

A lecture on Walter De La Mare's “The Listeners”

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“The listeners”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_n_cS-oHYs&t=6s



De la Mare: The Poet

A modern British poet (1873-1956) ◆

Interested in songs for children ◆

Compared to Blake ◆

He sees a real world beyond the shadowy
one ◆

Children, poets, and visionaries are able to
see it ◆

Dreams and death are two means to see it ◆

“The Listeners”

Silence could be positive or negative •

The positive as in the holy places or when one ◆

Mediates

The negative indicates the lack of □
communication

The poem shows the negative kind □



Main points

- A traveller came on a horse
- He knocks at a house but receives no answer
- “is there anybody there “,he shouts
- No answer
- He repeats it as **refrain**
- An empty house
- The inhabitants are like ghosts
- They live physically
- They are spiritually dead

More Points

The traveller is on a horse as a knight*

The notion of chivalry is implied *

He could represent both the past and the poet •

The missing moral values of the past •

Modern man is unable to communicate with it •

The social milieu is different •

Man feels a lone in this life •

Imagery

- The moon lit door refers to a little sign of hope
- The phantom-figures descending the stairs
 - indicates their upset status
- It could also refer to their little effort to communicate with the outsiders
 - Fruitless attempt*
- Both the bird and the horse are indifferent to the traveler
- The apathy is extended to the natural world*
- The door is a barrier before communication

morale

- Man should break all barriers which could hinder his human communication with others
- He should not be an island into himself
- To avoid self-centeredness which leads to cruel apathy

The Traveller as a Knight

