

SAMPLE
SECTION

The Complete Poetry Resource

Third Edition

Prescribed Poems and Learning Materials

BE FULLY PREPARED FOR THE FINAL EXAM

2014/2015
Syllabus

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

About The English Experience.....	6
Our approach	6
Using this resource	7

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

Reading and understanding poetry.....	8
Answering contextual poetry questions	13

THE RENAISSANCE

Introduction to the Renaissance Period.....	15
William Shakespeare: “When I do count the clock that tells the time”	18
Biography	18
Poem.....	19
Analysis	20
Questions	21
John Milton: “When I consider how my light is spent”	26
Biography	26
Poem.....	27
Analysis	27
Questions	29

THE ROMANTICS

Introduction to the Romantic Era.....	34
William Blake: “The Tyger”	36
Biography	36
Poem.....	37
Analysis	38
Questions	40
Percy Bysshe Shelley: “Ozymandias of Egypt”	46
Biography	46
Poem.....	47
Analysis	48
Questions	50
John Keats: “Ode to Autumn”	56
Biography	56
Poem.....	57
Analysis	58
Questions	60

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

THE VICTORIANS

Introduction to the Victorian Era	66
Matthew Arnold: "Dover Beach"	69
Biography	69
Poem.....	70
Analysis	71
Questions	73
Christina Rossetti: "My Secret"	79
Biography	79
Poem.....	80
Analysis	81
Questions	84
Gerard Manley Hopkins: "Binsey Poplars"	90
Biography	90
Poem.....	91
Analysis	92
Questions	93

MODERNISM

Introduction to the Modernist Movement	100
William Butler Yeats: "The Song of Wandering Aengus"	102
Biography	102
Poem.....	103
Analysis	104
Questions	106
Ezra Pound: "These fought in any case"	111
Biography	111
Poem.....	113
Analysis	114
Questions	118
T.S. Eliot: "La Figlia Che Piange"	124
Biography	124
Poem.....	125
Analysis	125
Questions	128

POSTMODERNISM

Introduction to Postmodernism	134
Phoebe Hesketh: "A Poem is a Painting"	136
Biography	136
Poem.....	137
Analysis	137

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

Questions	140
Dylan Thomas: “Poem in October”	146
Biography	146
Poem.....	147
Analysis	149
Questions	152
Denise Levertov: “To the Snake”	158
Biography	158
Poem.....	159
Analysis	159
Questions	162
SOUTH AFRICAN	
Introduction to the South African section	167
Thomas Pringle: “The Cape of Storms”.....	169
Biography	169
Poem.....	170
Analysis	170
Questions	173
Christopher van Wyk: “I have my father’s voice”	178
Biography	178
Poem.....	179
Analysis	180
Questions	182
Stephen Gray: “The Herb Garden”	187
Biography	187
Poem.....	188
Analysis	188
Questions	191
UNSEEN POETRY	
Getting to grips with unfamiliar poetry: some guidelines	196
Maya Angelou: “Phenomenal Woman”	198
Philip Larkin: “This Be the Verse”	202
Taylor Swift: “Begin Again”	205
Malika Lueen Ndlovu: “Wrapped Up”	208
E.E. Cummings: “dying is fine)but Death”	212
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	216

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

FOREWORD

ABOUT THE ENGLISH EXPERIENCE

The English Experience is an independent South African publishing house that specialises in developing high-quality IEB English educational resources for educators and learners. The team of passionate, talented experts behind The English Experience works tirelessly to ensure that every resource encourages insight, growth and debate – enriching and challenging both educators and learners – without losing sight of the important goal of examination readiness and success.

Focused on bringing the subject to life, every resource The English Experience publishes incorporates a range of features – including content, contextual and essay questions, tear-out rubrics and stimulating enrichment materials – designed to encourage a critical appreciation of the subject and to inspire the higher order thinking for which examiners are always looking.

The world-class English Experience team includes highly experienced educators, some with over 20 years of classroom experience, passionate literary experts in various fields, such as historical fiction, poetry and Shakespeare, fanatical historians and researchers, creative writers, skilled editors, picky proofreaders and obsessive fact checkers – together with spirited university lecturers and enthusiastic young minds who ensure our approach remains unique and fresh.

While exam readiness and success is a non-negotiable, our aspiration is to inspire a genuine interest in, and love of, English literature.



Visit www.englishexperience.co.za to learn more about The English Experience and the range of educational resources the company publishes. You can scan this QR code to launch the site on your phone automatically. Please note, you will need to have the free 'Tag reader' app installed, which you can download from <http://gettag.mobi>

OUR APPROACH

Perhaps the toughest challenge in teaching poetry to modern learners is convincing them that the effort often required to grasp the meaning of a poem is worth it. Decoding the language and deciphering the message of a poem can be taxing for learners so it's perhaps not surprising that many of them see poems as works through which they have to slog in order to pass an examination.

This resource has been written with this reality in mind and particular attention has been paid to providing the kind of context and insight necessary to help them engage fully with each poem and to discover for themselves why it has captivated others.

We believe that studying poetry rewards us with a broader, deeper understanding of ourselves and of the world around us. That is why this resource does more than provide learners with a detailed and, hopefully, eye-opening analysis of each poem. It also encourages them to engage with each work on a personal level and to uncover their own responses through the extensive contextual and intertextual questions.

Throughout this resource, learners are challenged to agree or disagree with the analysis provided. By formulating and expressing their own responses to the opinions, ideas and themes explored in the pages of this resource, learners are encouraged to reflect and grow as individuals as well as students.

In the end, we have approached the poetry syllabus the same way we approach every text: with two, interrelated goals in mind. The first, non-negotiable objective is to ensure examination readiness and success. The second, is to inspire a genuine interest in, and appreciation of, the works being studied.

USING THIS RESOURCE

This comprehensive resource ensures that educators are fully equipped to present the prescribed poems in context and in an interesting way, as well as ensuring that learners have everything they need to explore the syllabus with confidence. It includes: the full text of each of the poems prescribed in the IEB Matric syllabus; an introduction to the era in which each poem was written; a biography of every poet; an in-depth analysis of each poem and a set of stimulating contextual and intertextual questions that challenge learners to think critically about, and to formulate their own responses to, each work.

POETRY IN CONTEXT

The poems are arranged into sections that illustrate the progression of English poetry through the five centuries covered by the syllabus, from the Renaissance of the 1350s to the Postmodernist movement of the 1950s and contemporary South African verse. The Renaissance section, for example, includes the poetry of William Shakespeare and John Milton.

Each section begins with an **introduction** to the period that draws attention to the major events and influences of the time, and some of the themes that are highlighted in the analyses that follow. After this introduction, a concise **biography** of each poet is presented, followed by his or her **poem**, an **analysis** of the poem and then a set of contextual and intertextual **questions**.

The purpose of this structure is to help learners appreciate how English literature has developed over the last 500 years and to provide them with a social, political and personal context that, it is hoped, will help them to understand better and to value the work of each poet. With this in mind, we recommend working through this resource in chronological order.

UNSEEN SECTION

The popular Unseen poetry section, which prepares learners for tackling poetry they have not come across before (and, thus, the third poem they will be presented with in Question 3, Paper I of the examination), has been completely updated and revised and also features expanded guidelines on how to prepare for the contextual poetry section of the final examination.

We hope you enjoy using this resource as much as we enjoyed putting it together. If you have any comments, queries or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

KEY TO USING THE BOXES IN THIS RESOURCE:



Definition or Glossary

Provides the meanings of words and terms used in the text



Information

Provides additional details or facts about a topic



Alert

Something to which you need to pay attention or to be aware



Quirky Fact

Fun, interesting, extraneous information



Checklist

A list of items or activities required to complete a task satisfactorily

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

READING AND UNDERSTANDING POETRY

Reading and analysing poetry effectively is just as much about attitude as it is about mastering the necessary techniques. You will benefit from developing useful methods and honing your skills, but, ultimately, understanding poetry is about being open to new ideas and new ways of seeing the world around you.

Many readers complain that they develop a kind of 'block' when it comes to poetry, which prevents them from understanding the 'hidden message' in the poem; however, poets aren't trying to trick or confuse readers. Their message isn't actually 'hidden', but expressed in a way that is unique, complex and often very striking.

Poets don't wish to frustrate you, but they *are* trying to challenge or provoke you: not to work out an obscure meaning hidden behind fancy poetic techniques, but to think about their subject in a new, enlightening way. If a poem makes you think about an issue or look at something in a different light, then the poet has succeeded (and so have you!).



Remember that interpreting a poem is not just working out what the poet means, but also **what the poem means to you**. This is more than just the fun, potentially enlightening part of the process. Developing and substantiating your own views is exactly the kind of independent, individual thinking the IEB encourages. It will also serve you well in the examination because the examiners will always want to reward a different, fresh interpretation.

HOW TO ANALYSE A POEM

Before tackling a set of contextual questions about a poem, take the time to read through the verse carefully and to conduct a 'mini-analysis' (using the guidelines that follow). That way, when you tackle the questions, you will already have all the answers at your fingertips.

Even if you're unable to use all of your observations in your answers, conducting a mini-analysis will enrich your understanding of the poem as a whole and ensure that your answers are as comprehensive and well-informed as possible.

STEP 1: READ THE POEM

It's rare to understand a poem fully the first time you read it; most poems take several readings to be truly appreciated. Don't try to analyse the poem as soon as you start reading it. If you decide what the poem is about or what message it is trying to convey too early on, you will run the risk of missing an important point later and may try to 'force' a particular meaning on the poem. Be curious, be open-minded, ask questions and *enjoy* the poem before you start trying to deconstruct and analyse it.

Simply reading the poem through several times without over-thinking it will help you to process the poet's meaning and technique(s). If you can, read the poem aloud. This will not only help you to detect patterns of rhyme and rhythm, it will often make the meaning of the poem clearer.

Be sure that you are reading the poem correctly by paying special attention to the use of punctuation or lack thereof. The 'sentences' or 'pauses' within the poem, for instance, will help you to decipher its meaning. Make sure that you differentiate between **enjambéd** and **end-stopped** lines.

Once you've read through the poem a few times, pick up a pencil and read through it again, this time, making notes or marks on the poem.

React to the poem — write in the margins, circle words or phrases that stick out or confuse you, underline repeated words or striking images, and draw lines to indicate related ideas or metaphors.

STEP 2: WHAT'S THE STORY?

Once you've read the poem through several times (not just once, but twice or even three times), you are ready to start deciphering its meaning. Before anything else, ask yourself: What is the poem about? What message is the speaker trying to convey?

If the poem is particularly long, it may help you to re-read each stanza and jot down a few words or phrases that summarise that stanza. Once you have done this, work out one or two sentences that accurately sum up the **subject** and **theme** of the poem.

When determining the subject and theme of a poem, it is important to know something about its **context**. Obviously, knowing a few facts about the poet — such as when he or she lived — will help with your understanding and appreciation of the poem.

If you were to publish a poem now, your poem would be better understood by future generations if they knew a little about you as a person: for example, when and where you lived, your beliefs, what the social climate was, what society expected or frowned upon and what your personal philosophies included.

The same is true for any poem you encounter and, therefore, it's important that you familiarise yourself with the different literary periods and the common concerns or styles of these eras, as well as any major historical events that may have influenced the poets of a particular era.

Many people believe that any work of art — poetry included — should be seen as an independent entity, but you should be aware that no artist exists in a vacuum, free from outside influences. This is often particularly true of poets, who regularly feel compelled to offer commentary on their society, and to engage with the social or political concerns of the day.

Even if a poem has a 'universal' or timeless theme, it still helps to know what may have compelled the poet to put pen to paper. The date of birth of the poet will usually give you a good indication of the period or movement to which he or she



An **enjambéd** line occurs when a sentence or phrase (a unit of syntactic meaning) runs on from one line of verse to the next, requiring you to read the two (or more) lines together to grasp their meaning fully.

An **end-stopped** line occurs when the sentence or phrase is completed at the end of the line of verse and is usually indicated by a full stop.

Consider the following extract taken from the opening lines of Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali's poem "An Abandoned Bundle":

*The morning mist
and chimney smoke
of White City Jabavu
flowed thick yellow
as pus oozing
from a gigantic sore.*

These lines don't make much sense if you stop or pause at the end of the first, second, third, fourth or fifth line. Read together, on the other hand, the six lines make up one thought. Notice the full stop at the end of the sixth line. This indicates that we should read these lines as one thought or unit of meaning.



TONE VOCABULARY

Words that describe tone can include: admiring, ambivalent, amused, anxious, angry, apologetic, bitter, celebratory, condescending, contemplative, critical, cynical, defensive, defiant, desperate, depressed, determined, disdainful, disgusted, disheartened, dramatic, earnest, enthusiastic, excited, fearful, formal, frank, friendly, frustrated, gloomy, happy, honest, hopeful, humorous, indifferent, indignant, informal, intimate, ironic, irreverent, judgmental, lighthearted, lofty, malevolent, malicious, melancholy, mischievous, mocking, negative, nostalgic, objective, optimistic, patient, patronising, pensive, perplexed, persuasive, pessimistic, reflective, regretful, remorseful, reverent, sarcastic, satirical, scathing, self-pitying, sensationalistic, sentimental, serious, sincere, sceptical, solemn, stiff, straightforward, sympathetic, thankful, threatening, tragic, urgent, vindictive, witty.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

belonged, particularly if you aren't given any additional information. Remember, however, that you should **avoid making sweeping statements or generalisations** about a particular time period or literary movement.

You should also determine who is speaking in the poem. Remember that the **speaker** is not necessarily the poet and the views expressed by the speaker are not necessarily an indication of the poet's own views. A 'persona' might have been adopted in order to tell a particular story or present a certain viewpoint. Just as authors create characters in novels, poets often create characters through which to tell the story of their poems.

STEP 3: CLOSE READING

Conducting a close reading of a poem is a skill that you can learn and apply to any verse. Once you have mastered the technique of recognising particular poetic devices and the effects created by them, you will be able to adapt your approach to suit the text you have been asked to analyse.

First, consider **what caught your attention** (the phrases or words you underlined or circled when first reading the poem, perhaps). Why did these particular features strike you as effective or interesting? Is the poet using a particular poetic device or Figure of Speech? Why is the poet trying to draw your attention to this particular aspect of the poem?

Once you have dealt with the aspects of the poem that proved most striking to you, return to the beginning of the poem and work carefully through each line, taking note of the more subtle **poetic devices** and **Figures of Speech** employed by the poet. Again, ask yourself each time: *why has the poet done this?*

Remember to consider the **connotations** of the words chosen by the poet, particularly any words that seem unusual or particularly arresting. Every word in a poem is carefully chosen by the poet, and should be considered in context in order to appreciate its impact or effect on your understanding of the poem as a whole. The word 'red', for example, could simply be a colour or it could be representative of anger, passion, hatred or danger.

Punctuation or **typography** may give you further clues about the particular emphasis being given to a word by the poet. A word on its own line, for example, is always significant and the poet is drawing attention to it. Again, always ask: *why has the poet made these particular decisions?*



CLOSE READING CHECKLIST

The basics:

Make sure that you are clear on the following:

- the subject (what the poem is about)
- the context (poet's background and/or literary period)
- the speaker
- the tone/attitude
- the theme or message

Style and technique:

Determine whether the poet has employed any of the following techniques:

- a particular form or structure (such as a sonnet or ode)
- unusual diction (word choice) or punctuation
- striking or unusual typography (layout of the poem)
- a specific rhyme scheme
- a regulated rhythm or metre
- repetition or other forms of emphasis
- metaphors or similes
- Figures of Speech

REMEMBER: Don't just point out the particular styles or techniques used by the poet, explain what effect they have and how these features enhance or impact on the meaning of the poem as a whole.

Be aware of the speaker's **tone**, as this will influence the way in which a poem should be read. Remember that 'tone' and 'attitude' are synonymous when analysing poetry and will, usually, be indicated by the use of particular **diction** (word choice), punctuation or typography. Try to learn and memorise as many words describing tone as possible so that you have a 'tone vocabulary' at your fingertips, allowing your answers to be more specific.

An important thing to remember is that every choice a poet makes is deliberately implemented to emphasise or **enhance the meaning** of the poem. Whenever you recognise a specific feature of a poem, your main concern should be determining **why** the poet has chosen to express him- or herself in that way; for example, consider some of the possible effects of the following popular **poetic techniques**:

Alliteration:

- to echo the sound of something (e.g. 'whispering winds' mimics the sound of a whistling wind)
- to draw attention to particular words
- to create mood or atmosphere

Assonance:

- to create mood
- to link words and ideas by 'echoing' the sounds of these words

Simile:


- to emphasise certain characteristics
- the similarities between the two things compared are really striking

Metaphor:

- to clarify an idea with an unusual comparison
- certain associations or connotations may be evoked that emphasise or echo the poet's meaning or theme

FINALLY

Understanding poetry has everything to do with being open to new ideas and taking your time when assessing each work. Taking into account pronouncements made by teachers, critics and fellow students is commendable, but every examiner will reward handsomely students who show that they have read the poem carefully and are not afraid to make unique observations in considered, well-constructed answers that reveal a clear understanding and are supported by evidence from the text.



THREE FINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- No statement will be given credit without evidence from the text
- There are no short cuts: revise your work and take the time to interpret the questions properly
- Poetry is meant to be enjoyed; approach a poem with the right attitude and the rest is likely to happen more easily than expected

- CONTENTS
- FOREWORD
- INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
- THE RENAISSANCE
- THE ROMANTICS
- THE VICTORIANS
- MODERNISM
- POST-MODERNISM
- SOUTH AFRICAN
- UNSEEN POETRY
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE VICTORIANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE VICTORIAN ERA



Portrait of Queen Victoria, the monarch after whom the era is named. (Schloß Friedenstein, Gotha, Germany)

Like the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, the Victorian era is named after its reigning monarch. Victoria became the queen of Great Britain in 1837 and reigned until her death in 1901. Victoria's reign is often associated with strict social conventions, sexual restraint and prudishness. The legs of tables had to be completely covered, for example, to prevent any indecent association with the same part of the human anatomy. The literature of the period was governed by similarly strict conventions. In contrast to the Romantics, who emphasised the imagination and fantasy, Victorian writers and audiences favoured realism.

It was a period characterised by peace, economic prosperity, positive political reforms and a strong sense of British nationalism. Education was made more widely available (particularly for girls) and rapid progress was made in science, medicine, commerce and manufacturing. Britain also expanded its territorial acquisitions overseas considerably. Despite all these positive developments, however, the Victorian era was also fraught with severe social problems.

The urban population of Britain grew rapidly during this period. The Industrial Revolution triggered massive waves of migration from the countryside to the cities as people sought work in the newly-built factories. At the height of the Industrial Revolution,



Piccadilly Street in central London at the start of the 20th century (The Premier Photographic View Album of London. (1907) Valentine & Sons, London)

between 1800 and 1851, an estimated 40 per cent of Britain's population moved from the countryside to urban areas. The infrastructure of the cities could not cope with such rapid expansion and a large portion of the urban population found themselves living in overcrowded, unhygienic slums.

Hunger and malnutrition were rife as increased populations put a strain on urban food supplies. The lack of sanitation facilities in the densely-populated shantytowns — where it was common for up to 10 people to share a single room — meant that disease spread rapidly and children, in particular, were susceptible to deadly diseases like typhoid, cholera and tuberculosis. High levels of unemployment and rampant crime were also common problems, particularly in London.

The abundance of unskilled labourers compounded the situation by keeping wages meagre. Prostitution was rife and children as young as four years old were routinely made to work to help raise money, performing odd jobs, such as sweeping chimneys, and even employed under very dangerous conditions in the factories and mines.

RISE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

The Victorian Era witnessed the rise of the English novel and of the great English novelists. Victorian novels frequently engaged with the social problems of the day. The novels of Charles Dickens, for instance, featured the middle and lower classes and tackled poverty and child labour, with the grimy streets of London as a backdrop. George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) also used her novels to comment on societal issues, for example, the position of women in Victorian society.

A reaction to the practice of child labour, the Victorian era is also credited with 'inventing' childhood as this was when efforts to implement compulsory education for children gained significant momentum. A positive side effect of these efforts was that the children's publishing industry flourished for the first time in history.

GOOD VERSUS EVIL AND THE BACKLASH OF GOTHICISM

The central theme of many Victorian works is good and evil. When comparing the literature of the era with more modern works, this theme often seems quite didactic. In other words, Victorian works of literature and art often acted as **morality tales**, promoting a stern code of 'correct' behaviour by ensuring that bad characters were always suitably punished and good ones rewarded.



Many children worked during Victorian times to help supplement family incomes, taking in washing or chopping wood to sell as kindling. (Wamer H. (1912) Spitalfields Nippers)

⚡ WHAT'S IN A NAME?

It was not considered 'proper' for women to write and publish novels and poetry during the Victorian era. As a result, many female authors concealed their identities and published their works under male pseudonyms. George Eliot, for example, was the penname used by Mary Ann Evans, while the three Brontë sisters wrote under the names of Ellis, Currer and Acton Bell.

⚡ SPIRITUALLY BANKRUPT?

Gerard Manley Hopkins, the Victorian poet-priest, commented that the age in which he lived 'lacked a spiritual centre' because the scientific rationalism and materialism that was flourishing undermined Christian principles.

- CONTENTS
- FOREWORD
- INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
- THE RENAISSANCE
- THE ROMANTICS
- THE VICTORIANS
- MODERNISM
- POST-MODERNISM
- SOUTH AFRICAN
- UNSEEN POETRY
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A reaction against this strict morality found expression in an artistic genre called the **Gothic**. Gothic works are often described as scary ghost stories, but there is more to them than that. While the realistic works of Dickens and Eliot draw a firm boundary between right and wrong, Gothic works often cross or question this boundary. One example of this is Heathcliff, the anti-hero of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, who resorts to all sorts of trickery to torment the love of his life after she spurns him.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

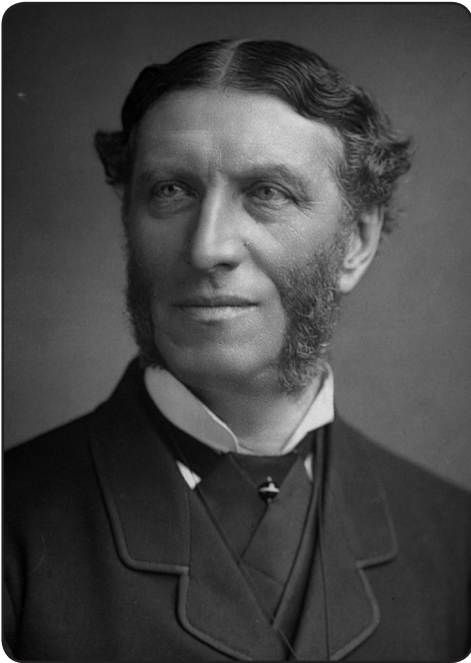
Although they express it differently, the realistic and the Gothic genres of Victorian literature have one thing in common: **nostalgia**. Both look back to the past with longing, to the Elizabethan age, in particular. Shakespeare's plays were regularly performed and contemporary poets often wrote odes and sonnets in the Elizabethan style during the 19th century. There was also a revival of interest in classical and mediaeval literature, epitomised by Tennyson's famous "Idylls of the King". It is often argued that this longing was the result of the many changes — some very negative — brought about by industrialisation and urbanisation.

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The Victorian Era is considered 'the age of the English novel' and produced some of the most famous authors in literary history:

- Charles Dickens
(*Oliver Twist*; *Bleak House*)
- Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë
(*Wuthering Heights*; *Jane Eyre*)
- William Thackeray (*Vanity Fair*)
- George Eliot (*Middlemarch*)
- Thomas Hardy
(*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*)
- Elizabeth Gaskell
(*North and South*)
- Oscar Wilde
(*The Importance of Being Earnest*)
- H.G. Wells
(*The War of the Worlds*)
- Arthur Conan Doyle
(*Sherlock Holmes*)
- Lewis Carroll
(*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*)

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822 — 1888)



Matthew Arnold (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Matthew Arnold’s poetry and prose are often described today as ‘the bridge’ between the Romantic and Modernist movements. His writings combine the conventions of Romanticism, such as sentimental imagery and the use of natural landscapes, with the cynicism and secularism of a Modernist writer. His poetry is often deeply meditative and even melancholy, tackling problems of psychological isolation and dwindling faith. He was also a highly influential and respected literary critic, credited for his ‘gentlemanly and subtle’ style and for establishing literary criticism as ‘an art form’.

Arnold began writing while at school and continued during his time as a schools’ inspector (a job that enabled him to support his family, but which he described as ‘drudgery’). He published his first volume of poetry in 1849, while still an inspector. Eight years later, though, he was appointed as the Professor of Poetry at Oxford University, a position that he held for two successive terms of five years.

His tenure at Oxford proved to be particularly productive. Free from the ‘drudgery’ of being Her Majesty’s Inspector of Schools, Arnold wrote his now-famous Oxford lectures, as well as volumes of literary criticism. He penned what is perhaps his most famous poem, “Dover Beach”, in 1867, along with the celebrated verse “West London”.

Arnold travelled widely during his twilight years, delivering lectures on education and democracy as far afield as the United States of America. He continued to write even after his retirement and the second volume of his *Essays in Criticism* series was still in production when he died of a heart attack in 1888.



Matthew Arnold is considered to be a **sage writer** — a genre of creative non-fiction that became common during the Victorian era in which the author rebukes and instructs the reader on contemporary social issues surrounding politics, economics and philosophy.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

THE RENAISSANCE

THE ROMANTICS

THE VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-MODERNISM

SOUTH AFRICAN

UNSEEN POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“DOVER BEACH”

The sea is calm tonight. 1
 The tide is full, the moon lies fair
 Upon the straits;— on the French coast the light
 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay. 5
 Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
 Only, from the long line of spray
 Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
 Listen! you hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, 10
 At their return, up the high strand,
 Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
 The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago 15
 Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
 Of human misery; we
 Find also in the sound a thought,
 Hearing it by this distant northern sea. 20

The Sea of Faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
 But now I only hear 25
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
 Retreating, to the breath
 Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
 And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true 30
 To one another! for the world, which seems
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
 And we are here as on a darkling plain 35
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.



GLOSSARY

straits (line 3): a narrow passage of water between two seas

moon-blanch'd (line 8): appearing white in the light of the moon

tremulous (line 13): trembling, unsteady

cadence (line 13): tempo, rhythm

Sophocles (line 15): ancient Greek playwright

Aegean (line 16): the sea separating Greece and Turkey

turbid (line 17): unclear, cloudy

furl'd (line 23): furled (i.e. curled)

drear (line 27): dreary, bleak

certitude (line 34): conviction, certain belief

darkling (line 35): growing dark

ANALYSIS

Romantic and Victorian era poets depicted the natural world as an alternative to the problems brought on by the Industrial Revolution; however, in doing so, they often idealised this natural world and the people who lived in it.

In “Dover Beach”, Arnold uses the natural world as a point from which to consider the problems of an industrialised, secular society, but, in comparison to the work of his Victorian literary peers, Arnold’s poem is more pensive and perhaps even nihilistic. Arnold suggests that modern, industrialised society is characterised by a sense of isolation, which can be traced to the dwindling role of religion. He adopts a Romantic theme, but adds a more cynical, Modernist perspective.

As is suggested by the title, the poem is set in Dover, a port on the English Channel that provides easy access by sea to neighbouring France. This port played an important role in transportation and trade during the Industrial Revolution. Arnold and his wife visited Dover in 1851, *en route* to Paris during their honeymoon and so it is tempting to claim (as many critics do) that the poem describes a scene from this particular trip.

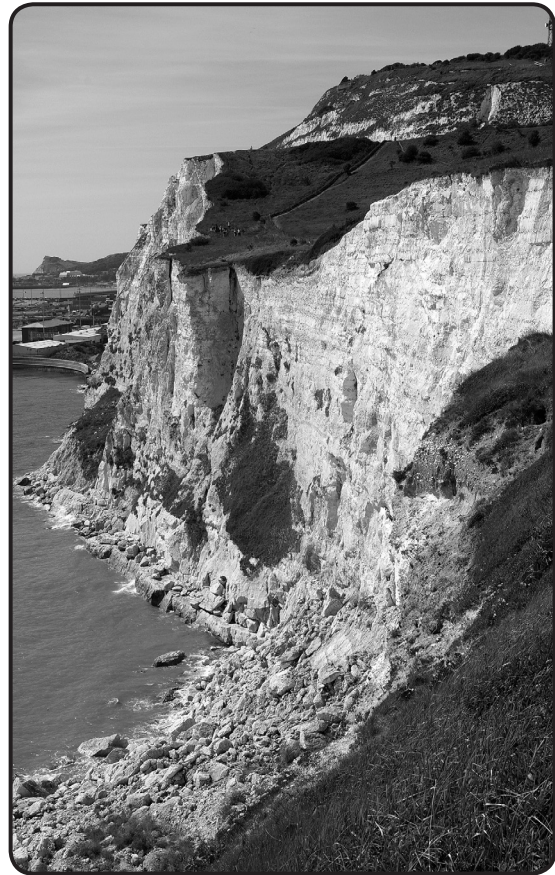
When analysing poetry, however, one should distinguish between the poet and the speaker of the poem, just as one would between a novelist and a character. One should never assume that the poet and the speaker are the same person.

IDEALISING THE NATURAL WORLD

The poem begins with the line: ‘The sea is calm tonight.’ (line 1). Read in the context of pastoral-inspired poetry, such as that of the Romantic poet William Wordsworth’s “I wandered lonely as a cloud”, this **first line** sets up the expectation that the natural world will be idealised as an alternative to urban life.

This expectation is heightened in the **next five lines**, which describe the view of the British and French coastlines from the port. The scene is characterised by the speaker as ‘fair’ (line 2), ‘glimmering’ and ‘tranquil’ (line 5) and, at this point in the poem, the descriptions are typical of pastoral poetry which glorifies nature.

In **line 6**, however, there is a subtle change in tone as the speaker calls his lover to smell the ‘night air’. The abruptness of this imperative sentence creates a sense of unease, despite the fact that there is no obvious change in subject. The speaker continues to describe the beauty of the view. This sense of unease is heightened in the next line, which begins with the word ‘Only’, suggesting that the speaker is going to point out a flaw in the scene before him.



The famed White Cliffs of Dover in Kent, England.
© Joanna Czapska (Dreamstime)



A **secular** society is one in which the state (i.e. government) is kept separate from the Church and religious authorities. Prior to the Reformation in England, the Church played a central role in the politics and political structure of Britain.



One of four types of sentences (the others being declaratory, exclamatory and interrogative), an **imperative sentence** is one that expresses a command or request. Advice can be offered, but, typically, instructions are given (as opposed to statements being made or questions being asked).

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

SUBVERSIVE STRUCTURE

The next six lines increase the sense of unease by subtly altering the direction of the poem and undermining the expectations that have been raised. The tone shifts drastically at the beginning of **line 9** with the use of the imperative 'Listen!'. The poet then describes the 'grating roar' of the waves washing over the pebbles on the beach (line 9).

The effect of the onomatopoeic 'roar' is heightened in the following lines by the rhythmic use of monosyllabic words like 'fling' (line 10), 'begin' and 'cease' (line 12). It is only in the final line of the stanza that the poet reveals what this roar represents to him: 'The eternal note of sadness' (line 14).

The **first stanza** can be divided into an octave, which introduces the themes of the poem, and a sestet, which extends these themes and provides a twist. Thus, the first stanza of the poem has the basic structure of a sonnet; however, not only is the rhyme scheme of this stanza unconventional, the stanzas that follow are made up of varying numbers of lines with varying rhyme schemes. Just as the poet takes up the theme of the idealised natural world and then subverts it, he also adopts the structure of the sonnet and then manipulates it.

CONNECTING THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

Stanza 2 develops the last line of stanza 1 by suggesting that the 'sadness' of the waves is a universal characteristic of human experience that extends across cultures and time. Sophocles was an ancient Greek playwright whose plays and themes still resonate with modern audiences. The Aegean Sea, which is linked to the Mediterranean, is the sea that separates Greece and Turkey. According to the speaker, Sophocles also detected sadness in the sound of the waves of this sea, in which he recognised 'the turbid ebb and flow / Of human misery' (lines 17–18). By suggesting that this 'sadness' has been experienced across the ages, the speaker establishes a connection between the past and present.

SECULARISATION CAUSES SADNESS

In **stanza 3**, the poet builds on the resonance between the past and the present suggested in stanza 2. In contrast to stanza 2, however, the speaker points to a time when the sea did not suggest sadness, by reimagining the sea as a metaphor for faith.

Before the Reformation, when the Church dominated social and political life, the sea was 'full' (line 22). Now, in the wake of the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution, the sea is 'retreating' (line 26) and exposing the pebbles on the beach as 'naked shingles' (line 28). The speaker suggests that the increasing secularisation of society and the diminishing importance of religion is the cause of the sadness and misery he describes.

Notice that the speaker describes the changes in the sea over time using **sense impressions**. When describing the 'Sea of Faith', the speaker uses visual images. In line 23, for instance, the sea is compared to a 'bright girdle'. By contrast, the speaker describes the sense of isolation that the sea represents aurally, using sounds. In lines 24 and 25, for example, he says 'now I only hear / Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar'. Compare lines 7 and 8 with 9 and 10 and it becomes clear that the same pattern is also present in the previous stanzas.

IS LOVE THE ANTIDOTE?

The **final stanza** represents another shift in tone in the poem. The tone of this stanza is reminiscent of Shakespeare's love sonnets, such as "Let me not to the marriage of true minds". The speaker begins by addressing his lover directly, which is a convention of Renaissance poetry. Just as previous generations of poets saw love as the ultimate virtue, the speaker

implores that the couple ‘be true / To one another!’ (lines 29–30), suggesting that their love provides respite from the ‘sadness’ and ‘misery’ of modern society.

Although the stanza begins positively, the speaker soon returns to enumerating the many pitfalls of modern life. Although the world may seem full of hope, he says, it is actually empty of ‘joy’, ‘love’ (line 33) and ‘peace’ (line 34). It is interesting that, even though the speaker has just suggested that love is an antidote to the world’s sadness, he includes it in a list of virtues that are absent from the world. When examined together with the fact that the speaker does not touch on the subject of love elsewhere in the poem, the declaration that begins this stanza seems hollow.

This hollowness is reinforced in the final lines of the last stanza as the speaker imagines the couple in the middle of a dark battlefield, ‘swept with confused alarms’ and surrounded by the clash of ‘ignorant armies’ (lines 36 and 37). The couple are trapped by the conflicting forces in the modern world, with no prospect of being saved. Although the speaker has already suggested that religion provides an antidote to this misery, in this final metaphor he suggests that there is no way to regain this faith and man is left in the dark, not knowing which way to turn.

It is for this reason that this poem is often described as nihilistic. Although it begins by accessing the imagery of Romantic and pastoral poetry, the poem uses this imagery to express a sense of cynicism that belongs to Modernism and the 20th century. This is also how Arnold bridges the idealistic subject matter of Romanticism and the cynicism of Modernism.



Nihilism is a philosophical doctrine that suggests there is no objective meaning, value or greater purpose to life.

① QUESTIONS

1. a. Transcribe the rhyme scheme of this poem, using the form ABAB as used elsewhere in this resource. (2)

- b. Provide one adjective to describe this rhyme scheme. (1)

2. a. What expectations does the first octave of the poem raise? Justify your answer by referring to the poem. (4)

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

5. Provide a definition for the term 'caesura', and identify and comment on its usage in the poem. (5)

6. In one well-constructed paragraph, compare the structure of stanza 3 with that of stanza 4, noting the similarities and differences between the two. (3)

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

7. What is the function of the capitals used in line 21? (1)

8. Who is the speaker of the poem, and to whom is the poem addressed? Substantiate your response. (4)

9. What Figure of Speech is used in the last stanza? Explain its effectiveness. (4)

10. Why are the armies in line 37 called 'ignorant'? Use evidence from the poem to support your answer. (2)

11. Paraphrase lines 35 to 37. (2)

12. Using your own words, provide a definition for the term 'nihilism' as used in the analysis of the poem. (Hint: You may have to do some research to answer this question adequately.) (3)

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

- CONTENTS
- FOREWORD
- INTRODUCTION TO POETRY
- THE RENAISSANCE
- THE ROMANTICS
- THE VICTORIANS
- MODERNISM
- POST-MODERNISM
- SOUTH AFRICAN
- UNSEEN POETRY
- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

13. Consider the following assessment of Arnold's poem:

“Dover Beach” is unflinchingly nihilistic.’

Do you agree with this statement? Use your answer to Question 12 to comment, in one well-constructed paragraph.

(6)

[50]

POSTMODERNISM

INTRODUCTION TO POSTMODERNISM

IF THIS ISN'T ART, THEN WHAT IS IT?
 IF THIS ISN'T ART, THEN WHAT IS?
 IF THIS ISN'T ART, THEN WHAT?

This witty and thought-provoking piece by Polish artist Maciej Ratajski, entitled 'Is This Art?', is an example of Postmodern art that challenges our ideas about what 'art' is or should be. What do you think? Is this art? © Maciej Ratajski

The exact 'end' of Modernism remains a contentious debate among scholars. Some academics date the end of Modernism with the outbreak of World War II in 1939, while others argue that Modernist influences continued well into the 1980s. 'Postmodernism' complicates matters even further. A controversial term in itself, postmodernism is used by some scholars simply to refer to the chronological time period after Modernism, others use it to describe a distinctive way of thinking and a lot of academics even argue that the term is now used so broadly and vaguely, that it has become meaningless.

Despite the areas of continued contention, most scholars agree that the beginnings of the Modernism movement are found in the late 19th century, when great scientific and technological advances prompted a transformation in the way the world was perceived. The heydays of experimental, *avant-garde* Modernist expression are usually considered to have occurred between 1910 and 1930, and the movement is considered to have reached its peak around the outbreak of World War I, when profound trauma and a collective sense of disillusionment called into question the values on which an entire civilisation had been established.

A REACTION TO THE HORRORS OF WARFARE?

Also known as 'Late Modernism', Postmodernism is difficult to define because the movement is, essentially, a reaction to early Modernism. It is a rejection of the overtly confident, positive and self-satisfied assumptions and values that epitomised early Modernism. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that the movement germinated in the aftermath of two World Wars, Postmodernism is characterised by scepticism, subjectivism and an acute sensitivity to the power of economic and political ideologies.

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DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF POSTMODERNISM:

- Germinated in the late 20th century (sometime between the 1940s and the 1980s)
- Disillusionment with the promises of Modernism (i.e. unrelenting progress, driven by technology)
- Scepticism and doubt replaces reason and certainty (there are no absolute truths)
- Morality and ethics are personal and relative (not traditional, objective or fixed)
- Globalisation instead of nationalism (unity and cooperation instead of division and conflict)

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SOME OF THE MOST NOTABLE POSTMODERN WRITERS INCLUDE

- Don DeLillo (*White Noise*)
- John Fowles (*The French Lieutenant's Woman*)
- Bret Easton Ellis (*American Psycho*)
- Joseph Heller (*Catch-22*)
- Hunter S. Thompson (*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*)
- Paul Auster (*The New York Trilogy*)
- Yann Martel (*Life of Pi*)

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRYTHE
RENAISSANCETHE
ROMANTICSTHE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISMSOUTH
AFRICANUNSEEN
POETRYACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

OBJECTIVE OBSERVATION IS NOT POSSIBLE

Despite the difficulties in defining Postmodernism, the literature considered to be part of the movement exhibits several distinguishing characteristics. Postmodern writers reject many of the concepts upon which Modernism was established. Most notably, they undermine the concepts of universality (the notion that anything can transcend the context of its time and place) and objectivity. In contrast, they explore the issue of subjectivism — rejecting an objective, external reality in favour of contemplating the subjective, inner consciousness.

Postmodern writers argue against the Modernist assumption that personal perspective can be applied to all human experience (i.e. universality); instead, their writing reflects the belief that *objective observation is impossible* to achieve, since every person naturally allows his or her own history, values and understanding to influence his or her assessment of the world.

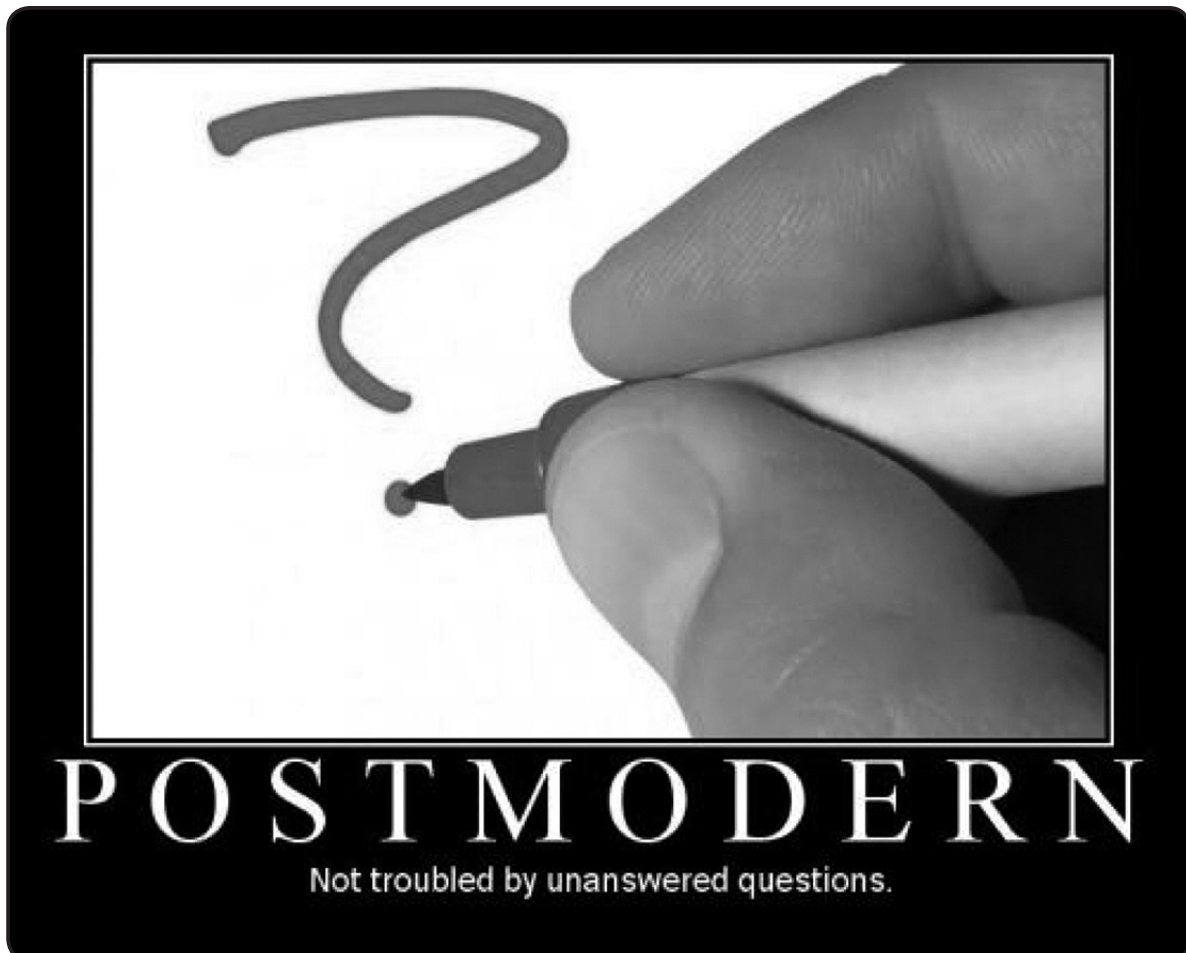
OTHER COMMON FEATURES AND TECHNIQUES OF POSTMODERN LITERATURE:

- Emphasises the subjective and personal
- Ironic, darkly comic and often paranoid
- Mixes up genres and styles (pastiche)
- Features intertextuality and temporal distortions (fragmented, non-linear narratives)



ARE YOU POST-POSTMODERN?

Some academics have taken the 'post' trend one step further and are claiming that we are currently in a Post-postmodern (or Metamodern) era. Once again, no consensus has been reached in defining Post-postmodernism: some critics believe that it marks a return to the principles of Modernism, while others argue that it indicates an escalation or intensification of Postmodern capitalist values in modern society.



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

PHOEBE HESKETH (1909 — 2005)



(Enitharmon Press, London)

Despite being a lesser-known name in Modernist literature, Phoebe Hesketh's long and fruitful career as a poet produced some of the most beautifully crafted work of the era. Known mostly as a 'nature poet', Hesketh was respected by her peers for the emotional power and directness of her verse, and compared with the likes of Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson.

Hesketh was born in 1909 in Lancashire, England, where she lived for almost her entire life. Her father, Arthur Rayner, was a renowned radiologist, and her mother was an accomplished violinist. From a young age, she showed great promise as a poet, and her father would take her for long walks around the famed Lake District while reciting poems by William Wordsworth. At the age of 17, she left school to care for her terminally ill mother; a few years later, she married Aubrey Hesketh, with whom she had three children.

Her first volume of poetry, titled simply *Poems*, appeared in 1939, but she later disowned this work to a large extent, dismissing it as juvenile. It was not until her second volume, *Lean Forward, Spring!* appeared nine years later, in 1948, that she earned critical acclaim. In the intervening years, during World War II, she worked as a journalist for the *Bolton Evening News*.

Hesketh went on to produce 14 volumes of poetry, a collection of poems for children, and four biographies and autobiographies, as well as a number of scripts for the BBC. She also worked as a freelance journalist and taught literature and creative writing at several schools and universities. She died in a nursing home in Lancashire at the age of 96.

CONTEMPLATING DEATH AND THE NATURE OF SACRIFICE

The idyllic landscapes of her hometown proved to be a great source of inspiration for Hesketh and her love of nature motivated some of her greatest poetic works; however, personal tragedy also influenced much of her writing. After the tragic death of her young son, she wrote a number of religious poems focused on the Resurrection of Christ and the nature of sacrifice. The slow decline and eventual death of her husband saw the penning of some her most morbid and sinister verses. Hesketh herself recognised that her focus shifted away from nature as her career progressed, and that her verse steadily became "less flowery and happy and more bleak". Over the course of her 60-year career, her precise technical skill, sensitivity to detail and emotional force established her as a poet of considerable talent; though, strangely, her work receives very little critical attention.



As a young girl, Hesketh was inspired to write by her aunt, Edith Rigby, a leading **English suffragette**. Rigby was a fierce activist who founded a school aimed at educating girls, and was incarcerated seven times during her life for her political activities. Hesketh published a biography about her aunt in 1966, titled *My Aunt Edith*.



RESTING IN PEACE?

Before her death, Hesketh told her doctor that she would like her memorial stone to read: "The day of death is better than the day of one's birth". When he told her that he didn't like that at all, she replied, "It doesn't matter, you're not going to have it".

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRYTHE
RENAISSANCETHE
ROMANTICSTHE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISMSOUTH
AFRICANUNSEEN
POETRYACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

“A POEM IS A PAINTING”

*A poem is a painting that is not seen;
A painting is a poem that is not heard.*

That’s what poetry is— 1
A painting in the mind.
Without palette and brush
it mixes words into images.
The mind’s edge sharpens the knife 5
slashing the canvas with savage rocks
twisting trees and limbs into tortuous shapes
as Van Gogh did
or bewitched by movement’s grace,
captures the opalescent skirts 10
of Degas’ ballet dancers.

But words on the page
as paint on canvas
are fixed.
It’s in the spaces between 15
the poem is quickened.



GLOSSARY

palette (line 3): a thin board or tablet on which an artist mixes paints or pigments

tortuous (line 7): full of twists and turns

opalescent (line 10): exhibiting a kind of milky iridescence, like an opal; a lustrous rainbow-like play of colour that tends to change as the angle of view changes

quickened (line 16): to become enlivened; to make alive

ANALYSIS

“A Poem is a Painting” is a relatively simple, straightforward poem in which Hesketh compares the art of poetry to the art of painting. The speaker suggests that both poetry and paintings create images that are brought to life in the imaginations of the poet/painter and the audience. The most striking aspects of Hesketh’s poem are her use of imagery, metaphor and comparison to emphasise the similarities between poetry and painting. Her vivid and colourful descriptions reinforce the subject of her poem so that words in poetry are used in much the same way as colours on a canvas, in that they are used to create images in the minds of the audience.

TITLE AND EPIGRAPH

The poem opens with a two-line epigraph which reads: ‘A poem is a painting that is not seen; / A painting is a poem that is not heard’. Immediately, the subject of the poem and the comparisons it draws are made clear. The speaker is emphasising the similarities and relationship between these two different art forms. The speaker suggests here that poetry and painting are essentially the same form, in that they create images for the audience — the difference between the two is the way in which these images are created, or the medium through which they are expressed. The epigraph suggests that the speaker is in some way trying to define the meaning of poetry, whether simply for him- or herself or for a larger audience.

The epigraph recalls a quotation from artist and inventor, Leonardo da Vinci, who once wrote: “Painting is poetry which is seen and not heard, and poetry is a painting which is heard but not seen” (*The Paragone*, 1651).

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

STANZA ONE: A TALE OF TWO PAINTINGS

The first two lines of the poem respond to the 'definition' of poetry suggested by the epigraph. The speaker reinforces this definition by declaring that poetry is 'A painting in the mind' (line 2). Once again, the similarities between the two art forms are emphasised, suggesting that both create images, but use different mediums of expression to do so. The speaker suggests that while the images created by the words of a poem may not be tangible or physically visible, as those created by paintings are, they are nonetheless visible in the mind of the audience and the poet. Poets use a pen, rather than the artist's 'palette and brush' (line 3), to turn 'words into images' (line 4), suggesting the power of words to convey the images in the mind of the poet to the imagination of the audience.

In **line 5**, the speaker extends this comparison between the tools of the artist and the tools of a poet. The speaker uses a metaphor here to liken an artist's palette knife, a blunt tool used to mix and apply paints, to the mind of the poet. Just as the artist uses a palette knife to create and apply the most vivid colours to a canvas, so does a poet use his mind to find the correct 'mix' of words that 'sharpens' (line 5) the poetic image being created.

In the remainder of the **first stanza**, the speaker actually enacts the subject of the poem, by using words to 'paint' or create images for the audience. The speaker achieves this by describing the paintings of two famous artists: Vincent van Gogh and Edgar Degas.

The two paintings the speaker describes are not specifically identified: their subjects are common depictions or themes of the two painters. The **van Gogh** painting is described as portraying 'savage rocks' (line 6) and 'twisting trees' (line 7), a description which could be applied to many of his vivid, dramatically distorted natural landscapes. **Degas**, meanwhile, is famed for his dozens of paintings of graceful ballet dancers (line 11) in the midst of dancing, and is noted for his skill in depicting 'movement's grace' (line 9).

By using rich, vivid descriptions to refer to familiar artwork by famed artists, the speaker is actually enacting the similarities between poetry and painting that are the subject of the poem as a whole. The highly expressive and colourful diction of these lines evoke very vivid images in the imaginations of the audience, images which will be identified as familiar as the speaker reveals the names of the artists only *after* describing their paintings. The speaker suggests that poetry creates images in the minds of the audience, and by describing these paintings, the speaker proves the point by doing just that: creating images with words. The power of these words to create a vast range of images is emphasised by the stark contrast between the descriptions of these two paintings: one is dark, twisted and forbidding, while the other is ethereal, beautiful and enchanting.

STANZA TWO: IMAGINATION BRINGS ART TO LIFE

A 'twist' or surprising conclusion is contained in the **second stanza**. While the first stanza is dedicated to describing the power of words and paints in creating vivid and potent images, the second stanza undercuts this suggestion of power, by declaring that these images 'are fixed' (line 14). The speaker declares that 'words on the page' (line 12) and 'paint on a canvas' (line 13) are in fact limited: what really gives life and power to the images they create is the imagination. The speaker uses the word 'quicken' (line 16) to describe this process of coming to life, a word which evokes two meanings.

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Vincent van Gogh (1853 – 1890) was a Dutch post-Impressionist painter, who was little-known during his lifetime but later celebrated as one of the most influential figures in 20th century art. Many of his most famous paintings depict natural landscapes, trees, flowers and wheat fields.

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Edgar Degas (1834 – 1917) was a French artist regarded as one of the founders of Impressionism. He is acclaimed for his mastery in depicting movement, particularly dancing – over half of his works depict dancers – and for his complex portraiture of female nudes.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRYTHE
RENAISSANCETHE
ROMANTICSTHE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISMSOUTH
AFRICANUNSEEN
POETRYACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS



The Olive Trees by Vincent van Gogh. (Wikimedia Commons)



Rehearsal on Stage by Edgar Degas. (Wikimedia Commons)

To 'quicken' can mean to hasten or accelerate, which is suggestive of the life or movement given to artistic description by the imagination of the artist or audience. 'Quicken' also means to enliven, and is used in a more archaic form to refer to the first signs of life felt in the womb of an expectant mother. This suggests, then, that art is given life by the imagination.

The speaker says that this process of art coming to life occurs 'in the spaces between' (line 15), referring to what is *not* said or depicted in a poem or painting. Read literally, this refers to the blank spaces between lines of poetry. The speaker is suggesting the importance of the role of the audience here: it is up to each individual to fill those blank spaces with his or her own imagination, to bring his or her own creativity and experiences to his or her appreciation of art in order to really bring it to life. Without this kind of engagement with the audience, a work of art – whether it is a poem or a painting – remains 'fixed' (line 14) and lifeless. This assertion of the importance of personal, subjective experience is typical of Postmodern philosophy.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

POETIC DEVICES

As noted above, the speaker frequently makes use of comparison and **metaphor** to emphasise the similarities between the art forms of poetry and painting. A painter's brush or palette knife is compared with the mind of a poet, for example, as both are the tools with which images are created (line 5).

This poem is an example of **ekphrasis**, or the graphic description of a work of art using words. Ekphrasis is intended to bring the subject into the mind's eye of the reader, and is evident in this poem in the descriptions of the paintings by van Gogh and Degas. Usually employed to praise rather than criticise a work of art, ekphrasis often addresses an image, makes it speak in turn, interprets the image or describes the experience of viewing the image.

Hesketh has made use of the **free verse** form here: there is no strict or structured rhythm, metre or rhyme scheme, and her stanzas are irregular in length. The lack of a formal structure reflects the freedom of the artist or poet, and the irregular line lengths can be seen as reflecting the movement of brush strokes on a canvas.

? QUESTIONS

1. Explain the function of an epigraph, referring to the poem as an example to illustrate your answer. (4)

2. Why would Hesketh describe poetry as something that is 'heard' in the epigraph, rather than something that is read? (3)

3. Identify the punctuation mark used at the end of the first line of the epigraph, and explain its function in this context. (3)

4. What poetic device is used in the first two lines of the poem ('That's what poetry is— / A painting in the mind'), and what is the meaning implied here? (3)

5. Identify the Figure of Speech in the phrase 'twisting trees' (line 7) and comment on its effectiveness. (3)

6. Why does the speaker not choose specific paintings to describe in the first stanza, and what effect is created by revealing the names of the famous painters only after the descriptions of the paintings associated with them? (5)

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

7. Identify the punctuation mark in the phrase 'Degas' ballet dancers' (line 11) and explain its function and placement in this context. (3)

8. Comment on the way in which the speaker characterises the 'moods' of the paintings described, indicating how this characterisation is achieved. (4)

9. What effect is created by placing the words 'are fixed' (line 14) on their own line? (2)

10. Why are 'words' (line 12) and 'paint' (line 13) described as 'fixed' (line 14), and how does the speaker suggest that this may be overcome? (4)

11. To what is the speaker referring in the phrase 'the spaces between' (line 15)? (2)

12. Explain how the double meaning of the word 'quicken' (line 16) applies to your understanding of the final line of the poem. (3)

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

THE RENAISSANCE

THE ROMANTICS

THE VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-MODERNISM

SOUTH AFRICAN

UNSEEN POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

13. In your own words, describe how the typography or 'look', as well as the rhythm and rhyme scheme, of the poem reinforces its subject. (4)

14. Consider the following poem "The Starry Night", by Postmodern poet Anne Sexton, which also takes as its subject a painting by Vincent van Gogh. By referring to both this poem and Hesketh's as illustrative examples, provide a definition for the term 'ekphrasis', showing how each poet uses art to explore her particular themes. (7)

"THE STARRY NIGHT" — ANNE SEXTON (1928 – 1974)

The town does not exist **1**

except where one black-haired tree slips
up like a drowned woman into the hot sky.

The town is silent. The night boils with eleven stars.

Oh starry starry night! This is how **5**

I want to die.

It moves. They are all alive.

Even the moon bulges in its orange irons
to push children, like a god, from its eye.

The old unseen serpent swallows up the stars. **10**

Oh starry starry night! This is how

I want to die:

into that rushing beast of the night,
sucked up by that great dragon, to split
from my life with no flag,
no belly,
no cry.

15

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The Starry Night by Vincent van Gogh (Wikimedia Commons)

[50]

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

UNSEEN POEMS

“PHENOMENAL WOMAN” — MAYA ANGELOU (1928 –)

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. **1**

I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size

But when I start to tell them,

They think I'm telling lies.

I say, **5**

It's in the reach of my arms,

The span of my hips,

The stride of my step,

The curl of my lips.

I'm a woman **10**

Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,

That's me.

I walk into a room

Just as cool as you please, **15**

And to a man,

The fellows stand or

Fall down on their knees.

Then they swarm around me,

A hive of honey bees. **20**

I say,

It's the fire in my eyes,

And the flash of my teeth,

the swing in my waist,

And the joy in my feet. **25**

I'm a woman

Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,

That's me.

Men themselves have wondered **30**

what they see in me.

They try so much

But they can't touch

My inner mystery.

When I try to show them, **35**

They say they still can't see.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRYTHE
RENAISSANCETHE
ROMANTICSTHE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISMSOUTH
AFRICANUNSEEN
POETRYACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

I say, It's in the arch of my back, The sun of my smile, The ride of my breasts, The grace of my style. I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, That's me.	40
Now you understand just why my head's not bowed. I don't shout or jump about Or have to talk real loud. When you see me passing, It ought to make you proud.	45
I say, It's in the click of my heels, The bend of my hair, the palm of my hand, the need for my care. 'Cause I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, That's me.	50
I say, It's in the click of my heels, The bend of my hair, the palm of my hand, the need for my care. 'Cause I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, That's me.	55
I say, It's in the click of my heels, The bend of my hair, the palm of my hand, the need for my care. 'Cause I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, That's me.	60

① QUESTIONS

1. Describe, in your own words, the intentions of the poet. (3)

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

2. Describe the rhyme scheme and comment on how it serves to emphasise the main themes of the poem. (2)

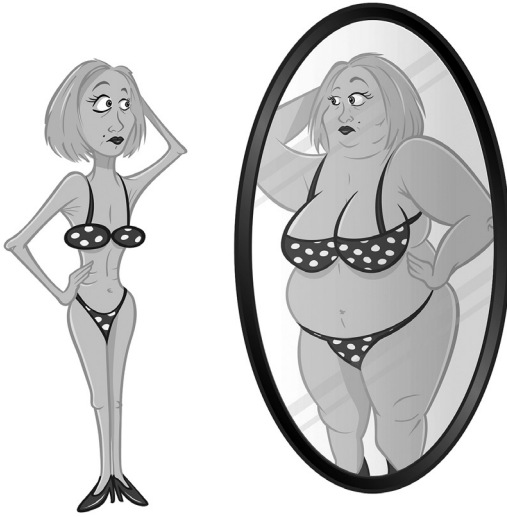
3. How would you describe the rhythm of this poem? (1)

4. What is the effect of the repetition of the words 'I say' in each stanza? (3)

5. Explain how Angelou makes use of the image of a feminine body in such a way that subverts the reader's expectations. (2)

6. Consider the following image, and use it as a means of discussing Angelou's engagement with body issues and contemporary ideas of beauty.

(4)



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[15]

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

THE
RENAISSANCE

THE
ROMANTICS

THE
VICTORIANS

MODERNISM

POST-
MODERNISM

SOUTH
AFRICAN

UNSEEN
POETRY

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

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