Pineapples and Pomegranates Study Guide

Pineapples and Pomegranates by Paul Muldoon

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Introduction

Paul Muldoon's "Pineapples and Pomegranates" was first published in his collection *Moy Sand and Gravel* (2002), which won the Pulitzer Prize in poetry in 2003. Muldoon's poem recalls the speaker's first encounter with a pineapple, as a thirteen-year-old boy growing up in Northern Ireland. The speaker muses on the pineapple's significance as a symbol of generosity or "munificence." The speaker then comments on the difference between "munificence" and "munitions" and expresses a wish for peace somewhere on the planet. The poem concludes with the speaker's assertion that he is talking about pineapples and not pomegranates. Muldoon dedicated the poem to the memory of Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai, who died in 2000.

Although the poem is partly about the difference between two fruits, it also alludes to the ongoing conflicts in Muldoon's native country of Northern Ireland and in Amichai's home of Israel. Like other Muldoon poems, "Pineapples and Pomegranates" addresses the slippery quality of language, as well as the elusive nature of peace. In this poem, Muldoon also employs a deft and unique use of rhyme, word-shifting, and repetition to emphasize his themes. The fourteen-line poem can also be considered a version of the sonnet.

Author Biography

Muldoon was born June 20, 1951 in Portadown, County Armagh, Northern Ireland. The son of Patrick Muldoon, a laborer and market gardener, and Brigid Regan, a schoolteacher, Muldoon grew up Catholic in the mostly Protestant town of Collegelands near a village called the Moy. As a young teenager, Muldoon studied the Gaelic language and Irish literature at St. Patrick's College, where he also began writing poetry. He also studied literature and philosophy at Queen's University in Belfast, where he met and worked with a number of prominent Irish writers who later became known as the Ulster Poets. This group of writers included Michael Longley, Derek Mahon, and Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney, who became Muldoon's tutor at the university and who encouraged Muldoon to write poetry.

In 1971, Muldoon published his first collection of poems, *Knowing My Place*. In 1973, he published *New Weather*, which was praised for its verbal virtuosity and which established Muldoon's reputation as an innovative force in contemporary Irish poetry. Muldoon went on to publish other poetry collections including, *Meeting the British* (1987), *The Annals of Chile* (1994), *Poems 1968—1998* (2001), and *Moy Sand and Gravel* (2002), in which "Pineapples and Pomegranates" appears. He has also edited several anthologies, including *The Faber Book of Beasts* (1997) and *The Faber Book of Contemporary Irish Poetry* (1986). Muldoon's other writings include translated works, children's books, plays, and his lectures on Irish literature.

From 1973 to 1986, Muldoon worked as a radio and television producer in Belfast for the British Broadcasting Company. Since 1987, he has lived in the United States, where he is a professor of humanities and creative writing at Princeton University. Muldoon has received many distinguished awards, including the 1994 T. S. Eliot Prize; a 1996 American Academy of Arts and Letters award in literature; a 2003 Pulitzer Prize in poetry and 2003 Griffin International Prize for excellence in poetry for *Moy Sand and Gravel*; a 2004 American Ireland Fund Literary Award; and the 2004 Shakespeare Prize. Muldoon is married to novelist Jean Hanff Korelitz and has two children.

Plot Summary

Lines 1—2

Muldoon begins "Pineapples and Pomegranates" as a personal anecdote or story by recalling the speaker's first encounter with a pineapple, at the age of thirteen. The poet emphasizes the sense of touch in recalling this experience as he writes, "I would grapple / with my first pineapple." These two lines establish the pattern of rhyming the last words of every two lines, as in the full rhyme of "grapple" with "pineapple." Throughout the poem, Muldoon continues to use rhymed couplets, rhyming every two lines.

Lines 3—4

In the next two lines, the speaker further describes his memory of the pineapple, noting, "its exposed breast / setting itself as another test." The metaphor in line 3 personifies the fruit by likening the pineapple to a female body part. By describing the pineapple in this way, Muldoon emphasizes the fruit's exoticness and its seductive qualities. In these lines, Muldoon uses the exact end-rhyme of "breast" and "test."

Lines 5—6

In lines 5 and 6, the idea of the pineapple as an object of temptation is further reinforced, as the speaker explicitly states that the pineapple is a test "of my willpower." However, the speaker also notes that even then he knew "that it stood for something other than itself alone." This quality of standing for something else seems to add to the pineapple's mystery for the boy. This line also begins the speaker's musings on things other than the pure memory of the pineapple.

Lines 7—8

In these two lines, the speaker claims that he had "absolutely no sense / of its being a worldwide symbol of munificence." Muldoon overtly points out the pineapple's function as a symbol of munificence, or generosity, while contrasting this adult awareness with his former naiveté. By using the word "symbol," Muldoon also emphasizes the speaker's position not only as an adult, but as a literary person and, presumably, a poet.

Notably, in line 8, Muldoon also finally concludes the sentence he began at the start of the poem. The length of this sentence creates a sense of fluidity, reflecting the speaker's free associations from the initial recollection of an adolescent experience. In running the sentence across the first seven lines, Muldoon uses enjambment, rather than stopping sentences where the lines end. This long sentence also makes up the first eight lines of the poem, which form an octave. Traditional sonnets often begin with

an octave that establishes a situation or question, which is then resolved, or answered, in the ensuing six lines, or sestet.

Lines 9—10

In line 9, Muldoon follows the long first sentence with a very short one: "*Munificence*□right?" The brevity of the sentence expresses the interruptive quality of this new thought, which departs from the speaker's previous musings on the pineapple. The em dash and the question "right?" also introduce an element of doubt, as the speaker shifts from thinking about the pineapple to thinking about the word "munificence." Muldoon follows this sentence with, "Not munitions, if you understand / where I'm coming from."

The shift from "munificence" to "munitions" is striking, as the two words sound similar but convey radically different meanings. "Munitions" refers to armaments or weapons, particularly explosives such as bombs or grenades. By slipping from "munificence" to "munitions," Muldoon subtly expresses how easily and quickly words and ideas can change from benevolence to violence. The end of the sentence reinforces this idea of the slippery slope to violence. The casual figure of speech "if you understand / where I'm coming from" also refers to the poet's country of origin, Northern Ireland, a place marked by violent conflict. Muldoon's adolescence during the 1960s was marked by the beginning of increased civil strife in Northern Ireland, known as the Troubles.

Lines 11—13

From the end of line 10 through line 13, the speaker expresses a desire for peace as he continues to muse on the meanings of the words "munificence" and "munitions": "As if the open hand / might, for once, put paid / to the hand grenade / in one corner of the planet." The act of munificence or generosity is expressed by the metaphor of the extended open hand, which the speaker wishes would put to rest the munitions represented by the hand grenade. In addition to using end-rhyme again in lines 11 and 12, Muldoon also repeats the word "hand" in these lines. By repeating the word in different contexts, "open hand" and "hand grenade," the poet again emphasizes how easily a shift from munificence to munitions (and back) can occur.

The phrase "in one corner of the planet" highlights the fact that violent conflict is a worldwide phenomenon. Muldoon dedicated the poem to the memory of Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai. In addition to strife in Northern Ireland, Muldoon is likely referring to Amichai's home of Israel, another site of continual conflict, where permanent peace has remained elusive.

Line 14

Muldoon concludes the poem with one end-stopped sentence: "I'm talking about pineapples□right?□not pomegranates." In this line, the poet again invokes a shift from

one word to another similar-sounding word, "pineapples" to "pomegranates." Although the words sound similar, the symbolic meanings of the two fruits contrast sharply. The poet has already stated that pineapples are a symbol of generosity. Pomegranates, however, are a symbol of temptation that literally lead to hell. In Greek myth, Persephone, the daughter of Demeter (the goddess of agriculture), is consigned to live six months of every year in the underworld because she ate six pomegranate seeds, given to her by Hades, king of the underworld. By comparing pineapples and pomegranates, Muldoon again shows how quickly things can shift from beneficence to destruction.

Muldoon's second use of the question "right?" interrupts the final line and conveys the speaker's sense of doubt about what he is saying. Rather than confidently offering the hope that peace is achievable, the poet-speaker doubts whether or not he even knows about what he is talking, and the poem concludes on an uncertain note.

The poem began as a personal recollection of an innocent and mostly enjoyable adolescent memory. However, rather than offering a definitive answer to the octave, the poem's last six lines, or sestet, contrast with the first eight lines by focusing on adult doubts and preoccupations with world violence. The short sentences, rhymes, repetitions, and word shifts in the last six lines bolster the sense that memory and reality are hard to pin down.

Themes

Memory and Reminiscence

The poem begins with the poet-speaker's recollection of his first encounter with a pineapple, as a young adolescent of thirteen. He recalls the excitement he felt, and the fruit's seductive and exotic qualities. The speaker also remembers realizing that part of the fruit's seductive appeal lay in its mystery and in its symbolic importance. He notes too, however, that as a young person he did not know that the fruit was a "worldwide symbol of munificence." This largely sweet memory is soon overlaid with references to the memory of civil violence, which marked the poet's later adolescence in Northern Ireland. Muldoon makes the transition from positive memory to disturbing memory by invoking a series of similar sounding words, starting with "munificence" and "munitions."

Mutability/Impermanence

Throughout the last six lines of the poem, words mutate or change, as the speaker free associates from one idea to another. This happens first with the shift from "munificence" to "munitions" in line 9. Although the words sound similar and share the first four letters, they bear very different meanings, as "munificence" refers to generosity and "munitions" refer to explosives. By juxtaposing these words, Muldoon emphasizes the mutability of words, and the idea that words, ideas, and perhaps even things can shift with startling ease. This sense of mutability is reinforced by the final word shift from "pineapples" to "pomegranates" in line 14. In this final pairing, the shift is again from something positive (the munficent pineapple) to something more menacing, as pomegranates symbolize temptation that leads to time in the underworld.

Struggle and Conflict

The poem alludes to the violent conflict that took place during the Troubles in Northern Ireland, which intensified during the 1960s and 1970s. Muldoon alludes to the conflict when he uses the word "munitions" while reminiscing about his youth. He refers to the Troubles again when he adds, "if you understand / where I'm coming from," since he literally comes from Northern Ireland. Muldoon follows this sentence with another that expresses a wish for peace, an end to munitions such as "the hand grenade / in one corner of the planet." The last part of this sentence may also allude to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the homeland of Yehuda Amichai, to whose memory Muldoon dedicates the poem. Throughout the late twentieth century, both Northern Ireland and Israel were the sites of ongoing violent conflict and struggle.

Doubt and Uncertainty

Muldoon conveys a sense of general uncertainty by repeating the question "right?" in lines 9 and 14. This questioning phrase undercuts the speaker's confidence. The sense of doubt is reinforced by the mutability or shifting of words throughout the poem. Nothing in the poem seems entirely stable or fixed, and this instability generates a sense of anxiety. Rather than expressing the confident hope that peace is possible, the speaker concludes the poem by doubting that the object about which he thought he was musing□the pineapple□is not in fact something entirely different.

Style

Sonnet

Muldoon's poem is a variation on the sonnet form. The English or Shakespearean sonnet consists of fourteen lines, which follow a pattern or rhyme scheme of *abab cdcd efef gg*. (The rhyme scheme refers to the rhyming of the last words of each line.) "Pineapples and Pomegranates" departs from the traditional sonnet form by using rhymed couplets or two-line pairs throughout, making its general rhyme scheme *aa bb cc dd ee ff gg*. The first or "a" rhyme is "grapple / pineapple." The second or "b" rhyme is "breast / test," and the rhymed couplets continue in this manner.

"Pineapples and Pomegranates" also differs from traditional sonnets in its meter. Strict or traditional sonnets use iambic pentameter, which means that each line consists of ten syllables that form iambs, or unstressed-stressed syllable pairs. In this poem, the number of syllables varies from line to line, so that some lines, such as line 3, have only four syllables, while others, such as line 14, have fourteen syllables. The varying line lengths help create a sense of fluidity and movement within the structure of "Pineapples and Pomegranates."

Rhyme and Word Shifts

Muldoon is known for his unusual use of rhyme and pairings of similar sounding but very different words. In this poem, similar sounding words mutate so that "munificence" becomes "munitions," "pineapples" slides into "pomegranates," and the last two syllables of "pomegranates" also echo "grenade" from an earlier line. This highlighting of the slippery quality of words reinforces the ideas of mutability or how things change, particularly from positive associations in "pineapple" and "munificence" to violent or ominous ones in "pomegranates" and "munitions."

As mentioned, Muldoon uses rhymed two-line pairs, or couplets, throughout "Pineapples and Pomegranates." These rhymes are mostly full rhymes, which are easy to hear, such as "bones / alone" or "paid / grenade." By using these exact rhymes in most of the poem, Muldoon sets up a dependable structure, which creates a sense of security. However, as also mentioned, the word "pomegranates," while rhyming with "planet" as expected, also echoes the sounds of "grenade" in line 12. This unexpected Muldoonian fuzzy-rhyme disrupts the formal pattern and thus creates a sense of instability, which reinforces the theme of doubt in the poem.

Repetition

Muldoon also makes the poem cohere by repeating certain words, such as "munificence" in lines 8 and 9, "hand" in lines 10 and 12, and "right?" in lines 9 and 14.

Although these repetitions create a tone of doubt, they also hold together disparate ideas, creating a sense of wholeness in the face of uncertainty.

Historical Context

Although the poem is ostensibly about two different fruits, Muldoon alludes to the political context of his youth in lines 9 and 10, when he writes, "Not munitions, if you understand / where I'm coming from." During the era in which the poem is set, tensions escalated between the pro-British Protestant majority and the large Catholic minority in Northern Ireland, resulting in increased violence from the late 1960s through the 1990s, during a time period known as the Troubles. The conflict was both religious and political, as Catholics tended to favor union with the Republic of Ireland, while Protestant Loyalists wished to remain united with Great Britain.

In 1968 and 1969, civil rights marches to protest the treatment of Catholics were brutally broken up by Protestant Loyalist (pro-British) forces. In 1972, violence increased further after "Bloody Sunday," when British paratroopers killed thirteen people in Derry, Northern Ireland. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or Catholic forces bombed and killed several British elected officials. The Northern Ireland Muldoon refers to was a site of ongoing political violence, with bombings, riots, and civil warfare continuing for decades as peace agreements between the warring factions failed to take hold. Throughout the Troubles, both innocents and combatants on both sides were killed in the violence. By the time Muldoon wrote "Pineapples and Pomegranates," however, much of the violence had settled down as cease-fires between IRA and Loyalist forces began to succeed in the 1990s.

Given that the poem is dedicated to the memory of Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai, the poem probably also alludes to ongoing violence and the failure of peace treaties in the Middle East. As with the Troubles in Northern Ireland, Israel has been the site of terrible political violence throughout the late twentieth century.

Critical Overview

The collection in which "Pineapples and Pomegranates" appears, *Moy Sand and Gravel* (2002), has received considerable critical acclaim as one of Muldoon's finest books of poetry. The book won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize in poetry, as well as the 2003 Griffin International Prize for excellence in poetry.

Critics have praised Muldoon's remarkably adept use of rhyme and other verbal techniques, his wit, and his unique engagement with personal and historical themes. A critic reviewing *Moy Sand and Gravel* for *Publisher's Weekly* notes, "This first full volume since Muldoon's monumental *Poems 1968—1998* reveals one of the English-speaking world's most acclaimed poets still at the top of his slippery, virtuosic game."

Although Muldoon has sometimes been criticized for merely being clever, most critics have delighted in his inventive use of form and word play to address serious topics, such as the Troubles in Northern Ireland, in fresh and unsentimental ways. In her *Moy Sand and Gravel* review in *Library Journal*, Rochelle Ratner writes, "*Munificence* is juxtaposed with *munitions* [in "Pineapples and Pomegranates"], while *aunts* is rhymed with *taunts* and *fuss* with *orthodox* [in other poems in the collection], almost daring readers to roll and twist the words in their mouths."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Hong earned her master of fine arts in creative writing at the University of Texas Michener Center for Writers and is a writer-in-residence at Richard Hugo House. In the following essay, Hong discusses Muldoon's use of word-shifting, rhyme, and repetition to generate complex associations that delve beneath the surface of apparent meaning.

Like many Muldoon poems, "Pineapples and Pomegranates" is not quite what it first appears to be. The title indicates that the poem's subject is fruit, and the poem begins as a personal anecdote with the speaker recalling his first experience with the pineapple. In the long opening sentence, the speaker muses on the fruit's exotic appeal, its seductiveness to his thirteen-year-old, relatively naive self. However, Muldoon's associations soon lead the reader away from the familiar world of objects to more complex and disturbing issues below the surface of daily life. Muldoon makes this transition from one mode to another seamlessly, by employing his distinctive use of rhyme, word-shifting, and repetition.

A master of poetic technique known for his verbal virtuosity and odd, ingenious rhymes, Muldoon also frequently uses association to juxtapose divergent ideas. In this poem, the speaker begins free-associating in lines 6—8, as he recalls that even as a young adolescent, he knew the pineapple "stood for something other than itself alone / while having absolutely no sense / of its being a worldwide symbol of munificence." These lines contrast the innocence of a younger boy with the informed, literary consciousness of the adult, poet-speaker. Although the tone is casual and confiding, the contrast hints at more ominous things to come.

In the next line, the shift to more complex and disturbing concerns begins. As the speaker continues to free-associate from his initial memory of the pineapple, he begins to muse on the words that arise, stating "*Munificence*□right? Not munitions, if you understand / where I'm coming from." The association seems believable, as the two words "munificence" and "munitions" sound similar. However, these words convey very different meanings, as "munificence" refers to generosity and "munitions" are explosive armaments. This typically Muldoonian word-shifting juxtaposes two divergent ideas, which are held together by sound. By invoking this word-shift, Muldoon ushers in the theme of mutability, of things quickly and almost imperceptibly morphing from one thing into another.

These types of shifts continue throughout the last part of the poem, and in "Pineapples and Pomegranates," this movement tends to go from good intentions to something more sinister. Sometimes the word-shift involves the repetition of a word, as in lines 10—12, when Muldoon writes, "As if the open hand / might, for once, put paid / to the hand grenade." The word "hand" is repeated but in entirely different contexts, as the generous, peace-extending "open hand" becomes the explosive munitions "hand grenade" two lines later. In these lines, the speaker expresses a desire for peace, but that wish is undermined by the word-shifting. As with the fluid transition from "munificence" to "munitions," the verbal closeness of the two phrases "open hand" and

"hand grenade" indicates how easily one thing can become another and vice versa. Muldoon's slippery use of language emphasizes how porous the borders can be between two opposing modes.

A final instance of word-shifting occurs in the poem's last line, as the speaker concludes, "I'm talking about pineapples□right?□not pomegranates." After all the free-associating in the poem's first thirteen lines, the speaker returns to the idea of the fruit that sparked the chain of associations in the first place. He immediately interrupts himself by comparing the subject to another fruit, one that sounds somewhat similar, as both multisyllabic words begin with the "p" sound. Once again, the two similar-sounding words convey very different ideas, and the shift is from positive to ominous. The expressed symbolism of the pineapple is generosity, whereas the pomegranate recalls a descent into hell.

In Greek legend, Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, eats six pomegranate seeds and thereafter must live in the underworld for six months of every year. In Muldoon's poem, both the pineapple and the pomegranate are, like the apple in the Garden of Eden, symbols of temptation. The pineapple is associated with adolescent sensual longing, as in the first five lines, in which the speaker compares the first pineapple to a breast. This relatively innocent desire contrasts sharply with the temptation associated with the pomegranate, which leads to life in the underworld. Or does it?

The pineapple's function as a "worldwide symbol of munificence" may not be as nice as it first seems to be. "Munificence" is a very liberal giving or bestowing. Gifts can be double-edged, and while the pineapple is symbol of generosity, it is also a symbol of empire and colonialism. Christopher Columbus first encountered the pineapple when he "discovered" the West Indies, bringing European domination to the New World. Like Muldoon, Columbus wrote about the fruit, helping to spread its proliferation throughout the planet on plantations that often exploited laborers. In Muldoon's poem, the juxtaposition of pineapples with the ominous pomegranate incites the reader to reconsider the connotations of the first fruit. Similarly, the slip from "munificence" to "munitions" leads the reader to think about the less benevolent aspects of gift-giving associated with the first word.

Words and their meanings become more complex in the world of Muldoon's poem, because the poet's word-shifts encourage the reader to question first-glance meanings. In this poem as in others by Muldoon, definitive, black-and-white definitions disintegrate in the face of word-play, creating a sense of uncertainty. Muldoon's poem is not the usual personal anecdote ending in a reassuring realization about the self. As Clair Wills notes in her introduction to her book-length study *Reading Paul Muldoon*, "Rather than a subjective journey of discovery, or a drama of consciousness, the poems offer an arena in which layers of meaning, image, story jostle one another, and slip into one another, mutating and transforming in the process." With all the shifting of words and meanings, the reader may feel that there is no firm ground on which to stand in Muldoon's poem.

Muldoon compounds the sense of uncertainty by using another repetition. He has the speaker use the questioning phrase "right?" twice, once in line 9 and again in the middle of the final line. This phrase serves to undermine the speaker's confidence. In line 9, the phrase immediately precedes the first disturbing word-shift to "munitions." In line 14, the phrase enables the shift from pineapples to pomegranates. Rather than ending the poem on a declarative hope or wish for peace, Muldoon has his speaker question whether or not he even knows what he is talking about. This sense of persistent doubt seems to stem from the musings on munitions, grenades, and pomegranates, which harken back to the violence of the Troubles in Northern Ireland during Muldoon's teen years and adulthood. The whimsical word-play leads to serious and distressing memories, which lay beneath the surface of the innocuous-seeming recollection of the pineapple.

In spite of the feelings of doubt and anxiety inspired by the instability of both words and peace in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, to which Muldoon alludes, the poet does not leave the reader hanging in the poem. In the face of this instability, Muldoon meticulously creates structure. This poem is a version of the sonnet, with fourteen lines and an almost entirely regular rhyme scheme of two-line rhymed couplets. In addition to this formal structure, Muldoon's repetitions of words and sounds serve to create a cohesive pattern that holds divergent meanings together. The full end-rhymes throughout the poem, such as "bones / alone" and "understand / hand," generate a sense of satisfying expectation. In addition, the more inventive echoings of sound in instances such as "pomegranates / grenade" add to the sense of structure and cohesion. In a Muldoonian twist, the poem's last word also mimics the meaning of "grenade" when read as the pun "palm-grenade." Although the poem ends with this would-be explosive, the feeling imparted is merely unsettling□not devastating. Using sound and word-play, Muldoon shifts the emphasis back to a sense of security by creating an intricate edifice to house both expansive and destructive impulses in a place where wry musing, and not the weapon, wins the day.

Source: Anna Maria Hong, Critical Essay on "Pineapples and Pomegranates," in *Poetry for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Topics for Further Study

Research the history of the conflict, or Troubles, in Northern Ireland from the 1960s through the present day. Create a time line of events. Then give an oral report discussing the nature of the conflict, the parties or groups involved, and what conditions have nurtured peace between opposing factions.

After coming upon pineapples in the West Indies, Christopher Columbus wrote about the fruit, which was consumed as food and used in wine-making. Imagine that you are Columbus encountering the pineapple for the first time, and write a short essay or a poem that describes the fruit's properties and your reactions to tasting a pineapple for the first time.

Research the history of pineapple cultivation in Hawaii and its impact on the region. Write and perform a play that shares this history, perhaps focusing on plantation laborers or the activities of the Dole Company.

Research how pineapples are grown on modern plantations using mulch paper and other methods. Prepare and deliver a presentation that explains how pineapples are cultivated. Use charts, photographs, and other graphics to aid you in your presentation.

According to Greek legend, Persephone, the daughter of the goddess of agriculture, was forced to spend half of every year in the underworld because she had eaten six pomegranate seeds. Research the legend of Persephone and then write your own version of the tale as a play, a song, or a poem. As you draft your piece, feel free to change details such as how many seeds Persephone ate, her motives, or the outcome of her action. Then give a reading of your version of the legend.

What Do I Read Next?

Muldoon's collection *Poems 1968—1998* (2001) contains his eight previous volumes of poetry.

Muldoon edited *The Faber Book of Contemporary Irish Poetry* (1986), which features a number of other prominent Irish poets, including Patrick Kavanagh, Louis MacNeice, Michael Longley, and Seamus Heaney.

To Ireland, I (2000) includes Muldoon's lectures on Irish literature.

Selected Poems 1966—1987 (1990) comprises poems by Muldoon's early mentor, the Nobel laureate and fellow Northern Irish poet Seamus Heaney.

The anthology *Modern Irish Drama* (1991) features plays by several Irish writers, including W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, J. M. Synge, and Samuel Beckett. The collection also includes essays and criticism about Irish drama.

William Trevor's *The Collected Stories* (1993) contains stories about life in contemporary rural Ireland from several of the acclaimed writer's collections.

The Longest War: Northern Ireland's Troubled History (2002), by Marc Mulholland, explores the issues and debates about the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Translated from Hebrew into English by Bloch and Chana Kronfeld, *Open Closed Open: Poems* (2000) is Yehuda Amichai's final collection and magnum opus.

American poet Heather McHugh's collection *Hinge & Sign: Poems, 1968—1993* (1994) features poems lauded for their verbal ingenuity. Muldoon selected this collection as one of his favorites.

Mistaken Identities: Poetry and Northern Ireland (1997), by Peter McDonald, tackles the question of Northern Irish poetry and politics through close studies of a number of important writers, including Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin, Louis MacNeice, Derek Mahon, Paul Muldoon, and others.

Further Study

Heaney, Seamus, *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968—1978*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980.

In this collection of essays, Heaney writes about his poetics and those of other poets, including William Wordsworth and W. B. Yeats. His essay "The Mixed Marriage: Paul Muldoon" focuses on Muldoon's second collection *Mules*.

Holland, Jack, *Hope against History: The Course of Conflict in Northern Ireland*, Henry Holt, 1999.

A journalist of Catholic and Protestant Northern Irish descent, Holland describes the thirty-year conflict in Northern Ireland known as the Troubles, tracing the history from 1969 through 1999.

Kendall, Tim, *Paul Muldoon*, Seren Books, 1996.

Kendall's study interprets Muldoon's poetry through Muldoon's *The Annals of Chile*, providing biographical information as well as information about Irish history and mythology.

Kendall, Tim, and Peter McDonald, eds., *Paul Muldoon: Critical Essays*, Liverpool University Press, 2004.

Scholars from Ireland, England, and the United States discuss Muldoon's work. Several of the essays began as papers at a 1998 conference on the poet, held in Bristol, England.

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Wills, Clair, "Introduction," in *Reading Paul Muldoon*, Bloodaxe Books, 1998, pp. 9—23.