

A Hideous Portrayal of Man in “The Sea View”

In “The Sea View” by Charlotte Smith, the poet expresses her love of nature and hatred of the evil caused by mankind. She compares the purity and stillness of a seascape to a rough and stormy ocean, which symbolizes the vulgar and hostile actions of man. Smith uses such comparisons to represent her frustration with society in the late 1700s and early 1800s. To symbolize her feelings, the author begins the poem using positive and uplifting imagery to describe nature, which then develops into negative and angry imagery as she reflects on a battle she saw years ago. In this poem, Smith describes nature as an exquisite and brilliant creation by God, and human desires as the culprits of the destruction of not only nature’s beauty, but of society as well.

The title of the poem can be interpreted in a few ways. The word “sea” literally means a large body of water that can be either surrounded by land, or it may be so large in size that it appears endless. The term can also be used as a metaphor to express a large amount or size of an item that can be overwhelming. “View” can be defined as seeing or looking at something, such as a flower or, in the case of this poem, the sea. This word can also define a person’s thought or opinion about a subject. Therefore, the purpose of this poem may be to inform the audience about what the ocean and its surrounding scenery looks like. Another interpretation of the title may be that Smith is going to tell the readers her opinion of the ocean and what she likes or dislikes about it. One may also believe that the poem discusses a body of water that the author sees and describes its overwhelming size and beauty. As the audience reads the poem, they discover that the numerous interpretations of the title can all be used to describe a majority of the poem’s content.

Throughout the poem, the author uses the point of view of a shepherd to describe the sea and its surroundings. His point of view is used to tell the audience what is seen out at sea and to express Smith’s opinion about what is seen. In the first phrase “The upland shepherd, as reclined as he lies / On the soft turf that clothes the mountain brow, / Marks the bright sea-line mingling with the skies” (1-3), the sonnet begins with a shepherd relaxing high up in the mountains, looking at the sea and noticing how it blends in with the sky. “Upland” refers to a part of countryside that is outside of town and “away from the sea.”

This term also suggests that the shepherd is in a hilly, elevated area, which indicates that the shepherd is in a remote location. The term “shepherd” can be identified as a man that watches or guards a group of grazing animals. The word can also imply a “spiritual guardian,” which connotes the idea that the shepherd symbolizes innocence and purity, and that it is possible that he may have divine-like qualities similar to those of a god. The poet may have chosen the words “upland shepherd” to convey to the audience the idea of being alone in a place of peace and solitude, where an individual has the opportunity to connect spiritually with the earth and God. One cannot achieve this peacefulness in an overcrowded and dirty city or town that mankind has created.

Smith then tells the readers that the shepherd is “reclined,” suggesting he is lying back, resting. He is enjoying the beautiful view, and therefore wants to be comfortable and relaxed so he can see everything in front of him. By lying back, he is not only emotionally and mentally connected to nature, but he is physically closer to it than he would be if he stood or sat on the ground. It can also take on the meaning that he is returning to a place or state of mind that he was in previously, which can imply that the shepherd has been to this location before or that he is reconnecting with nature.

The poet describes the ground that the shepherd is lying on as “soft turf that clothes the mountain brow” (2). The word “turf” has a literal meaning of being a piece of land or soil that is covered with grass and other plants. It can also be a symbol of possession, suggesting that this land does not belong to the shepherd. “Turf” can therefore convey the idea that the ground he is lying on is God’s territory and it belongs to Him because He created it. With this interpretation, readers may believe that Smith is proposing that nature and earth are not our property. God lends this land and all that is on it to society, hoping that it will be taken care of and treated properly. However, as it is seen later in the poem, mankind does not provide proper care for nature or its inhabitants.

“Soft” is characterizing the ground as comfortable and smooth in line 2. It may also suggest that, visually, the ground is not rough or rugged, but rather it is calming and subdued. This gives the landscape the appearance of being safe and not dangerous. “Clothes the mountain brow” is illustrating how the soft ground clings to or covers an area at the peak or edge of a massive and overwhelming elevation. The idea of seclusion and isolation is reiterated by using “mountain” because mountains are raised geographical structures that are difficult to navigate, making them almost uninhabitable by humans and most animals. Smith may have also included this phrase in the poem to suggest that these beautiful mountains are being covered because they need to be protected from the destructive actions of mankind. However, the audience does not know what the mountains and nature need to be protected against until later in the poem.

The third line describes the shepherd noticing “the bright sea-line mingling with the skies.” This line is also where Smith begins to describe the sun and sea. In this poem, the word “marks” is used to mean that the shepherd is attempting to identify and distinguish the boundary between the sky and sea. Although it is being used as a verb in the poem, when “marks” is used as a noun, it can be defined as unique or distinguishing characteristics. Therefore, an alternative interpretation of this word is that “marks” is describing the mountains, sea, and/or the sky as extraordinary and exquisite in appearance. “Marks” can represent an object that indicates a limit or boundary, which may be referring to the mountains as being a boundary between land and sea. This term may then have the connotation that a boundary is being formed between a place of serenity, like the mountain landscape, and a place or object that is tumultuous and dangerous, like the sea. With this interpretation, the audience may think that Smith is implying that a division is being formed between God, who inhabits the sky, and mankind, who inhabits the land and ocean.

The author continues to describe the “sea-line,” which is the horizon, as “bright” and “mingling with the skies” (3). Corresponding to the possible interpretation of “marks,” “sea-line” also refers to a boundary. However this boundary is not one between the land and sky, but rather it is one between the ocean and the sky. Using the term “bright,” meaning cheerful, brilliant, and glorious, to describe the horizon makes this boundary seem more positive than the boundary between land and sea. It also suggests hopefulness and happiness, giving the sea and sky a spiritual and calming appeal. “Mingling” implies that there is not an absolute boundary between the sea and sky, but rather they appear mixed or blended together. “Skies” literally means clouds but can also figuratively mean heaven. This idea of the sky and ocean mixing together may reflect the author’s desire for not only the ocean to become more like heaven, but for the human race to also become more like heaven, where it is peaceful, immaculate, and superlative. This phrase gives the sea a positive image, which changes drastically later on as the poem continues.

In the second phrase that begins “Or from his course celestial, sinking slow, / The summer-sun in purple radiance low, / Blaze on the western waters” (4-6), Smith is illustrating a beautiful sunset that the shepherd sees as it casts a beautiful light onto the sea. “Course” can have several meanings, especially when grouped with “celestial.” The term “celestial” relates to the sky and heaven. It also means “of a divine or heavenly nature.” The first definition of “course” that one may think of is a path, which is probably the most obvious meaning in this section of the poem. This word can represent running or moving forward or an “onward movement in a particular path, as of the heavenly bodies.” Therefore, this phrase is more than likely indicating the descent of the sun, a “heavenly body,” from its position high in the sky to below the horizon and the ocean.

“Course celestial” can also be interpreted as possibly referring to the location of the shepherd. He may feel that he is so high up on the mountain that he feels like he is in heaven, looking down at the beautiful Creation. These terms also reiterate the ideas of heaven and that the shepherd may have a divine-like quality. This phrase implies that the shepherd is entering heaven or that he knows that when he dies, he will be admitted into heaven because he has lived his life in a way that is pleasing to God. Smith may be using this phrase to allow the audience to imagine how high up this shepherd is so he can see and enjoy this beautiful landscape. She also wants the readers to see that if they live life in a manner that pleases God, they too can experience the benefits and rewards that the shepherd is experiencing.

As lines 4 through 5 continue with “sinking low, / The summer-sun in purple radiance low,” Smith describes the sun setting on the ocean. The phrase “summer-sun” sets the scene of the poem, informing the audience that it is summer. The “sun” is literally the largest and brightest star in the solar system, which all of the planets revolve around. It also provides warmth and light to the planets. Mentioning the “sun” in the poem adds to the beauty of the seascape and the positive emotions that the shepherd is experiencing by the sea. It is also another connection to heaven and God and His presence in nature. “Sinking” is describing the “downward movement” of the sun. It continues to set the scene of the poem to indicate to the readers that it is a summer sunset and it is almost night-time. This term also denotes a decline in power, implying that the sun is no longer as bright as it was earlier in the day. “Slow” is describing the pace at which the sun is setting as being sluggish and unwilling, as if it does not want to stop shining.

Describing the sunset is signaling the change between day and night, one of the first transitions in the poem. Because the author chose to have the sun sinking slowly instead of quickly, this may imply to the readers that this environment is very peaceful and calm compared to the stressful and fast-paced city life. Smith may also be using this shift in the time of day to symbolize that things may look beautiful during the day but at night, they can become terrifying and hideous. It indicates that Smith not only dislikes the darkness of night, but she also dislikes the darkness of human nature and the troubles that result from this evil. The poet wants the entire world to be blissful and perfect as long as possible, not just in the countryside during the daytime. The sunset is also the death of the day and the beginning the night, which therefore symbolizes the start of the horrific and evil actions of man and foreshadows the deaths that occur at the end of the poem. She is also preparing the readers for the more noticeable transition that occurs later in line 9.

“Purple radiance low” (5) is describing what the sunlight looks like as the sun sets. “Purple” is a cool color that is a symbol of richness and prosperity, normally worn by people of royal ranking. Choosing “purple” as the color that is being cast on the ocean is yet

another example of the text referring to religion. This color may also be worn in a time of mourning, which reiterates the possibility of the sunset symbolizing death. The color “purple” is contributing to the serenity and peacefulness of the seascape because cool colors are calming, relaxing, and soothing. “Radiance low” is obviously describing the lack of brightness and poor quality of the sun’s light as it sets. The term “low” repeats the connotation that the sun is “sinking” (4) in the sky. “Radiance” may also describe a person’s expression of being joyous and hopeful. Because “low” is describing “radiance,” this could suggest that the shepherd’s pleasant attitude is in its first stages of morphing into something more dark and angry. This solidifies the idea of the sunset symbolizing a change between beauty and darkness in people.

Line 6 begins with “Blaze on the western waters,” informing the audience where and what the sinking sun is shining upon. The term “blaze” is what the sun is doing to the water. The shepherd sees the sun casting a brilliant light onto the water, as if the sun has caught it on fire. It may also be foreshadowing that hell is about to be unleashed on the earth, but it is unclear what event will bring about this chaos. By including the word “western,” it indicates that the shepherd is facing west, which has already been suggested since the sun sets in the west. This may have been mentioned again because some Christians believe that the dead should be buried with the head at the west end of the coffin. Smith may be using this information to imply that not only is the sunset the death of the day, but death to the earth and mankind may occur soon if the behaviors and actions of humans do not change.

“The wide scene / Magnificent, and tranquil, seems to spread / Even o’er the rustic’s breast a joy serene” (6-8) is the next phrase in the poem where it notes that the peaceful and serene landscape spreads happiness and comfort across the countryside and the shepherd’s heart. “Wide” is describing the seascape as being a large, spacious, or grand in size and area. It also expresses the notion of something being open and inviting. Another possible definition of “wide” pertains to an area that exists in between “two things which are far apart.” With this interpretation, the area where the shepherd is lying is both literally and figuratively located between heaven and hell. To the shepherd, the area appears to be majestic and brilliant like heaven but it can also be atrocious and awful like hell, which can be seen in the second half of the poem.

The use of “scene” in this poem is obviously depicting nature as a perfect picture. It may also be referring to “human activity,” suggesting that the daily life of the shepherd and other individuals in the area contribute to the “tranquil” (7) feeling that the shepherd experiences. A “scene” is also commonly associated with a part of a theatrical play or performance where actors enter or exit. “The wide scene” literally means an area of grandeur and openness. The phrase “wide scene” may be interpreted as being an extensive

and vast background or curtain, similar to those in theatrical productions. This part of the poem may therefore figuratively mean that the amazing view that the shepherd sees is about to disappear with the sun and unveil a frightening landscape, another hint that a change is about to occur.

The words “magnificent” and “tranquil” (7) describe the “scene” in line 6. “Magnificent” represents an object that is sublime, extraordinary, and grand in size. The word “tranquil” denotes something as being calm, serene, and peaceful. These characteristics of the scenery continue to build upon the thought that it is a heaven-like place that is very calm, quiet, and perfect. The term “spread” is extending and distributing “joy” and “serene” emotions. However, Smith uses the word “seems,” which suggests that these happy and peaceful feelings appear to be felt, but in reality, it is just a thin layer that is covering the darkness and wickedness of the human race.

The word “even” at the beginning of line 8 is emphasizing that although it seemed unlikely and impossible, the shepherd is able to feel the happiness and ecstasy that the seascape creates. “Even” can also mean something is level or flat. If used in this context, the author may have chosen this word to express that the opportunity for these positive emotions are being distributed equally, and that all people have the chance to experience this bliss. The term “o’er” means over, above, or to cover something. “Rustic” can be defined as being in the countryside, but because it is possessive, it describes the shepherd as being “a peasant” that is plain, charming, and simple. “Breast” literally means the anatomical protrusions of a female. Both males and females have breasts that are located on the chest, covering the heart. Smith may be using this term to refer to its figurative meaning of the heart, more specifically the shepherd’s heart. Therefore, “o’er the rustic’s breast” indicates that these positive emotions are being spread across the heart of the shepherd. It may also suggest that the seascape makes the heart feel hopeful and relaxed, making others in this area feel as happy as the shepherd.

For the first eight lines of this poem, Smith shows nature and earth as glorious and immaculate. In the first three lines, she chooses words to describe nature that make several references to religion, beauty, and individualism. In lines 4-6, the author continues to refer to religion and beauty, but she is also indicating a decline in beauty as the sun sets. The poet may also be foreshadowing a change in the tone of the poem. Continuing in line 6 to line 8, Smith is telling the audience what kind of emotions and feelings that this seascape provides for people in this area as well as the shepherd. She also wants the readers to see that living a simple and peaceful life like he does is how life is meant to be lived.

The poem experiences a *volte*, a change in mood that is a classic characteristic of an Italian sonnet, in line 9. The fourth sentence of the poem begins here and continues to the middle of line 12. It describes war ships that the shepherd sees further out in the ocean.

The poet uses “war-freighted ships” as the type of ships that the shepherd can see because she is alluding back to a battle that she saw years ago at sea (Greenblatt 42 n.1). The simile “like dark plague-spots by the Demons shed” is comparing the ships to evil and death. “Dark” suggests that there is no light or lack of light, making the image of the ships seem obscure and unknown. It also gives the sea gloomy and depressing characteristics compared to what it was depicted as earlier in the poem. The word “dark” can be defined as evil, wicked, or immoral. Smith may be illustrating these ships as “dark” because they are doing terrible things to one another.

“Plague-spots” can have several different meanings, the first being that the ships are like boils or sores on the sea; they are ugly and dangerous. A plague is a contagious illness that has an extremely high death rate. The plague is a general term that refers to several diseases that are normally indicated by the presence of spots or blotches on the skin. Smith may believe that these ships and the destruction they bring should be avoided like a disease. Because a plague is very deadly, the term can also mean ‘slaughter,’ making the ships a symbol for death. This interpretation foreshadows the death that occurs near the conclusion of this poem. These words may also be an allusion to one of the ten plagues in the Bible, the plague of boils (*Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, Exod. 9.8-12). If the word “dark” is included, this phrase may also be an allusion to the plague of darkness, meaning that the battle literally casts darkness over the ships (Exod. 10.21-29). Smith may be using this phrase to show that as a consequence for the behaviors and desires of mankind such as anger, power, and greed, their punishment is death.

“By the Demons shed” is describing the location of where the “plague-spots” came from. A “shed” is a building used as a workshop or for storage. It can also be a “lair or nest for an animal,” which suggests that the war ships were stored in the dwelling of the Devil or another immoral creature. However, in this poem, it is more than likely that “shed” is being used to mean that “Demons” are dispersing ships that are filled with evil and death. This would further imply that the ships will cause suffering and despair. “Demons” are “supernatural beings” that have qualities between those of “gods and men,” but they are evil and destructive qualities. These “demons” may also be describing humans because they created these ships and also created the purpose of the ships, which is to fight one another.

The phrase “charged deep with death” (10) foreshadows that the ships will cause death and destruction to one another. “Charged” means something is full or loaded. It also suggests that the ships were given a military “duty” and “responsibility” that they must carry out. This term also implies that the ships are preparing to move at “full speed” towards one another and start a violent and hostile attack. If the ships do this, they will be “charged,” meaning accused, of the crimes and sins they commit. Smith may be implying that it will be God who will punish mankind for their actions. “Deep” is defined as something that is

profound and extends extremely far down, almost to its core. She is possibly describing the ships as being very full of death. The author may also be using the figurative definition of “deep” to mean that the principles and morals of mankind are declining further and becoming consumed with “sin, crime, or guilt.” Smith can be emphasizing that humans are filled with negative emotion that has such a large affect on them that they are becoming more malicious and vindictive towards each other.

The word “death” is obviously the end of one’s life on earth. The term indicates what will happen to most of the men on board the ship. It also adds to the depressing mood that the author is creating. Another interpretation is that a person has become “spiritually dead.” With this meaning, the author may be implying that mankind has drastically changed because they have lost or ended their spiritual connection with nature and God. “Death” also refers to “slaughter” or “murder.” In the line before, the author mentioned “plague-spots,” which can also mean slaughter. By the author continuously using words that have similar meanings, she is giving the audience an extremely negative image of the ships and humans so they can comprehend her feelings and thoughts.

“Far seen” describes the shepherd’s distance from the ships. Smith may be using “far seen” instead of a phrase such as “far away” because she is reiterating to the audience that the shepherd is seeing these events with his own eyes and forming these opinions on his own. “Far” suggests that an object is a large distance away from other objects, giving the feeling that the ships are in a remote area. This word also means something is advanced in its progress. The poet may be indicating that the battle the shepherd is watching has been going on for a long time. As a result of mankind being disconnected from religion for so long, they have become extremely distant from the positive values and principles that they once had. The term “seen” is the act of seeing. She may hope that the readers can place themselves into the poem and form similar feelings towards the ships, the seascape, and mankind.

The phrase “upon the waves” is reminding the readers that the ships are on the ocean. “Upon,” meaning on top of, is noting that the ships are still above water, possibly foreshadowing the destruction of the ships and the men on board to the point where the ships will sink. It implies that even something that is strong and sturdy can be dismantled by mankind. The term “waves” allows the audience to visualize a dark and stormy ocean that has several large crashing and dangerous waves. It may also mean that several ships may come in fleets to fight in the battle. This may be showing that several people feel angry and are not happy with one another, implying that new ideas and attitudes that are being influenced by greed, violence, corruption, power, etc. are causing a divide in their society.

“When, like dark plague-spots by the Demons shed, / Charged deep with death, upon the waves, far seen / Move the war-freighted ships” comprise lines 9 through 11,

where the ships are described as “dark” and filled with “death.” Line 11 is describing the motion of the ships. It gives the idea that the ships are moving on the waves that are further out on the ocean. With this phrase, Smith may be indicating that mankind is moving away from the beauty and peacefulness that is given to them and no longer appreciate it. She may also be suggesting that man’s evil and darkness will soon overtake everything, even the ocean. “War-freighted ships” are sea vessels, whose only purpose is to fight in a hostile battle. “Freighted” connotes the idea these ships are loaded with men and will carry them across the ocean so they can fight. The term “war” is informing the audience as to what the shepherd is seeing. He sees a horrible display of mankind’s behaviors and actions. The poet may be implying that this battle is a result of the negative change in society that was caused by man’s greed and narcissism.

The shepherd continues describing the movement of “the war-freighted ships; and fierce and red, / Flash their destructive fire” (11-12), where “fierce and red” characterizes the “fire” coming from the ships. This “fire” is the cannon fire or gunfire. The shepherd sees the gunfire “flash,” meaning that he sees numerous rushes of light, and describes it as “fierce and red.” A definition of the word “fierce” is something that is uncontrollable, forceful, and violent. The color red is a warm color that is usually associated with anger, blood, fire, and evil. The poet also notes that the “fire” is “destructive,” indicating that it is deadly and will cause a lot of damage, as well as “put an end” to many lives. A political meaning of this word is “opposed to constructive and conservative,” which implies that mankind disagrees with the conservative ideals of religion. This gives the human race a negative image because it suggests that they have turned their backs on God. The use of these words as descriptions of the ships’ ammunition further increases the author’s idea that the event that is occurring on the sea will not end well.

From the middle of line 12 until the end of line 13, the author notes that the “victims” of the battle are either “dead” or “dying.” “Mangled” describes those that are “dead” (12) and “dying” is describing the men that are “victims” (13). The bodies, as defined by the term “mangled,” are disfigured, missing limbs, and spoiled. “Dead” indicates the lifeless state of most of the men on the ships, and the descriptive word “dying” portrays that some of the men are almost dead. The term “victims” may imply that many of the men were a “sacrifice” to a “supernatural power.” The intent of the poet’s use of this term might also be to express to the audience that man is idolizing and pleasing the Devil, not only by killing one another but also by unjust and immoral behavior. Smith may have chosen this word to represent that not everyone is corrupt or immoral and that many people are suffering for these injustices. She may believe that these “victims” still believe in God, and they may therefore be spared and live.

The phrase “pollute the flood” (13) refers to the word “blood” (14) as well as the “dead” and “dying” men in lines 12 and 13, respectively. “Pollute” means to make something corrupt or contaminated. When thinking of a “flood,” one may first identify it with the flow of water and the sea. The “dead” are not only contaminating the water with their “blood,” but they are also contaminating it with their sins and evil. “Flood” may also be an allusion to the Biblical story of Noah’s ark, where God flooded the earth because He was distraught with the wicked and immoral ways of man (Gen. 6-9). The author might be referring to this story in hopes that others will change and become anew to save themselves from devastation and destruction. If Smith is referring to “blood” as being a pollutant, one may also believe she is alluding to another plague that is mentioned in the Bible, the plague of blood (Exod. 7.14-25). During this plague, all of Egypt’s water turned into blood. These possible references to God indicate that He is everywhere and sees everything. It also shows His power and willingness to make mankind righteous and pure again.

In the final line of the poem, Smith declares that it is mankind that is at fault for destroying nature and everything that God has created (14). “Ah” in this phrase suggests that the shepherd feels disappointed, frustrated, dissatisfied, or saddened because of the seascape’s transformation into something dark and ugly. “Man” identifies who has caused the sea and its surrounding scenery to undergo a drastic change. The poet is blaming mankind and society for all that is wrong with the world. Smith cites that because of their want for power, wealth, land, etc., wars and death are the results of these desires, leaving several innocent people in despair. It has also caused many people to become immoral. The next word, “spoils,” describes what the actions of “man” have done. Although it can mean stolen riches or goods such as treasure, “spoils” in this sentence is more than likely expressing that the “blood” and “dead” are damaging and ruining the water. This word is also reiterating “pollute” in line 13. Smith may have done this to reiterate the idea that humans are contributing to the deterioration of nature.

“Heaven’s glorious works” is describing God’s creation of mankind and nature and also reflects on the feelings the shepherd had at the beginning of the poem. The poet uses the same language as she did when she described nature to reiterate that the actions of humans have devastating results. The language represents religion again, as well as the fact that God has created nature to be a superb and remarkable masterpiece. It further contributes to the stark differences between the two tones she uses in this poem. Heaven is a place of bliss, located “beyond the clouds” where God lives. By the poet making “Heaven’s” possessive, it represents that nature and mankind belong to God. “Glorious works” denotes a creation or masterpiece that is magnificent, gorgeous, extravagant, and brilliant. The creations that the poet describes throughout the poem are nature and humanity. “Blood” is the red, nourishing fluid that flows inside the body. However,

“blood” is what is annihilating these “glorious works.” This term also suggests slaughter, death, or murder, another symbol of several in this poem that represents that more death will ensue if man continues a life of wickedness and evil.

Within five lines of the poem (9-13), Smith suggests or directly mentions death. This continues to add to the feeling that what the men are doing out at sea is damaging, upsetting, and deplorable. The poet is repeatedly informing the audience that mankind is evil and that their actions should not be supported. She wants the readers to feel compassion for those that are dying and anger towards those that are the cause of the battle. The last line is when Smith no longer implies, but finally informs her audience that “man” is the cause for all problems and for destroying everything. Smith wants the audience to recognize that mankind not only “pollute[s]” nature with their actions, but they also destroy and cause “death” to fellow man.

Throughout the poem, Smith employs a lot of religion and repetition to unify the text. She also includes the contrasts between light and dark as well as good and evil. Several Biblical references of the plagues and the flood were very interesting to find. To the readers of her time, they may have been obvious but to the present day audience, they can easily be overlooked. The poet’s word choice also mentioned religious qualities such as perfection, serenity, bliss, beauty, etc. (1-8). The aspect of religion in this poem may indicate to the reader that Smith has very strong beliefs, and that she wants the audience to appreciate God as much as she does. She repeated several definitions of words such as “skies” (3) and “celestial” (4), “tranquil” (7) and “serene” (8), as well as “plague” (9) and “death” (10) in many places throughout the poem. The poet may be using repetition to strengthen her argument and opinion regarding the subject of the poem. The comparisons of good and light to evil and darkness also set the mood and tone of the poem. The first eight lines of the poem put the readers in a happy and upbeat attitude, which turns angry and resentful starting in line 9. This strategy also establishes the poet’s opinion.

This poem is strongly represented by Smith’s use of nature, religion, imagery, allusions, and emotions. Overall, the sonnet depicts a story of a shepherd who is fascinated by the earth and its beauty but is deeply saddened by what mankind has done to it. The shepherd is overwhelmed by nature and the serenity, joy, and peacefulness that it brings him. However, when he observes a battle on the sea, his attitude changes drastically and seems to no longer feel happy and light-hearted. The shepherd no longer describes his surroundings in the positive and uplifting ways that he did before. He seems to have lost faith in fellow man and is disgusted by what they are doing to the point where he blames them for the destruction of everything that is pure and beautiful.

Works Cited

Greenblatt, Stephen, et al. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. Vol. D. New York: Norton, 2006. Print.

Holy Bible, New Living Translation. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1997. Print.

The Oxford English Dictionary. 2010. Ohio State University Libraries, Lima. 16 January 2011.

Web. < <http://www.oed.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/> >.

Smith, Charlotte. "The Sea View". *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. Vol. D. New York: Norton, 2006