

Depressing and cynical love in poetry (matthew arnold's dover beach and anthony h...

[Literature](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The poems "Dover Beach" and "Dover Bitch" were written by Matthew Arnold and Anthony Hecht respectively. Although having two different authors the poem is referring to the same couple and the relationship these two people have. The first poem focuses on inside the relationship, between the man and woman and gives the reader a glimpse into their love life. The second poem is looked at from outside the couple, by a third party. It is taken from the view of another man who knows the woman from the first poem, and from him we learn a bit more of the intricacies of their relationship.

The first poem "Dover Beach" starts with just the man. He is staring at the beach and looks at how peaceful it is. He is watching from a window inside and he calls his love to the window to look at the scene with him. He describes the scenery as, "Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay." (In 5) He wants his love to appreciate the peacefulness of the night with him, giving a sense of calm happiness between him and the woman. However the second verse takes the poem in another direction, and his words become much more harsh and sudden. He begins to describe the sea and sounds as a "grating roar of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling." (In 9-10) This shift to a more aggressive phrase leads the reader to believe that the couple perhaps is not as happy as they seemed to be in the first verse. The sudden shift as his love joins him at the window implies that there is not complete peace in the relationship. He even reflects on the story of Sophocles and of "the turbid ebb and flow of human misery." (In 17-18) This piece of thought implies that it is the writer, the man, who is unhappy in his

relationship. He thoughts of human misery and sadness would suggest that he is sad about something in his relationship.

The last two sections of the poem " Dover Beach" turn more towards his actual relationship as he compares it to the sea. He suddenly sees the ocean only as the " melancholy, long withdrawing roar," (ln 25) which is odd because at the beginning he seemed so at peace. It is only with his love that he begins to see it as a depressing thing. He then turns directly to the woman and pleads with her " to be true to one another." (ln 29-30) His immediate focus on this aspect shows that this may have been why he is not pleased with her. It seems that he does love her, and wants to be with her, but he either suspects that she is unfaithful or he knows that she is.

Ultimately though, he does love her and wants to stay with her trying to make it work as an " ignorant armies clash by night," (ln 37) which suggests that he might know that it is a losing battle, but he is still willing to try.

The second poem shows us the outside of the relationship, through the eyes of another man. He believes the first man to be foolish because while he was going on about the sea she " had in mind

The notion of what his whiskers would feel like on the back of her neck."(ln 9-10) So the concern between the first man of unfaithfulness was warranted, and is apparently true as told by the second man. She doesn't seem to have the same affection for the first man, but stay with him anyway while going to visit another at times. She stays with this man even though she doesn't seem happy in the relationship and explains that she is sad because of everything she is missing out on such as " the wine and enormous beds and

<https://assignbuster.com/depressing-and-cynical-love-in-poetry-matthew-arnolds-dover-beach-and-anthony-hechts-dover-bitch/>

blandishments in French and the perfumes," (ln 13-14) The girl is more concerned with material goods, and seems angry that the man she is with does not provide that. But instead of leaving him, she just goes out to visit another. In the end we learn that it is because he is " fat, but dependable as they come," (ln 27) that she stays with him. She wants the comfort of being taken care of and not having to worry even if he isn't who she loves.

These two poems together have a very cynical view on love, and a pretty depressing one. We see a man completely in love with a woman and willing to do what it takes to keep her. He wants to be happy and only wants the woman to be faithful to him. But then we see that the woman does not love him and goes to another man, only staying with him out of convenience. These stories show the different perspective a relationship can take, in this case a man hopelessly in love and a woman who is only using him.