally, he concluded with a simple "There! bless you now! Old Year, good-bye!"

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

Time resides as a prominent theme in this poem, which is not a surprise because the celebration of the beginning of a new year is the celebration of the passing of time. When many people think of New Years, they often come up with New Year's resolutions, and they look forward into the future with hopeful ambitions. Nevertheless, this speaker of this poem does not contemplate the future whatsoever; rather, he only looks at his own past and the past of the people around him, which do not particularly seem to have gone that well. The speaker examines New Years from an entirely different perspective than most. Moreover, "The Passing of a Year" discusses what passing time feels like, and how it feels to go from moment to moment in time. Time is always flying by, but New Years is the only day that people actually reflect on how time has affected them and how they hope it will affect them in the future. This poem in particular takes into account the things that may have happened through time to influence people's looks and emotions. This "audience" that the speaker is observing may represent all the feelings a person could be able to feel through experience or perhaps even just a small sample of emotions.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"The Passing of the Year" is written in rhymed iambic tetrameter. Unlike many artsy and creative poets, this poem has a rigid and set rhythm and rhyme scheme. The poem is seven stanzas long with four rhyming pairs per stanza, which are separated by one line each. Iambic tetrameter means there are four iambs (da-DUM) in each line. The consistency of the this rhythm adds to the poem's fluidity and calmness. Metaphorically, time is portrayed as an actor or actress that affects people's lives in various different ways as if the people are watching time as a movie or a play. When time's performance is coming to an end, the speaker examines the members of the audience, which may not even be real people at all. Rather, they seem like concepts that represent a good portion of the human population in terms of feelings and emotions.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

Although I chose "The Passing of the Year" because it happened to be New Year's Eve, I felt as if the poem was actually full of monotonous repetitiveness because it was so structured and unambiguous. The author threw in some metaphors to make it more interesting, but, for the most part, it was actually quite boring. Nevertheless, I do like the concept that Service is hinting at with this poem, and I do find this concept to be very poetic. Service is urging the reader of the poem to contemplate more seriously about what his or life actually means instead of just obliviously moving on through life with no examination. A person needs to understand his or her own feelings and what is contributing to or influencing them in order to make a change or redirect his or her focus in life. Moreover, this poem tries to make the reader expand his or her own boundaries by taking him or her outside of his or her comfort zone, helping him or her think and take into account the lives of other people. The realization that so many people are going through so many things at the same time that a person may simply be eating breakfast or doing homework is actually quite a poetic concept. This concept was recently relevant in my life when I met up with people, who now live out of town, whom I used to be friends with when I was younger. As we described some of the things we missed out in each other's lives, it was actually quite intriguing realizing that they may have been doing something extraordinary while I was merely going through the daily tasks of life. "The Passing of the Year" ultimately tries to explode the bubble that many people live in and to make them view the world in a different way.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)