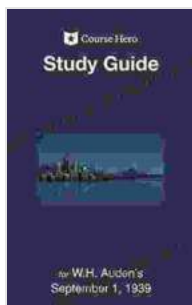


Study Guide for Auden's "September 1939" from Course Hero: A Comprehensive Overview

W.H. Auden's "September 1939" is a powerful and evocative poem that captures the complex emotions and experiences of the outbreak of World War II. Published in 1940, the poem reflects the poet's own sense of disillusionment and despair in the face of global conflict. This study guide provides a comprehensive overview of the poem, including its historical context, themes, imagery, and poetic devices.

Historical Context

"September 1939" was written in the aftermath of the outbreak of World War II on September 1, 1939. The poem reflects the widespread anxiety and uncertainty that gripped Europe at the time. Auden himself had witnessed the rise of fascism in Germany and the Spanish Civil War, and his experiences shaped his pessimistic outlook on the future.



Study Guide for W.H. Auden's September 1, 1939

(Course Hero Study Guide) by Course Hero

★★★★★ 5 out of 5
Language : English
File size : 940 KB
Screen Reader: Supported
Print length : 334 pages
Lending : Enabled
Paperback : 32 pages
Item Weight : 4.8 ounces
Dimensions : 8.5 x 0.08 x 11 inches



Themes

Disillusionment: Auden expresses a deep sense of disillusionment with the world in the wake of war. He sees the conflict as a betrayal of human ideals and a failure of civilization.

Isolation: The poem also explores themes of isolation and alienation. Auden feels disconnected from the world around him and struggles to find meaning in a time of chaos and upheaval.

Responsibility: Despite his feelings of disillusionment, Auden also acknowledges the responsibility of individuals to take action against injustice. He urges his fellow citizens to "speak out" against the horrors of war.

Imagery

Auden uses vivid and powerful imagery to convey the horrors of war and the emotional toll it takes on individuals. Some key images in the poem include:

* **"Those to whom evil is done"**: This image represents the innocent victims of war, who suffer unimaginable pain and loss. * **"The unmourning dead"**: This image suggests the vast scale of death and destruction caused by the conflict. * **"The enormous dark death"**: This metaphor represents the overwhelming and unstoppable nature of war.

Poetic Devices

Auden employs a variety of poetic devices to create a powerful and memorable poem. These devices include:

* **Meter:** The poem is written in a regular iambic pentameter, which gives it a sense of rhythm and flow. * **Rhyme scheme:** The poem follows an ABAB rhyme scheme, which helps to create a sense of unity and coherence. * **Alliteration:** Auden uses alliteration throughout the poem to create emphasis and reinforce his message. For example, "the unmourning dead" and "the enormous dark death." * **Metaphor:** Auden uses metaphors to compare war to a dark force or an unstoppable monster. This helps to convey the overwhelming power and destructiveness of the conflict.

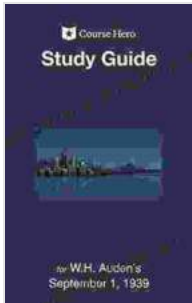
Analysis

"September 1939" is a complex and multi-layered poem that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. However, some key themes that emerge from the poem include:

* **The futility of war:** Auden argues that war is a senseless and destructive force that only leads to suffering and death. * **The importance of individual action:** Despite his feelings of despair, Auden believes that individuals have a responsibility to speak out against injustice. * **The hope for a better future:** The poem ends with a glimmer of hope, as Auden suggests that the darkness of war may eventually give way to a brighter future.

W.H. Auden's "September 1939" is a powerful and evocative poem that captures the complex emotions and experiences of the outbreak of World War II. The poem's vivid imagery, powerful themes, and masterful use of

poetic devices make it a timeless work of art that continues to resonate with readers today.



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