

Ageing in Literature: Global South and Global North Perspectives
“Tattered Coat or Magic Stick: Imagining Old Age through Literature from Global South and Global North”

Seamus Heaney, ‘A Kite for Aibhin’

Discussion Points

1. Age is defined almost entirely by memory – of childhood and adulthood.
2. The kite, initially controlled, then flies higher – what is this an analogy of?
3. In old age there is still longing: for the grandchild, perhaps?
4. The final image of the kite breaking free – what is this an analogy of?
5. Is memory linked to wisdom in the poem?

Manohar Shetty, 'The Old Scholar'

Discussion Points

1. The poem revolves around memory objects/objects of memory.
2. The processes of thinking and writing, his career, seem to have revolved around objects, which are now no longer required.
3. The instantaneity of the new generation, in terms of devices and processes.
4. Does the poem imply a redundancy and a refusal to change as a marker of ageing?
5. Is there an ironic twist at the end of the poem – maybe even a paradox – when the speaker suggests that the old scholars were, in fact, prophetic, vatic, predicting what was to come?

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6. How does that challenge the perception of ageing as a fixed condition where the old scholars are stuck in the past?
7. How is education represented? Do you agree with the contrast between the purposes and modes of education in the past and education now – global south and global north?