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AP English 12

November 18, 2003

*We're Gentle, to judge*

Thomas' "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" tell us all not to give into death. It is still thought to be natural process and an infallible foe; nevertheless we should still not give in without a struggle, even if that struggle is in vain. Thomas goes as far as to presume the state that death will bring: something far less enjoyable than life. If he did not distrust death so much, than why would he urge us to attempt to struggle in vain? The whole poem only assumes what death will bring and what it will end in life. Some do not go gently "because their words had forked no light" (5), and even though the second stanza refers to the wise man, it is still presuming that death will be the ultimate sacrifice of our inconsequential efforts. Others resist because they "sang the sun in flight, and learned, too late, they grieved it on its way," (10-11). Even if this is the most valid reason for fighting death, because one has not enjoyed the fruits of life, it is still assuming what the afterlife will offer. In general, Thomas says that we should all fight the phase into death, because death is just a mystery and judged as untrustworthy.

Lu Hsun's Death is very casual and comforting to those concerning greatly with death. In the beginning, Lu Hsun lists the manifestations and the varied beliefs of the afterlife that seem to be quite significant to daily life. Most believe in spirits, and through transmigration, the soul will be reborn into another body. Then there are those who do not ponder too heavily on death, which is where the character places. The character did

not devote much thought and time to death, and even when his illness was diagnosed he still refused to ponder the subject heavily. It is almost admirable, to see such a character treat death so lightly and casually. The only thoughts of death he devoted to during his last days were the trifles, which, by nature, required only little concern. The will, which he did not draw up, was almost comical. It was his only acknowledgement of death, and even in the will's contents that acknowledgement was thin—"forget me and live your own lives-if you don't, the more fools you" (269). He rejects the European traditions and ceremonies with the burial of the soon to be deceased. He only sits upon his wicker chair and accepts this inevitable phase. Unlike Thomas' poem, the character admits he does not know what it will be like, but if "this happens only once in a lifetime, I can take it" (270).

Woolf's "The Death of a Moth" is sad, yet only that because it expresses the one true constant in life: we all are subject to the same fate. Though this essay is not quite a revelation of similarity between the main character and the moth. It focuses on significance and inconsequentiality-death as well as life. The moth is a creature quite worth the pity the character dwells upon. It is a simple species unable, regardless of its efforts, to enjoy the splendor of the day. When death finally descends upon it, the main character looks with obvious sympathy, but the resilience of this quite insignificant creature inspires the character even greater than would the resilience of a more consequential life form. In general, any brief victory against this foe is inspiring, but when such a victory is unexpected, as would generally be with a moth, greater inspiration is evoked. Of course the moth inevitably dies, but what reiterates the character's passion for life is the moth's impressive battle with this titanic foe. With this pleasant and

beautiful atmosphere, life would be worth struggling against, and even the lowly moth would not easily lose the life it tried so hard to enjoy.

Plato's The Death of Socrates is more like Lu Hsun's with the willingness to submit to fate. Though, to contrast it with Lu Hsun and to provide the antithetical to Thomas', we have another presumption of death. Here Socrates assumes that death will provide greater aims than life will. Life is treated as harsh and unimpressive. Where Woolf reiterated her passion for life, Socrates explained that death is a cure for this horrible stage. Like Lu Hsun, Socrates mocks the classic ceremonies and traditions that the soon to be deceased face. He embarrassed those who wept during his last moments because in his own mind, he believed he would soon be in a better place, which is certainly not news one should weep over. Socrates and the character in Death both face death with acceptance. Though, in contrast to the other three works, Socrates did not have any passion reserved for life.

Even though I am so willing to accept any enlightenment of any brilliant philosopher, I must say that Lu Hsun's Death presents the best way to face the inevitable. For, even though I agree with Socrates' assumption of death, I do not feel that assumptions should be valid, since nobody can truly say that death is either the beginning of a golden era, or a simple mystery that should be distrusted through prejudice alone. So then, I respect the character in Death, for not only does he admit death as inevitable, but also he admits, in his current stage, his own ignorance. It is mind evoking and creative to judge death through a philosophical and educational manner, but it proves to be unappealing to those facing death. So this casual reaction criticizing those overly

distraught with this inescapable fate is most valued to me, but I shall never really know until I am facing my own end.