

Dover beach analysis



“ Dover Beach” is well celebrated poem written by Mathew Arnold and is being regarded as one of the thought provoking poems written during the Victorian era and during the late 19th century. Arnold is long-familiar for revealing his social critical ideas and thoughts pertaining to modern world into this poem. “ Dover Beach” by Mathew Arnold explains how society is being misled by its perceptions. Fundamentally, this poem is about sea and a beach, but there exists still deeper significance that can be unearthed through deeper assessment.

In “ Dover Beach”, Arnold has used symbolisms, similes, technical attributes, allusiveness and imagery mainly to illustrate the narrator’s perception between what is real and what is observed or seen. Arnold has illustrated the plight of the Victorian era through narrator of the poem. During the Victorian era, industrial revolution was commenced and many new industries were started and as a result, there was free flow of money and much value had been added to the economy. It is to be recalled that only during Victorian era, atheism was spread. [Baum 11].

Mathew Arnold illustrated the perplexity, conflict and misery of an era that was ensnared by a period of changeover. In his poem, Arnold stresses to his lover to remain to true to one another. He also raised a question whether it is easy to remain true when the world is changing fast and is full of delusion and vagueness. Arnold is of the view that there is no immediate escape from an issue and certainly no escape from the world we reside in. [Schow 26]. In his poem “ Dover Beach” Arnold was looking for an answer to the issues which was being faced by him and by the world too.

Thus, Arnold concerned with gloominess of the civilization lost, look forward to its future and try to find out a solution to the issue. The narrator of the poem starts promptly with auditory and visual imagery when portraying the sea is calm. Arnold is taking the readers by narrating about the calm, beautiful night and the silent sea with the moon light shining in full brim. This illustration implies that there exists a life out there but it is suppressed by darkness. And the cliff is sparkling in the moonlight.

The narrator invites his accompanying person to get nearer to the window to feel the cool night air. He comments that thin as the unending wave get in and get out again and again. His sentiment brings sensation of sorrow. The narrator comments that even Sophocles, an eminent Greek scholar even heard the narrator's eternal sadness. Sea is raging a relentless tussle with the shores as it dashes the shore and immediately shrinking back. Narrator here compares the sea's effort as that of struggles in life with ever decreasing desires. [Schow. 27].

Narrator uses an excellent metaphor to denote faith of all people as “ the faith of the sea” Though, in the initial stage, narrator believed that the world is full of faith but now that faith has disappeared. Though the narrator hears the dashing sound of waves but now he is no longer likes to enjoy the same but rather feels sorrow. The narrator of the poem wants to get assurance from his lover that nothing happen negatively and whether he can believe her love as true and eternal one. However, his inner conscience cautions him not to believe the same.

Through this metaphor, poet really intends to judge the perfect life one longs to have to that of real world scenario. Finally, the narrator comments without any joy, love and tranquility that there is no room for goodness in this universe and there always linger uncertainty. Poet use the symbolism to represent the prevalence of atheism, people must trust each other to confront the approaching war and gloominess. Arnold implies here since people does not believe in god unless there exists mutual confidence and faith among people, it is will be arduous to meet the complexities that our universe build.

Arnold portrays a delicate calm ocean which overwhelmed with tension to highlight a status of reality verses visual aspect. Though a calm sea is presented in “ Dover Beach” but in reality it is a sea of veiled turbulence. Arnold commences the disposition with the essences of serenity and stillness. The narrator looks under the surface of the Dover Beach and unravel the true color of the sea. When the poet ceases to hear the noise of the sea, “ he only listens to oceans depressed and its extended withdrawing roar.

Here, the poet wishes to justify the hypothesis that things are not always remain the same as that of what they seem to be. The poet wishes to remind the reader that though world appears to be charming but in real sense it is a place of chaos, disagreement and dangerous misapprehension. [Schow 27]. Arnold interlinks the sea of faith with that of erosion of religious faith. He illustrates that sea of faith was once roaring but now it is only melancholy withdrawing yell. Arnold compares both religion and sea as they were very roaring once but now has lost their significance.

In the Dover Beach, imagery plays a pivotal role and acts as the eminent protagonist of the central theme of the poem. Thus, calm and Lull Sea is used to depict the roughness and serenity. Sound and surroundings of the sea enhances the other images. Though the rhythm is employed to convey the meaning in the Dover Beach, imagery is utilised more to express strong feelings. Arnold also uses various poetic narrations like sounds, figures of speech, satirical words to explain auditory, visual and images in the poem. Poet also employs symbolism in the Dover Beach.

Symbolism is being used to highlight the main theme of the poem i. e. outward show vs. reality. Thus, the usage of symbolism and image facilitate the reader to create a link to the human mind, sea and life all at the identical time. The poet also attempts to project the sentiment of sadness on to the sea as it is intensified by the way the rhythm confines the endless movement of the tide. The poem is a response to Arnold's faithlessness mainly because of progress in scientific theory that fundamentally opposes the earlier faiths and moral values put forth by religion.

Perhaps, Arnold was not convinced about the rationalist perception of the people during Victorian era due to industrialization. Further, there was strong resentment against the new perceptions like Darwin theory of evolution. . Arnold is of the opinion that love is the sole mean to salvation from this distressing world. Arnold poem depicts the dissimilarities between reality and hope. Caesuras are being used to demonstrate the varying mood of the lyrical. Poem longs for a passive world, but also understands that is not possible at all.

Arnold here symbolically highlights on the industrial revolution that had brought many changes in the social life of the people of that time and people are opposed to such changes as they thought that it would leave them in distrust and sadness. Arnold's being a Victorian era writer, his poem " Dover Beach" resembles the Victorian writer's style as they wrote vehemently their staunch faith in religion and their hatred for the fast changing of their environments. As Arnold grew older, he became more religious as it is evidenced by his poem that speaks a lot about the god.

Since, Arnold was a school inspector for major period of his life and his daily work routines might have motivated his melancholy poems. Dover Beach is a poem linked by dissimilarities of the opposites. Every stanza of the poem is having alike dissimilarity but is depicted from varied views. However, each of them possess its own characteristic and subject and adds on the entire theme about the difficulties to achieve something. Thus, Arnold's poem captivated by the plenty of varied variety of dictions and the undulation of feelings and the strong images of the roaring sea that ever remains in the minds of the readers for long.