

***‘The context of individuals significantly shapes their process of discovery and the discoveries themselves.’***

***How does your prescribed text and at least ONE text of your own choosing support this view?***

Discovery is an experience inherent to humanity, and yet, the nature of it, in terms of its catalysts, processes, and outcomes differ for individuals. The processes of discovery, particularly with regard to the catalysts, and the discoveries themselves are often shaped by an individual’s context. This context can refer to an individual’s physical setting as explored in Rosemary Dobson’s poem Wonder as well as Nick Baker and Tristan Klein’s short film animation Punctured. In both texts, the central characters are placed in physical settings that characterise their discoveries and essentially catalyse them. However, an individual’s context is not limited to just the physical world and can also relate to their emotional and mental states. The influence of these contexts is highlighted in Dobson’s poem Young Girl at a Window. Here, the metaphysical worlds of the nameless girl evokes her to make discoveries, which in turn impacts this world and brings about emotional and mental transformation.

Firstly, Wonder highlights how the context of the poet can influence discovery as the persona attempts to convey their overwhelming awe and amazement following their viewing of a painting. Here the context is the physical situation of the persona – looking at the painting. This action is essentially what provokes the persona’s understanding of the significance of art and history, a discovery that may only take place in such situations like these. The significance of art is consistently stressed throughout the poem through the use of artistic allusion, such as (“Jan van Eyck was here”) – a reference to the early Netherlandish artist. Furthermore, the historical allusion to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish soldier (“So Cortes returned perhaps to the Old World after-”) implies a relationship between the emotions experienced by Cortes after discovering the riches of the Aztec Empire and the persona looking at the painting. Hence, through this text it becomes clear that the persona’s renewed understanding of the intensity of emotion and wealth of knowledge that art and history can provide is often instigated and responsive to their physical settings.

Furthermore, Punctured also demonstrates how the physical setting of a persona can influence the nature of their discovery as the dystopian nature of the central character’s world compels him to embark on a journey to discovery. The context of the central character is established through the opening, establishing shot, which is a slow angled pan. This portrays the world on an axis, representing the character’s discontent with his life and society and the dark bleakness of it. Inherently, it is the nature of this world that provokes his curiosity and necessity to discover the world outside his own. This is represented through the coloured balloon that he flies away with, marking the start of his process of discovery. In this scene, there is also a dramatic increase in brightness as this last balloon emerges, which symbolises his heightened curiosity in the coloured balloons that do not belong to this world. They also act as an opportunity to discover the outside world. The actual discovery of the character comes from his realisation that there is another world besides his own – the existence of a world that is exciting and bright. This is conveyed through the change in colour palette from black and white to sepia and golden. The portrayal of the dystopian world and the catalysing effect it has on discovery, reveals how the context of individuals often shapes their process of discovery and the discovery itself.

Discoveries can also be influenced by an individual's metaphysical world - this being their emotional and mental states. This is explored in *Young Girl at a Window*, where the context – the cusp of adolescence – forces the girl to develop new perspectives towards time and adulthood. Her change in perception of this new phase in life is embodied in the ode-like structure of the poem. The first stanza acts to set the context of the poem and present the complication. This can be seen through the visual imagery in “*the fading air is stained with red*” which alludes to the red glow of dusk. Hence, this foreshadows the coming of a new day and relates to the girl's position in life – she about to enter the next phase of life, adulthood. A melancholy tone is established here, through the diction of words such as “*sighing*” which has negative connotations of resignation, defeat and tiredness. This is indicative of her reluctance to enter this new stage of life. The second phase seeks to add commentary or add a counterargument and represents the beginning of her acceptance of adulthood as it draws nearer. This idea is conveyed in the opening line of the stanza “*or Time was lost*”. The word “*or*” indicates a new way of thinking and creates a sense of hope or possibility. The third stanza is where the conflicting currents of the first two stanzas are resolving – ultimately this is where she comes to understand and accept the inevitability of time. These renewed perceptions are marked by the change in tone from melancholy to definite and determined, which is established in the opening line “*Over the gently-turning hills*”. The distinctly soft imagery creates a peaceful atmosphere and contrasts that of the first two stanzas. The hills can be seen to be representative of this next phase of life, although “*gently turning*” suggest that it is not an insurmountable task. This positive outlook further demonstrates her perceptions of the future. Ultimately, her renewed perceptions of life and adulthood are a direct consequence of the situation she finds herself in, on the cusp of adolescence. This supports the idea that often an individual's metaphysical context can guide them to discoveries.

In essence, these texts explore how an individual's context often shapes their process of discovery and the discovery itself. In *Wonder* and *Punctured*, the physical situations the characters find themselves in, ultimately catalyse their process of discovery, and the discoveries made are a direct response to these situations. *Young Girl at a Window* demonstrates how an individual's emotional and mental world can be the motivation for discoveries and inevitably lead to a shift in these worlds.