

Personal perspective on the society



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Through discovering a new perspective, an individual may become able to re-evaluate the values of their world and gain a new insight into their own beliefs or morals. These discoveries are meaningful on a personal and societal level, as they facilitate change. In his poem Meatworks, Robert Gray explores the way in which his attitude towards his society has changed as a result of his own discoveries, and consequently encourages his readers to question their own personal values. His poem Late Ferry, whilst also appearing to display a negative attitude towards Western Culture, demonstrates a more acceptant, Buddhist mindset, being that the flaws and attributes of his society necessitate one another. This notion of emotional and spiritual discoveries playing a role in an individual's societal perspective is further explored in Katherine Mansfield's short story entitled The Garden Party. Through these new perspectives, discoveries have the ability to influence the culture of a society through their personal and social ramifications.

An individual's perspective may become altered as a result of discoveries, as they offer a new insight and thus encourage an individual to re-evaluate the way in which they view their society. Robert Gray explored this theme in his poem Meatworks, in which he aims to evoke moral discoveries in his audience as a result of his own. After exploring the lack of humanity within the slaughterhouse, represented through his gory depiction of the pigs as "bags of blood," Gray demonstrates the way in which this revelation has influenced his perspective. As he now sees the once "white-bruising beach" in "mauve light", he uses pathetic fallacy in order to create a physical depiction of his newfound understanding. This, in conjunction with his

metonymic portrayal of the pig's fate, is representative of Gray's own discovery and subsequent growth. In her text The Garden Party, Katherine Mansfield also demonstrates the way in which discoveries can alter perspectives, however her focus is on the way in which the physical and spiritual realization of death and mortality can influence people to re-evaluate their own lifestyle. At the beginning, Laura, the perspective character, appears conscious of her own class, saying that her "upbringing made her wonder [...] whether it was respectful for a workman to talk to her of bangs slap in the eye." Through this apparent juxtaposition of Laura's own formal narrative voice and the workman's colloquialisms, the clear distinction and structure of Laura's life is demonstrated. However, after her discovery of the futility of this lifestyle in relation to death, she stammers, "isn't life—" and it is then said that "what life was she couldn't explain." This change in the sophistication of Laura's speech and her lack of clarity is reflective of her altered perspective in regards to her lifestyle and societal structure. Through these discoveries, the way in which an individual views their world may change as a result of new values and attitudes.

Changes in perspectives often result in a re-evaluation of the values of an individual's society, as its morals - or lack thereof - are brought to light and a judgement must be made. Robert Gray is one composer who challenged the values of his society, as he questioned the morality of a slaughterhouse in which he worked in his poem The Meatworks. Throughout this poem, Gray suggests that due to westernization, people are now willing to act inhumanely in exchange for monetary payment. Through graphic imagery, Gray demonstrates his disgust with the slaughterhouse, seen in his gory

description of the pig's "dripping solidified like candlewax." Using elision and simile, he appears to be unable to convey in full the horror of the factory. In return for committing these acts, he says that the workers receive "frail, green money," his depiction of which both highlights its lack of integrity and alludes to Australia's link to American currency and lifestyle.

Gray further shows his distaste for Industrialization and Westernization in Late Ferry, in which he refers to his society as a Busby Berkeley spectacular. Through his use of ekphrasis, Gray evokes an image of mindless clockwork, implying the lack of deeper meaning. However, contrary to his clear moral standpoint in The Meatworks, Gray now uses his own non-western ideal of unity and harmony in order to justify the actions of his Western society. By applying the Buddhist concept of light and dark necessitating one another, Gray is able to demonstrate that he can only see the light of the ferry "while it's on darkness", choosing to accept his world rather than harshly judge it. As a result of the discoveries he has made, Gray has been able to both discover his attitude towards his own societies and make a judgement on the value of these evaluations. While they discover new attitudes and perspectives in regards to their society, individuals also gain new insights into their own beliefs. These new understandings are conducive to change within a culture, as people begin to question their world. Robert Gray's Late Ferry is a clear example of personal discoveries allowing for growth on a societal level.

As the persona explores the way in which the harbor, representative of Australian city, functions, they begin to question the integrity of the structure as their descriptions gradually lose clarity. Throughout the poem

the depictions of sensory stimuli grow uncertain, as “white lights” are described to be both “feeling about in the blackness” and a “blizzard of light.” By personifying the light and characterizing it to be gradual and uncertain, yet then depicting it as a sudden and disorienting storm, Gray demonstrates the way in which personal discoveries may develop over time, but implies that the discovery itself can lead to uncertainty and subsequent questioning. This concept was also expressed in The Garden Party, in which the central character Laura discovers the lack of distinction between classes on a personal level. This revelation is explored throughout the story as it is said that “for her part, she didn’t feel them. Not a bit, not an atom...”

Mansfield’s decision to depict Laura’s realization using short, intercut clauses with repetitive phrases demonstrates the character’s lack of certainty in regards to the issue, despite the high modality. As in Late Ferry, this confusion is representative of the cultural change in her perspective. These discoveries allow their individuals to gain both a deeper understanding of themselves, and a motivation to instigate change in their societies.

Without discoveries, societies would lose their ability to develop, as people wouldn’t begin to question the values held by themselves and those around them. In this way, the new perspectives an individual gains through discoveries are vital in the functioning of an entire culture on a personal and interpersonal level.