The Ideal Synthesis Essay, Research Paper

The story of Adam and Even in Genesis depicts the ideal model of life: the perfect balance of natural order. Yet man s natural towards destruction and sin causes the ruin of this utopia. The fate Adam receives can directly be related the shortcomings of the military and society s loss of stasis with nature which are both described in Reed s poem. The numerous connotations of words and phrases in Reed s poem help bring out this theme of imbalance. In Naming of Parts , Henry Reed compares the garden and the soldiers by use carefully worded imagery to portray the unfortunate effects of war on the lives of many men.

In the poem, Reed portrays the soldiers in two roles: namers and occupants of a garden. These two different roles are clearly and repeatedly contrasted to establish a comparison between harmony with nature and the discordant role of the military in the natural world. A strong theme of the poem is that war disturbs the balance of the natural order. Reed offers a vision of the appropriate equilibrium of the world through his descriptions of the garden. The garden is a symbol of life and beauty: a magical place, at once \”silent\” and \”eloquent\”. Their \”blossoms are fragile and motionless,\” not to mention better trained than the soldiers. Furthermore, Reed reserves all of the figurative language for nature: \”the safety-catch is always released\” but \”Japonica / glistens like coral\”. In the garden, the reader sees the personification of branches which \”hold in the gardens their silent, eloquent gestures\”. Later, the reader told of blossoms that \”are fragile and motionless, never letting anyone see / any one them using their finger\”. The bees are also shown \”assaulting and fumbling the flowers\”. The diction further supports a vision of a garden which is gentle, peaceful and harmonious. The garden and its parts are \”silent, eloquent\”, \”fragile and motionless\”.

The use of bees as a model for natural order serves to create an ironic comparison with the soldiers. Initially, the distinction between the bees and the soldiers is not so clear. Like the soldiers the bees are part of a highly structured and mechanical society. However, the poem clearly identifies the bee s role in the natural order by first describing them in relation to the flowers. The soldiers are never described at all, let alone in relationship to the natural world. Furthermore, the bees serve a vital role: both life giving and crucial to the balance in nature. Their activity results in pollination of the flowers which sustains the garden and maintains balance. In contrast, the military is an inadequate example for order. The soldiers are continually shown to be lacking by the repeated phrase: \”which in our case we have not got. The soldiers lack both the \”silent, eloquent gestures\” of the branches and the \”point of balance,\” which literally refers to a part of the gun but portrays much more about the soldier s futile role in their world. The daily ritual of cleaning the guns is shown to be inadequate by the very fact that it must be performed daily. The \”daily cleaning\” is ineffective to make the guns truly clean; in other words, in harmony with the natural order.

The disruptive effects of war on the natural order are shown through contrasts between the soldiers and the garden. The bees are compared to the soldiers and parody them by their \”assaulting and fumbling the flowers\”. Bees assault flowers to the benefit of the flowers. Men assault men in battle to the detriment of the other. Where the assault of the bees brings life, men with guns bring death. A second comparison is implied between the fresh immaculateness of the garden, whose \”Japonica / glistens like coral\” and the soldier s guns with their need for \”daily cleaning\”. The ironic contrast is that the garden, grounded in dirt, is effortlessly clean while the soldiers must clean their guns repeatedly. The structure of the poem also serves to make the comparison to nature s advantage. Each stanza is split between the dry, unimaginative language of the first speaker, presumably the drill sergeant and the poetic language used by the second speaker, perhaps one of the men in the squad, to describe nature. The use of repetition and near-repetition of phrases is ironic due to the placement of the repeated phrases in different contexts. In each instance, nature is shown to be better at the same activities. The instructor insists that the men not to let [him] / see anyone using his finger\”. At the end of the same stanza, the blossoms are seen \”never letting anyone see / any one of them using their finger\”. Although not explicitly stated in the poem, perhaps the soldiers should take a cue from the blossoms and not use their fingers, especially not on the trigger. The garden is repeatedly shown to have that which \”in our case we have not got\”. While the soldiers fondle their guns and \”slide it rapidly backwards and forwards\” to no productive end, the bees fly \”rapidly backwards and forwards\” pollinating the flowers. This is in sharp contrast to the natural order, in ends justify the means and every action takes place in a synergetic web of life. Once again, the soldiers fall short where the bees succeed.

Comparing and contrasting guns and gardens, soldiers and bees, this poem relates the unrelated in order to draw a clear difference between the forces of life and the forces of death. However, the poem goes further than merely contrasting opposites. The structure and language of the poem combine to demonstrate how one should synthesize with the natural order. More generally, the poem demonstrates that war is contrary to nature.