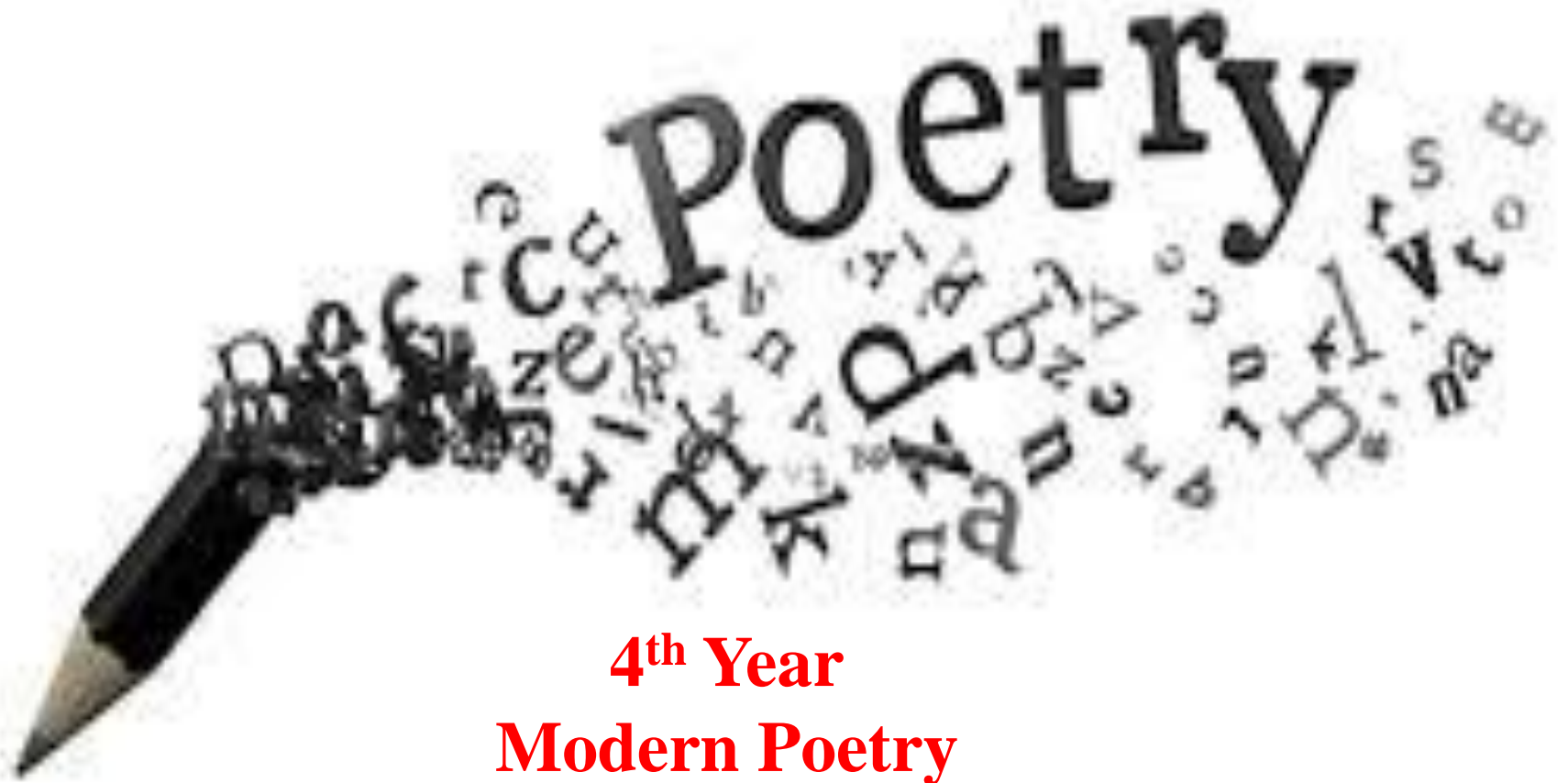


University of AL- Muthanna
College of Education for Humanities
Department of English



4th Year

Modern Poetry

A'ida Th. Sallom

A decorative illustration featuring a scroll with a quote. The scroll is unrolled, showing the text. A quill pen is positioned at the bottom of the scroll. A red wax seal is visible on the left side. The background is a light beige color with faint circular patterns and a watermark.

poetry is
a skill
which
moves
us still

P

Modernism



the late 19th and early 20th
centuries

A philosophical and an art movement aims at modifying traditional beliefs in accordance with modern ideas. It emphasizes the power of human beings to create, develop and reform their surroundings .

Modernism (The Modern Literature)

The term is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms concepts and styles of the literature. Literature in the last decade of the 19th century combined the traditional and the experimental.

As a result, modern age became the age of

complexity and **confusion**.



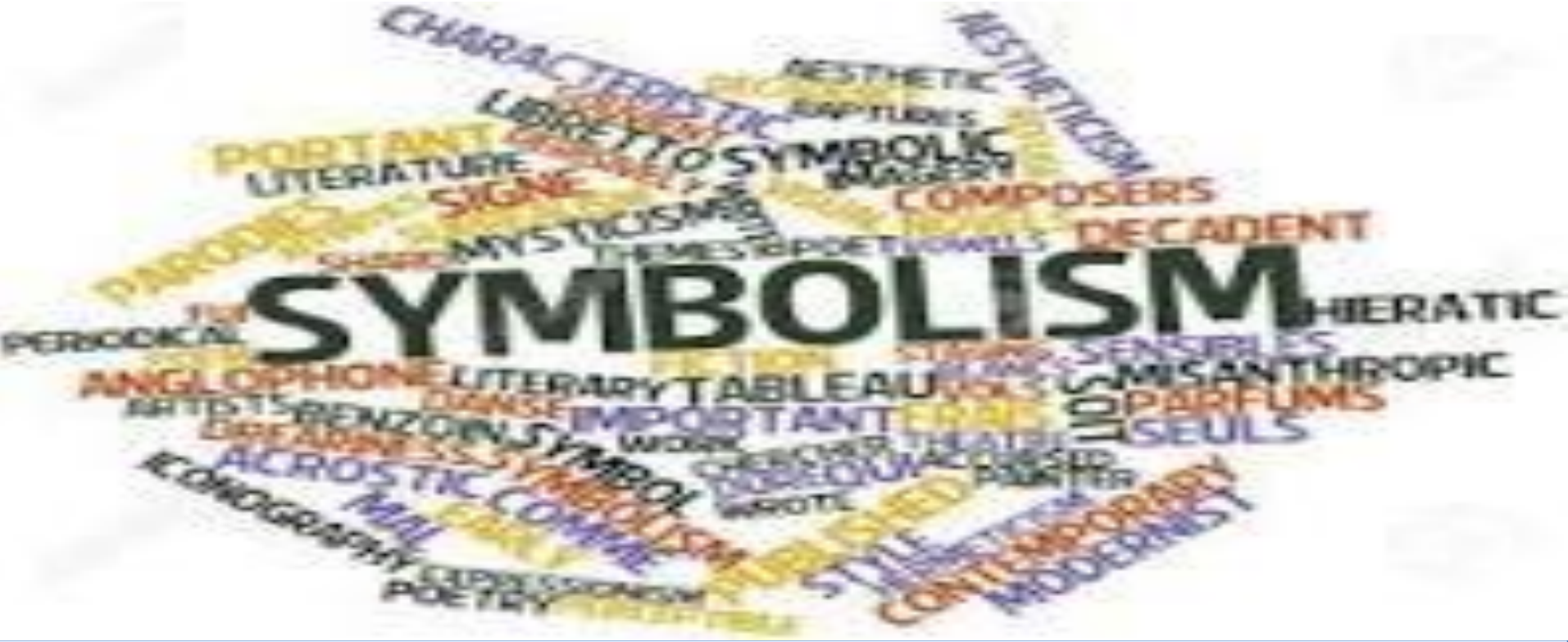
MODERN POETRY

- Modern or new experiments in form and style.
- Complex and open-ended nature of themes and meaning.
- Realism: to see life as it is with all its ugliness, involving the influence of two W.W. and scientific progress.
- Psychological interest, diving deep into the sub-conscious .
- sympathy for the miserable life of common people like laborers, farmhands, soldiers etc.

Modern Schools and Movements

Being part of the general artistic milieu, modern poetry is notably influenced and articulated by the new artistic schools and movements; among them, restricted to the curriculum of 4th year/ Department of English:

- Symbolism: W. B. Yeats, Wallace Stevens.
- Imagism: T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, William C. Williams.
- The Georgian School: Walter de la Mare,
- The Socialist School, W. H. Auden, Langston Hughes.
- Neo- Romanticism: Dylan Thomas, Richard Strauss.
- The Movement: Philip Larken.
- The Extremist: Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath.



A literary and artistic movement that originated with a group of French poets in the late 19th century, spread to [painting](#) and the theatre, and influenced the European and American literatures of the 20th century.

- Symbolist artists sought to express individual emotional experience through the subtle and suggestive use of highly symbolized language.

Sailing to Byzantium

That is no country for old men.



- Chief representative of Symbolic movement, "Sailing to Byzantium" is written in 1926 by the Irish poet William Butler Yeats. It is regarded as Yeats' definitive statement about the agony of old age and the imaginative and spiritual work required to remain a vital individual even when the heart is "fastened to a dying animal" (the body).
- Yeats declares that his homeland is no more suitable to the aged person who seeks immortality through intellectual knowledge, rather than indulging himself in the worldly sensual desires.
- Technically, the poem is written in four eight-line stanza that are metered in iambic pentameter and rhyme ABABABCC which is called ottava rima, explaining the statement in the first six lines and concluding the discussion in the seventh and eighth lines.



Sailing to Byzantium

*And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.*

William Butler Yeats
1865 – 1939

The title is remarkably **symbolic**: a. sailing represents a spiritual journey towards art and eternity, b. Byzantium: is an inspirational city of religion, artistic magnificence and permanence.

The young

In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.



The young are caught in the earthly cycle of life and death and in “sensual music”. They do not regard ageless intelligence. Birth, life and death are meeting up again with dust and clay and resulting in nothingness. This fading generation show no interest in art and intellect and will not achieve perpetuity. The images of birds, fish and fresh **symbolize** transcends and mortality.

**An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder
sing**

**For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;**



An old man, the speaker says, is a “paltry thing,” merely a tattered coat upon a stick, **a symbol** of lifeless image that the poet rejects in his mortal existence. He motivates his soul to clap its hands and sing; and the only way for the soul to learn how to sing is to study “monuments.”



And therefore I have sailed the seas and come To the holy city of Byzantium.

- Dreaming of amending such sensual and mortal world, the poet expresses a longing to remake the world and eliminates its imperfection. Hence, he starts his spiritual journey to an ideal and artful world. He “sailed the seas and come / To the holy city of Byzantium.” where he can enjoy art and magnificence.



O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.



- Reach imaginatively to Byzantium, the persona hopes that the sages will appear in fire and in a spinning movement take him away from his body into an existence outside time, where, like a great work of art, he could exist in "the artifice of eternity."
- The holy fire of purgation to clean him from the worldly desires to suit his new position in the holy city

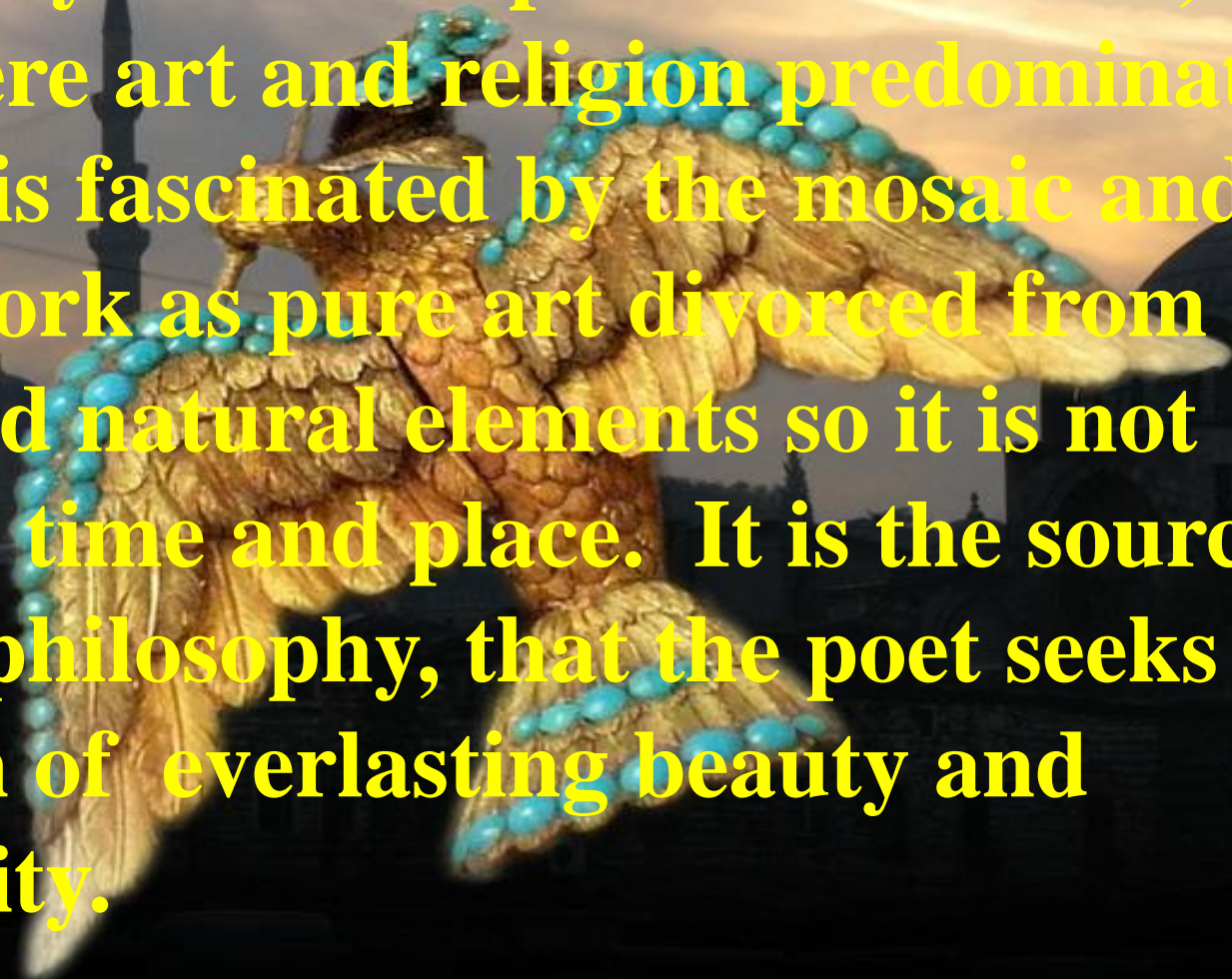
**Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come**



- In the final stanza, the poet states that once he is out of his body, he will never again appear in the form of a natural thing; rather, he will become **a golden bird, sitting on a golden tree**, singing of the past ("what is past"), the present (that which is "passing"), and the future (that which is "to come"). That means to achieve immortality.
- His new artistic form, a golden bird **symbolizes** his fascination of artificiality as a triumph of art over death.

Why Byzantium!?

- Byzantium, now Istanbul, was the center of Christianity and European civilization, a place where art and religion predominate. The poet is fascinated by the mosaic and enamel work as pure art divorced from nature and natural elements so it is not subject to time and place. It is the source of spiritual philosophy, that the poet seeks in his search of everlasting beauty and immortality.



Figures of speech



- **The recurrent auditory image of singing that prevails the poem symbolizes a unifying motif between the world of intellect and that of desire.**
- **In the first stanza the natural bird in tree is singing a temporary, short lived song. In the second stanza the “singing school” symbolizes estimation of knowledge and intellect. In the final stanza, the golden bird that the poet wishes to be, is singing to entertain the lords and ladies of Byzantium**

Figures of speech

- Apostrophe: means addressing an absent entity or person, Yeats addresses the sages of Byzantium, “O Sages”.
- Alliteration: repeating of the consonant sound, Line 4: the salmon falls, the mackerel- crowded sea , line 5: fish, flesh or fowl.
- Allegory: allegorical journey.
- Contrast: death vs. life, morality vs. immortality, young vs. aged people, east vs. west, natural art vs. artificial art, past vs. present.
- Mystery, Supernatural and Personification : the ability of the golden bird to sing and telling stories from the past and the present
- Metamorphosis: the power of transformation from human being into piece of art