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In the poetic sequence “Modern Love,” George Meredith uses a wealth of figurative language and metaphors to portray a view of modern love as being akin to living death. This bleak, pessimistic view is communicated primarily through his use of personification and metaphor as means to characterise modern lovers.

The two characters of this piece, an unidentified “he” (line 1) and a similarly unidentified “she” (line 1), are bound, tragic figures that serve to illustrate modern love at its worst. Their marriage bed, called only a “common bed” (line 3), appears to lack the fiery passion and love traditionally associated with marriage. The wife’s internal reality, revealed to us through the poet’s use of indirect characterization, becomes apparent as “she wept with waking eyes” (line 5). Clearly, she is miserable in her marriage, and openly demonstrates this discontent through, “the strange low sobs that shook their common bed” (line 6). The wife’s external reality, described as “stone-still” (line 7) in a metaphoric metaphor, also implies how unhappy she is.

Her husband appears to share a similar attitude toward their “marriage tomb” (line 15); he feels that his wife’s weeping is “dreadfully venomous to him” (line 16), indicating the feelings of resentment and bitterness he harbours toward her. This gives the reader some insight into his internal reality and serves to illustrate how Meredith views modern love. The lovers in this sequence, characterised with similes comparing them to “sculptured effigies” (line 14), devoid of life and passion, are only the primary means that the speaker
utilizes to convey his views on modern love. Their
stony, passionless attitudes toward each other are
painful to read, but they effectively communicate
the nature of their love

Another significant means by which the
speaker communicates his ideas on modern love is
figurative language and imagery. He employs personification
particularly well in illustrating modern love, lending
human characteristics to the wife’s “waking eyes,” (1.1)
the husband’s “hand’s light jerks” (1.2), the woman’s
soas “that shook their common bed” (1.3), and her
“giant heart” (line 9) which is egged on to “drink
the pale dregs of silence” (line 10). Each of these
examples serves to dehumanize the character; it is as if their individual
eyes and hearts and hands must act independently
of them because they are so paralysed. So “stone-still
(1.7) by their passionless love. The
speaker also uses several effective metaphors and
similes to portray modern love in all its misery.
He makes a comparison between the wife’s soas and
“little gaping snakes” (1.5), thereby communicating the
attitude of revulsion and distaste in which she is
held. The clear lack of affection for her is evident.
It appears that her response to this is to
lay/stone-still... with muffled pulses” (1ns.6-8); in
this description, the speaker is employing a metaphor
likening her to a corpse. This morbid comparison
serves to further emphasize the deathlike qualities of
modern love.

The final, most powerful literary device present in this poem is a conceit comparing the husband and wife to "sculptured effigies... upon their marriage-tomb" (lines 14-15). This poignant comparison truly conveys Meredith's attitude toward modern love; through their marriage, they have effectively committed themselves to a lifetime of death. The passion, the joy, the exuberance that once characterized their relationship has been replaced by a single common metaphorical desire: "the sword that severs all" (line 16). The reader realizes that the modern lovers desire nothing but death, fully understand the tragedy of modern love as portrayed by J. Meredith. Not only does it steal the joie de vivre of young, beautiful couples, it leaves them with nothing but a miserable series of "dead black years" (l. 12) behind them, full of sorrow, misery, and regret.
The phrase used frequently in weddings, “till death do us part,” has lately become void of meaning when modern couples take and break this oath easily. This was not always the case. People used to endure such inconvenient marriages to the point that both partners suffered. In a time when marriage was forever, the English writer George Meredith sounds his silent rebellion in his poem “Modern Love.” He begins his story by telling how the first discovery that his wife is unhappy. He describes how her hands light quiver by her head.” (line 2) she begins to cry uncontrollably. Surely this is not the love that the man married. Meredith is portraying how after marriage the woman in love is changed to the extent that the touch of her lover, now husband’s hand is revolting. And yet in spite of her obvious discomfort, the marriage continues and she remains sharing his bed.

The apparent unhappiness of the woman has a drastic effect on the man, and Meredith uses images of venomous snakes and poison to portray these feelings. With each tear the woman cries the man feels “gaping snakes” that are “deeply venomous to him” (line 5-6). The man, like the woman, remains in this torturous marriage and feels the pain of its endurance. Once again, it is pointed out that love is gone, and that only pressure...
from society is keeping the two together. The passage continues to reveal the pains of an old-fashioned marriage that is not held together by love. In the end all the couple really has left is “vain regret” (line 13) that years of tear-filled nights have provided. That is not love. All this could have been prevented if the couple had adhered to a view of modern love. This is a love without regrets and poison. If they had had the courage to end it, they could have each other again rather than dying together, bitter and yet alone through the couple had a sword between them. Their entire life, but lacked the sword that severs all” (line 16) and as a result were unhappy and without love. Modern love is given freely and taken away just as easily. Modern love is also knowing when to let go.

George Meredith had a modern view of love which can be seen through his poem “modern love.” In it he shows a dead, old-fashioned love which could have been saved. It shows that love between two people doesn’t always last forever, and in a modern world, it needs to be recognized.
The "modern love" concept is seen in the couple's relationship that has been lost in the past through regret and sorrow.

Lines 1-6 depict the relationship between the husband and the wife. He knows her sorrows simply "at his heart's light quiver by her head" (1.6). Her sorrows are too big for her, she cannot escape them, and they poison her husband. Her crying "shook their common bed" (1.3) but this is the only thing they share. The husband too does not see is not able to share in his wife's sorrow because they are constantly present. This is seen through the simile: "like little worn-out gaping smiles," (1.5) where the snake, portrayed as an evil animal, stares without rest, ready to strike, yet simply a presence. His wife's evil sorrows never go anywhere, they are constantly watching to strike his husband.

The wife carries her burdens throughout the night that never seems to end. The author personifies memory and tears, they "drink the pale drug of silence," (1.10) that keep sleep away, and keep her awake, bringing up the past full of sorrows. They were "looking through their dead black year, / By vain regret scanned over the blank wall." (12-13) The woman keeps on looking to her past, though this is futile because she cannot change it, and the past is gone, like a "the blank wall." (1.13)

Even until their death, do they carry the burden of the past, in that they have forgotten to look at what they do have. Both are stuck in "wishing for the sword that sever all." (1.6) it because they have lost what they do have in the past. Modern love is empty and full of regrets.

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