

Gould questions 2022

1. “Poetry is seeking to make not meaning, but beauty; or if you insist on misusing words, its ‘meaning’ is of another kind, and lies in the relation to one another of lines and patterns of sound, perhaps harmonious, perhaps contrasting and clashing, which the hearer feels rather than understands, lines of sound drawn in the air which stir deep emotions which have not even a name in prose.” (Basil Bunting)

What kind of ‘meaning’ does poetry ‘make’, and how does it make it? Answer with reference to any poet or poets of your choice.

2. ‘Her conversations reveal individual personalities, accurately, swiftly, as if they had no author at all’ (Zadie Smith on Zora Neale Hurston).

Write on dialogue or speech in any work of your choice and what you see as its achievement.

3. “A passage of prose experienced on the page doesn’t exist as obviously in time as a snatch of music or a theatrical scene. That doesn’t mean time doesn’t matter when we’re reading. A number of the most striking verbal effects depend on the temporal dimension.” (Jenny Davidson)

How does time inform reading? Answer this question with detailed reference to any work of prose. Some subjects to explore could include: pacing; analepsis and prolepsis; duration; the (historical) time in which a work is set or written or read; dates and time-keeping; prose rhythm.

4. “This then is the peculiar paradox of the novel: those of us who love novels often read them because of the eloquence with which they communicate a ‘sense of place’. Yet the truth is that it is the very loss of a lived sense of place that makes their fictional representation possible”. (Amitav Ghosh)

Discuss this quotation in relation to any novel that you have read.

5. “From the start it has been the theatre’s business to entertain people” (Bertolt Brecht)

What is your view on this? Discuss with reference to any play that you have read or seen performed.

6. – ‘Chew-chew chew-chew’ & higher still
‘Cheer-cheer cheer-cheer’ more loud & shrill
‘Cheer-up cheer-up cheer-up’ —& dropt
Low ‘Tweet tweet jug jug jug’ & stopt

(John Clare, on a nightingale’s song in ‘The Progress of Rhyme’)

Is poetry able to record the non-human? Answer this question with reference to two or more poems about nature, detailing some aspect of the relationship between human and the non-human world.