

The gull



Beauty can only be defined by the beholder, for it is something that each person may experience differently. David Elliott explores this concept in his poem "The Gull", which shows how the perception of beauty for one is not the same for another. Elliott uses techniques such as juxtaposition, metaphors and similes, along with personal experience throughout the work to show us both sides to the truth of beauty. Elliott uses juxtaposition between the beginning and end of the poem to show the contrast of perception. \* In lines 1-9 "The sea gull is most clean" we see the perspective that the sea gull at hand is seen as most beautiful and elegant; a creature perceived to be pure. However, in lines 11-18 "I know he is sepulchre" we see the contradicting view of the speaker. Through these lines he describes the sea gull with terms of brutality, evil, and repulsion.

By contrasting the beginning and end to the poem Elliott has allowed the reader to experience both perspectives, bringing great emphasis to idea that beauty is merely a state of observation. Elliott uses metaphors and similes to help bring meaning to his concept of perceptual beauty. \* Elliott uses many metaphors throughout the work, one example being "a blob of beady-eyed hunger" in line 13. Another example is seen in line 6, "A shining sea-flower, sky-flower" which besides being a metaphor is also an example of contrast between the two perspectives of the sea gull. A "blob of beady-eyed hunger" illustrates an image of savagery and disgust, whereas a "shining sea-flower, sky-flower" holds an image of grace, beauty and delicacy. \* In the lines 3-4 "His wings flashing like variable stars against that deeper blue"; a simile that is used to convey the image of beauty that one may see when looking at the gull.

Elliott shares personal experience within the poem to identify his perception of the sea gull. \* In lines 1-9 ??? The sea gull???; most clean.??? Identifies the opinion of ??? some poets??? which is that the sea gull is a beauty of nature, a being of purity that is seen a beautiful. \* In line 10 ??? But I, though often deluded by forms of beauty, know the gull better??? shows that Elliott has a very different opinion of this ??? sky-flower???. He sees this sea gull as a ??? filth-eater??? line 14, or a ??? winged gluttony??? line 14, and even compares it to a grave in lines 17-18 ??? His cleanliness is that of a whited sepulchre???. There is an edge to Elliott??™s words here that alludes to a previous encounter where he was deluded by ??? beauty???. Due to this, there is a sense of bitterness laced into his words throughout the work.

Is beauty then just a fabrication of visual pleasure Or does beauty develop from the inner truth of a being Elliott has brought this question to mind, using literary elements that produce contrast between what one may see and what the reality of it truly holds. One can assume that it is not only sea gulls that will delude us in our everyday lives.