ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY

(Accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC (with CGPA: 3.64) in the Third Cycle and Graded as category - I University by MHRD-UGC)
(A State University Established by the Government of Tamilnadu)

KARAIKUDI – 630 003

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

B.A. (ENGLISH)

Second Year – Third Semester

11233

VICTORIAN LITERATURE

Authors:
Dr. M. SUMITHRA
Assistant Professor in English Literature
Sourashtra College, Madurai.
(Unit 1-7)

Dr. DAVID SYDNEY BASIL
Professor in English (Rtd),
Urumu Dhanalakshmi College,Trichy-20
(Unit 8-14)

Reviewer:
Dr. D. BASKARAN
Assistant Professor in Education
Department of Education
Directorate of Distance Education
Alagappa University
Karaikudi.

SYLLABI **PAGE NO**

BLOCK I: POETRY – I

CONTENT **PAGE NO**

BLOCK – I : POETRY - I

UNIT-1 VICTORIAN AGE: *SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, RELIGIOUS AND LITERARY TENDENCIES*

Structure

1.1 Social Conditions

The Victorian Age belongs to the reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901 in Britain. It was a peaceful and prosperous time with many social problems. The social classes of this era included the Upper class, Middle class, and Lower class. The Upper class were landowners who were making profitable investments and did not do any manual labour. Instead they hired lower class workers to work for them. They were divided into three subcategories, the Royals (members of royal family), the Middle Upper (important officers and lords) and the Lower Upper (wealthy men and business owners).

The Middle class consisting of skilled people called as 'Bourgeoisie' expanded during this age due to the rapid growth of industries, transportation and economy. As domestic and overseas trade flourished, merchants and shopkeepers grew more in number. The exponential growth of new industries, banks, railway lines, coal mines and cities needed more labour. More white collared professionals were needed for the administrative works and they ascended up quickly in the rankings and salary. Moreover, the Middle class were divided into two subcategories, Higher Middle class and Lower Middle class. People from the Lower Middle class worked under those in the Higher level.

The Lower class were divided into the Working class and the Underclass. The Working class consisted of unskilled labourers who worked in harsh and unsanitary conditions. They did not have access to clean food, water or

clothing, proper shelter and education for their children. Often, they lived on the streets far away from the work place. Many workers used drugs like opium and alcohol to survive their hardships. The Underclass were those who were helpless and depended on others for support, like young orphans and unskilled women. The unskilled women did not get any jobs eventually became prostitutes.

The Underclass children were forced to do hard jobs like the coal miners, chimney sweepers, farm workers, railway line laying workers and domestic servants due to greater demand for labour. The cruellest form of child labour was seen in coal mines with 12 to 18 working hours a day, infested with rats and disease. The dangerous and poorly ventilated working conditions led to the increase in respiratory diseases and mine accidents among children.

As the population continued to expand, the poverty created unstable marriages among the Lower class parents. The term illegitimacy or having children out of wedlock became popular. Such children were considered a 'bastard' when the male would leave the support and care of the child to the female. As a result, the Bastardy Clause (the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834) was enacted to issue relief for illegitimate children. The law prohibited local churches from giving away any help to unwed mothers. The law forced women and their bastard children to go to workhouses. Even with such horrible reputation some people accepted this law as it would provide food, clothing and schooling for those children.

The industrialization and urbanization led to a greater need for different kinds of paid fosterage. The poor women servants lived in their employers' homes without their children because they could not afford to have their children along with them. Such mothers were determined to keep working in the city as wages were higher, but chose to keep their children in villages and towns under the care of total strangers. This form of neglect led to worsened behaviour of children.

The Queen Victoria's lifestyle represented a femininity that revolved around her family, motherhood and respectability. The woman's responsibilities were to love and respect her husband, perform the duties of running the house started. Her devotion to her husband Albert and her nine children became a sign of femininity. During this period, the roles of men and women became more sharply defined than they were living in 'Separate Spheres.' Women were best suited for the domestic sphere because they were considered physically weaker but morally superior. The men travelled long distance to do work, leaving the women in home to take care of the house. After the marriage, everything including the body, property, and money of women belonged to her husband.

The responsibilities of Upper-class and aristocratic women were to oversee the servants and organizing dinner parties. The women proved their homemaking skills, and served just as symbols of social status. The Lower class women were distinguished from the upper class by having less education and fewer opportunities. Most Lower class women worked as domestic cook, maid, or laundress to a wealthier woman not able to properly taken care of their children. Further they were employed as

barmaids, waitresses, chambermaids, and washerwomen. Such mothers had to pay some other very elderly or very young women to watch their children during their working hours. Besides their actual jobs they had to do all of the household errands themselves because working women could not afford to pay for servants.

The need for a police force was mandatory due to increased violence due to rapid industrialisation and Robert Peele sponsored the Metropolitan Police Act in 1829. As a result of the uniformed police forces called the Metropolitan Police was formed at Scotland Yard. They replaced military troops and militia as the peacekeeping force in the London metropolitan area. In early years, the police had minimal authority, but their jurisdiction grew as the crime rates were high. The poor 'criminal class' and the members of this underworld lived in the East End of London robbed the respectable people who lived in the West End of London. In the fiction *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, Fagin and his boys spent their time robbing wealthy gentlemen. The crime rates began to decline after the growth of the police force. Various punishments were imprisonment, flogging, capital punishment, isolation, forced silence, and bible study. Abel Magwitch in Dickens' fiction *Great Expectations*, was sent to Australia to serve the prison sentence. Garrotting became a common style of crime for robbery and poems were written from the perspective of the garrotter. The design of spiked collars became famous and was worn for protection by the scared Upper class.

1.2 Political conditions

Under the monarchy of Queen Victoria the English government was formed comprising of a Parliament. The Parliament was a Bicameral legislature and it consisted of The House of Lords (appointed and not elected by public voting) and The House of Commons (elected by the common people). These houses met separately, passed bills which were made as a law by winning majority votes in both the houses.

The two strong political parties in the Victorian period were The Whigs (Liberals) and the Tories (Conservatives). The Whigs supported the growth of the Parliament and wanted to control the Royal power. They were of the opinion that Parliament should take all the decisions and all men irrespective of their social status or economy should have a right to vote. The Tories, favoured monarchy and many rich officials belonging to high posts were members of this party. They supported the voting rights for only the rich men and who owned large plots of land.

'Colonialism' occurs when one nation expands its territory beyond its own borders and establishes either colonies or administrative dependencies through which they rule the people native to the land. The colonizers further take control of the resources, finances and the labour markets of the occupied countries. During the Victorian period, the British Empire was described as 'high empire' because it conquered a huge amount of territory and colonized a massive proportion of the world's population.

'Cultural Imperialism' is the process whereby one nation dominates another, by enforcing their culture and language upon the colonized people. A fear of degeneration of the natives and reversion to a state of savagery were instilled into the minds of the colonized by this process.

'Orientalising' is a process by which Western writers described the colonised people to possessing feminized, childish and exotic characters, rather than trying to understand the reality and cultural values of the colonized nation.

In 1858, India came under the direct control of the Queen Victoria from the British East India Company. In 1876, she was proclaimed Empress of India and the British rule in the country lasted until 1947. India saw a huge development in the construction of canals, roads, and railway under British rule. The Common wealth countries emerged. The British directly ruled in India, Africa, and the West Indies. But the Empire expanded to Australia, New Zealand, and Canada under self-governance.

Check your Progress-1

A.What are the divisions and subdivisions in the social class of Victorian age?

B.What is the type of parliament seen in Victorian Age?

1.3 Economic Conditions

The First Industrial Revolution began at the end of the eighteenth century, starting with the mechanisation of the textile industry. The power looms required unskilled operators to work the machines of the modern mills. The skilled handloom weavers and spinners working from home lost their income. The structure of the family unit changed due to the migration of the males from villages to towns and cities for working.

The Second Industrial Revolution began from the mid and extended to the late nineteenth century with further advances in mechanisation. The development of steam power paved way to increased production of clothes which paved way for the development in international trade. Britain became the chief provider of cotton goods to the rest of the world. Further industrialisation required more labour which led to exponential increase in urbanisation. Upper class owners ran their mills for extended profit by exploiting the workers with long working hours under horrible conditions. With very few laws to protect the working men, women and children suffered death and succumbed to cotton industry related lung diseases.

The 1830s saw the rapid construction of the railway lines changing the rural and urban landscapes. Faster means of transport challenged traditional beliefs of time, space and distance giving rise to new growth opportunities for trade and commerce. The government fixed low fares to the railway

companies which in turn led to increase of commuting (travelling) trains increasing the mobility from country side to the cities.

In the early to mid nineteenth century, the advanced technology of printing, along with the mass production of paper and the decreased travelling time gave rise to a new reading class of people. Current events were printed and sold in single sheets of paper as street ballads (broadsheets) with simple rhymes and rhythms. The literacy levels increased as the newspapers and periodicals were available. Popular periodicals carried many novels and short stories published

in serial form. Cheap books, called 'yellow backs' were sold in railway stations throughout the country and became hugely popular among the rising middle class travellers. For the first time 'circulating libraries' came into existence meant for renting new novels.

The industrialisation was not without its own drawbacks. In 1811, at Nottinghamshire, a series of riots took place, breaking machines. These riots marked the beginning of 'The Luddites' who were supporters of anti-industrialization and demanded the urgent need for better working conditions in the industries. Charlotte Bronte's novel *Shirley* (1849) portrayed the uprisings of the Luddites in the textile industry of Yorkshire. Industrialisation in the mid nineteenth century saw the beginnings of trade unions and unfruitful strike protests. However, with absence of protective laws and rights, protests were hard to be sustained and vitnessed employers often blacklisting the strikers. William Blake's mentioned 'chartered streets' in the poem *London*, and 'dark, satanic mills' in *Jerusalem* that showered some light on the labour protests. A set of protest poems like *A Voice from the Factories* (1836) by Caroline Norton's and *Song of the Shirt* (1843) by Thomas Hood highlighted the sufferings of the exploited working classes in industrial cities. The poem, *The Cry of the Children* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning expresses the poet's rage on the reports of the Children's Employment Commission of 1842. The novel *Alton Locke* by Charles Kingsley showed the disasters of industrialisation and the rise of the Chartist movement. 'Chartism' was a working class movement, which started in 1836 and was active between 1838 and 1848. The aim of the Chartists was to get political rights and power for the Working class.

1.4 Religious Conditions

Most of the nineteenth Century writers were strongly influenced by the King James Version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Victorian fictions are characterised by direct references to the Book of Common Prayer and to this Bible. Churches were built in the new industrial cities with regular attendance by major population. The language of the Bible and rhymes recited in the sermons every week in churches were referred in the fictions. Churches continued to be centres of the communal life in villages, towns and old cities. Moreover, even non Christians or non believers of Christianity, tried to follow the moral and ethical standards of the Christians. Churches sprang up on every street

corners with good attendance on every Sunday mornings. Preachers got a wide audience in meeting halls, on television and radio.

The government supported 'Church of England' was the dominant church in Victorian Age in terms of numbers and memberships. During the eighteenth century, there had been great dissatisfaction with the very formal Anglican Church. New religious movements like the Methodist and the Baptist weralso increasing with their combined chapels or nonconformist churches. During the English Civil War, the Congregationalist churches had developed from the Independent churches that separated from the Church of England collectively known as Dissenting or Nonconformist churches. These new sects had arisen because people wanted a simpler, direct religious form of Worship without priests and rituals. These Methodists and the Baptists were predominantly lower class. A social distinction was indicated by describing people to either 'church' (Anglican) or 'chapel' (Nonconformist) goers.

Evangelicalism became a powerful movement within the Church of England. Many members of the Anglican Church had considerations with the views of the Dissenting Churches. In the early nineteenth century, an Evangelical Movement began in the Anglican Church, inspired by the Methodist movement referred to as 'Low Church Anglicanism.' But Evangelicals believed that human beings are profoundly affected by sin and therefore unable to achieve a close relationship with God by their own efforts, however hard they try.

Christianity promoted the piousness among individuals. Missionaries were sent to other countries to spread Christianity by setting many charities to support the upliftment of the natives. They fought for abolition of slavery. The great Evangelical social reformer, William Wilberforce was one of the leaders of the campaign to end slavery in Britain. Lord Shaftesbury worked to end poverty and the exploitation of children.

The nation's political and church leaders were mostly the Oxford and Cambridge educated and was mostly Anglicans. But Evangelicalism never penetrated the two main universities in England in the nineteenth century because they were forts of die-hard Anglicanism. In 1833, John Keble, an Anglican clergyman circulated a series of tracts, leaflets arguing a point of view called 'Tracts for the Times' at Oxford. He wanted a stricter observance of the rituals said in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. These tracts wanted the Church of England to be more conservative like the Roman Catholic Church (headed by the Pope). The opponents of this method of prayers, it meant going back to the time before the Reformation period. To the supporters, this method of ritualistic beauty and drama in prayer service is meant to enhance interest in the church service and spiritual energy. This 'Oxford Movement' or the 'High Church revival' was carried out by an influential group of people known as 'Tractarians' or 'Puseyites' after their leader, Edward Pusey. Today the term Anglo-Catholic is often used for Anglicans who like to support their practice of

the Roman Catholic Church. Tractarians supported the ritual in worship. They observed the seasons of the church year and the Saints' days. Their clergymen and choir wore ornate robes and used the incense and other aesthetic things during the rituals.

Although England was a Protestant country three centuries before since the Reformation period under the king Henry VIII, certain part of England was always Catholic. The North West England, Ireland, had remained largely Catholic, though Protestants had been forcibly made to settle in the Northern Ireland in the seventeenth century and highland areas of Scotland, had remained traditionally Catholic. There was no properly organized Catholic Church in England at that time. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the number of Catholics in Britain was increasing due large numbers of Irish migrating into England to find work in industries and to escape the famines back at Ireland. The refugees and immigrants from Europe were also often Catholic. As a result

in 1850, the Catholic Church re-organized itself under Cardinal Wiseman became its leading Archbishop at Westminster in England.

Many English people looked on the rebirth of the Catholic Church as a threat to Anglican Churches. After theologian and poet John Hendry Newman converted to Catholicism, the Pope conferred a doctorate on him and allowed him to become a Catholic clergyman as he was unmarried. Catholic priests should be unmarried and celibate. In 1879, he became a Cardinal in the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

Apart from the sectarian religious battle, there were more battles between scientific and theological concepts. *On the Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin gave the theory of evolution contradictory to the teachings of the Bible. New findings in geology also seemed to challenge the traditional, biblical view of earth's shape. Some German theologians considered that Bible was just a collection of writings of what men thought about God and therefore can be criticized. So the Bible was considered not to be absolutely true and scientific views challenged many biblical beliefs. Matthew Arnold and George Eliot expressed such philosophical thoughts in their works.

Many academics and clergymen in the Church of England started to agree with some of the challenges to biblical authority. Such challenging arguments on the traditional view of the Bible, Christ and Christianity were put forward by Benjamin Jowett, a tutor at Balliol College of Oxford was published as a book of essays called *Essays and Reviews* (1860). He was challenged by the Tractarians in courts. They could not stop Jowett from becoming Professor of Greek, in Oxford but they made sure that he did not get his salary. The last effort of the Tractarians' was the 1864 Oxford declaration, suggesting Jowett and his friends were guilty and ought to be expelled from the Church of England. However the Anglican Church started to accept varying views like that of Jowett. He used various terms such as 'Latitudinarians' or 'Broad Church'

for such thinking people. Today, we use the simpler terms 'liberals' and 'liberal theology' for such radical clergymen and academics who challenge the biblical thoughts with the scientific facts.

1.5 Literary tendencies

The literature that evolved during the reign of Queen Victoria entered a new period after the romantic revival called as the Victorian Age literature. Victorian literature is a fusion of romantic and realist style of writing because it was preceded by romanticism and was followed by modernism or realism. Victorian Age novels are lifelike pictures of difficult lives lived in that age in which hard work, determination, love and luck are factors for success. They were realistic, usually prone to improve the world with a central moral lesson concerned with inner mind or conscience. Victorian Age dramas, farces, musical burlesques, extravaganzas, and comic operas were equivalent to those of Shakespearean dramas. Serious dramas were written by dramatists like James Planche and Thomas William Robertson.

The discoveries and inventions of science had great effects upon the literature of the age. The Victorians took a great effort in describing and classifying the entire organisms and land forms. One scientific book in particular, *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin remains even famous as literature book. Although it took a long time for this work to be widely accepted, the theory of evolution in the book broke many perceptions of the Victorians about themselves. The book completely changed the future thoughts beliefs of the people and the literature itself.

The new genre called the fantastic fiction came out during this age in form of the old Gothic tales. These tales often centred on famous and larger-than-life fictional characters such as Sherlock Holmes (the famous detective of the times), Barry Lee (big time gang leader), Sexton Blake and Phileas Fogg. The evil characters like the Edward Hyde and Dracula were also equally famous.

All the great writers and literature of the Victorian Age had three general characteristics concerned with human progress. The works were realistic mainly concerned with practical problems and solutions. The Victorian literature moved away from the strict principle of 'art for art's sake' to 'art for moral or life sake.' Despite great economic, scientific and social revolutions, this was more like the age of pessimism and confusion. In general the Victorian Age literature characterizes practical or materialistic life but portrays a completely ideal life. The idealisms like justice, truth, love, brotherhood were emphasized equally by the poets, essayists and novelists of the age.

The significant Victorian novelists include Charles Dickens, the Bronte sisters, Lewis Carroll, Joseph Conrad, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Oscar Wilde, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Wilkie Collins , Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, George Meredith, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Gissing, Richard Jefferies, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, Bram Stoker, Philip Meadows Taylor, William Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, and George MacDonald. The significant Victorian poets include Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold, Christina Rossetti, A. E. Housman, Algernon Charles Swinburne and G.M. Hopkins. Charles Dickens was one of the English novelists who used his writings as a means to protect the weak people of the Victorian Age and criticize the societal structure of the time. He was successful in contributing to several important social reforms in the future. His social consciousness led to the writing of some of the most influential pieces of Victorian Age literature such as *Great Expectations, The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist* etc., Dickens was able to shower light on serious social issues which even the government failed to see. His works strongly influenced the people to think that something had to be done to reduce the social evils of that new industrialisation era.

Thomas Hardy was one of the novelists of the Victorian Era to write realistic novels with commanding emotions. His new style of pessimistic writing was highly criticized. His works such as *The Return of the Native, Far from the Madding Crowd, Tess of the d'Urbervilles* etc., introduced slightly satiric or very tragic characters with powerful and intense emotions. He is a social critic

Who portrays the low standards of life that the poor lived during this period of industrial revolution. This mix of realism and social criticism was the reason why Thomas Hardy was one of the most influential authors of the Victorian Age.

George Elliot was also an author who used literature to entertain and to portray the social conditions. Mary Ann Evans, who wrote under the pen name George Elliot, used her works to show how the social environment, affected the characters. Elliot believed that any work should be based on the real life like *The Mill on the Floss* was based on her real life experience of being rejected by her friends and family for her marriage.

Check your Progress-2

C. What was the cause and consequence of rapid economic growth in Victorian age?

D. What are the different sects of Christianity seen in Victorian Age?

1.6 Let us sum up

In the Victorian Age the literature transformed from romantic to realist style. The language, theme, content, diction, poetic devices and analogies were unique. Many poets, novelists and dramatists of this age produced famous realistic works which paved way for the modern literature. The knowledge about the social, economic, political, religious tendencies gives the learner to understand the background of the literary tendencies of this age. The section gives a brief account of the social, economic, political and religious conditions and how it influenced the Victorian literature.

1.7 Unit End Exercise

Section A Questions (2 marks)

1. What were the social divisions and social subdivisions seen in the Victorian age?

2. What is 'Bicameral Legislature and the two major Political parties in the Victorian Age?

3. Who are 'Tractarians?'

4. Name some of the Poets, Novelists and Dramatists in the Victorian Age.

5. What style of literature was followed in Victorian Age?

Section B Questions (5 marks)

1. Give a brief account on the Victorian age Class system.
2. Give a brief account on the Victorian age women and children.
3. Write the transformation of Victorian Literature from romantic into realist literature.
4. Write a short note on Charles Dickens.

5. Write a short note on Robert Browning.

Section C Questions (10 marks)

1. Give a detailed note on the Victorian Age Society enlightening the men, women, children, labours, middle class 'Bourgeois.'
2. Give a detailed account of the religious tendencies seen in the Victorian Age.

1.8 Answers to Check your Progress

A. What are the divisions and subdivisions in the social class of Victorian age?

The social classes in the Victorian Age were the Upper class, Middle class, and Lower class. The Upper class were landowners who were making profitable investments and did not do any manual labour. Instead they hired lower class workers to work for them. They were further divided into three subcategories, the Royals (members of royal family), the Middle Upper (important officers and lords) and the Lower Upper (wealthy men and business owners). The **Middle class** consisting of skilled people called as 'Bourgeoisie.' The Middle class were divided into two subcategories, Higher level Middle class and Lower level Middle class. The **Lower class** were divided into the Working class and the Underclass.

B. What is the type of parliament seen in Victorian Age?

Queen Victoria was the monarch of England. An English government was formed comprising of a Parliament. The Parliament was a Bicameral legislature and it consisted of The House of Lords (appointed and not elected by public voting) and The House of Commons (elected by the common people). These houses met separately and passed a bill and made as a law by winning majority votes in both the houses.

C. What was the cause and consequence of rapid economic growth in Victorian age?

The **First Industrial Revolution** began at the end of the eighteenth century, starting with the mechanisation of the textile industry. The **Second Industrial Revolution** began from the mid and extended to the late nineteenth century. This saw further advances in mechanisation. The rapid laying of **Railway lines** led to ease in transportation and hence rapid economic growth. The development of steam power paved way to increased production of clothes which paved way for the development in international trade. Further industrialisation needed more labour which led to exponential increase in urbanisation, horrible working conditions and industrial diseases.

D. What are the different sects of Christianity seen in Victorian Age?

The main sects of Christianity during the Victorian Age were the Protestants and the Roman Catholics. They were further divided into various sects like the Methodists, the Baptists, and the 'Tractarians.'

1.9 Suggested References

1. Birch, Dinah (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Seventh Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.2009. Print. ISBN 978-0-19-280687-1.

2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature* (Volume II).New Delhi: Supernova Publishers. 2010. 993-1048. Print. ISBN 978-81-899-304-48.

3. Rickett, Arthur Compton. *A History of English Literature.* New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. 2013. 403-596. Print. ISBN 978-81-85944-63-0.

4. Kumar, Satish. *A History of English Literature.* Agra: Lakshmi Narian Agarwal Pubisher.378-441. Print. ISBN 81-85778-70-1.

5. Long, J. William. *English Literature- Its History and Its Significance.* New Delhi: Surjeet Publications. 2009. 452-568. Print.

NOTES

UNIT-II ROBERT BROWNING: *ANDREA DEL SARTO*

Structure

2.1 Introduction

The poem *Andrea del Sarto* was written by Robert Browning and was published in the poetry collection called *Men and Women* (1855). It is written in the form of a dramatic monologue told from the perspective of the Italian Renaissance painter, *Andrea del Sarto.* It speaks about the ideal art, its value in the society, the worthiness of an artist, the attitude of great artists, and the setback in the speaker's life due to the influence of his wife. The theme and the form of the poem are typical of Victorian age works in following realism.

2.2 About the Poet

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, London (1812-1889). His interest in literature was due to his early education, family support, financial wellbeing and stimulation that he derived from his father's large library. He married a fellow poet Elizabeth Barrett and moved to live in Florence, Italy. They had a son in 1849. After the death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1861 Browning and his son moved back to England. Browning gained critical acclaim in his 50 years of age. The greatest work, *The Ring and the Book,* was published in 1868-69. The Browning Society was formed to honour him in Oxford University. He is a recipient of an honorary Doctorate of Civil Law from Balliol College at Oxford University.

2.3 About the Poem

Andrea del Sarto is one of Browning's dramatic monologue poems. Browning supports the fact that an art should not only portray the body or

image but also portray the soul. The poem was inspired by a renaissance artist Andrea del Sarto, originally called Andrea d' Agnolo. He was born in Florence, Italy on July 16, 1486 and died in Florence, Italy on September 29, 1530. He was the pupil of

Piero di Cosimo and was influenced by the painters Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Fra' Bartolommeo. His work belongs to the traditional Quattrocento, the fifteenth century painting. He was highly appreciated for his art and some called him *Andrea senza errori* meaning the 'unerring.' In this poem Browning accepts that any paintings which are free of errors are appreciable but that alone does not make a piece of art great. The poem is based on biographical material by Giorgio Vasari who is mentioned in the poem. He is a biographer of the artists of various periods.

2.4 Summary of *Andrea del Sarto*

The speaker in the poem is Andrea del Sarto is an artist. He requests his wife, Lucrezia, sit near him for a moment, without quarrelling and listen to him. He wants the both of them to have one silent moment together for discussing their course of life. He describes the appearance of his life. He adds that on passage of time, he lacks any control over his life.

In the majority lines of the poem, the speaker discusses about his artistic talents compared with that of other great artists. He believes that he has more ability than other famous painters such as Michelangelo or Raphael. But unfortunately he feels that his art does not have the life and the soul. The other famous artists are able to exploit that soul. They have entered into the heaven after leaving a great inspiration in the minds of the audience which he is never able to create. The artist is disappointed by the fact as no one seems to recognise the worthiness of his art.

The speaker then tries to put most of the blame for this unrewarding life due his wife's decision to return to Italy from France. He thinks that his wife has been binding him back and obstructing his development. He is also of the notion that the other great artists do not have similar problems because they are unmarried. He describes that his work was most admired by the people when he was in France working for the king.

In the end of the poem he concludes that his life has not been what he wanted it to be. He also knows that he cannot change it. However he is happy to have spent this time with his wife. Then on the arrival of Lucrezia's cousin their private moment is interrupted. The cousin demands money from Andrea del Sarto to pay off his debts acquired due to gambling. He sadly accepts this request and asks his wife, to go away and carry on with her work.

2.5 Analysis of *Andrea del Sarto*

But do not let us quarrel any more,

No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:

Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.

NOTES

You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?

I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,

Treat his own subject after his own way,

Fix his own time, accept too his own price,

And shut the money into this small hand

When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?

Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love!

Andrea del Sarto who is the speaker of this poem addresses to his wife, Lucrezia. Although there are two characters in this poem and many parts of the poem are in monologue form. He asks her if they can just have one private moment, without fighting or quarrel. He assures that if she listens to him once, he will yield to all her wishes. Although Lucrezia turns her 'face' towards the speaker, he does not believe her willingness to listen to him. He asks her if she is bringing 'her heart' to their conversation. In return Andrea Del Sarto tells his wife that he is willing to do what she asked and pay or lend money to her 'friend's friend.' It is unclear why the friend is in need of money but he promises to give it 'to-morrow.'

I often am much wearier than you think,

This evening more than usual, and it seems

As if—forgive now—should you let me sit

Here by the window with your hand in mine

And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,

Both of one mind, as married people use,

Quietly, quietly the evening through,

I might get up to-morrow to my work

Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.

To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!

That evening, the speaker is much 'wearier' than the knowledge of his wife. To help him out of this frustration, Andrea del Sarto asks Lucrezia to sit by him, quietly, with hand in hand, with a receptive mind and think about their life in 'Fiesole,' (a place in Florence, Italy). Together they are to sit and talk with each other, so that he will be able to refresh for the next day's work. He modestly requests her attention in these lines for an intimate discussion about their life.

Your soft hand is a woman of itself,

And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.

Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve

For each of the five pictures we require:

NOTES

It saves a model. So! keep looking so—

My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!

—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,

Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—

The speaker considers his wife's 'soft hand' as a representation of her soft nature as a woman. He considers his tough nature to 'the man's bared breast,' where her entire soft body that can curl. He is cherishing her as a 'serpentining beauty' who can serve as a model instead of paid models for 'five pictures' (paintings) that he is planning to draw. He finds her to be of immaculate beauty and questions her why she should pierce her 'perfect ear' to wear pearl earrings.

My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,

Which everybody looks on and calls his,

And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,

While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.

You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,

There's what we painters call our harmony!

A common greyness silvers everything,—

All in a twilight, you and I alike

—You, at the point of your first pride in me

(That's gone you know),—but I, at every point;

My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down

To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.

He praises the beauty of his wife to that of a moon. He thinks about her image that is hanging as paintings in the homes of his buyers. Every men looking at her on the painting considers her to be theirs but the speaker says that truly she does not belong to any of them. He strongly believes that Lucrezia is the perfect model for his work and the power of her smile could inspire him to finish the painting in no time. She is what 'painters call our harmony.' He remembers a time when they were young lovers, new to each other, she was proud of him and his profession. But now he knows that those good times have 'gone' and his 'youth…hope… (and) art' has gone down or 'toned down' in his life. His life is not as good as he expected in Fiesole.

There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;

That length of convent-wall across the way

Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;

NOTES

The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,

And autumn grows, autumn in everything.

Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape

As if I saw alike my work and self

And all that I was born to be and do,

A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.

How strange now, looks the life he makes us lead;

So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!

The speaker can hear the 'clinking' of a bell 'from the chapel-top' and see the 'last monk,' leaving the garden at the end of the day, on looking out from their home in Fiesole. The autumn season falls and withering occurs in everything around is a symbolism for the deterioration of his art. The speaker wonders the way in which 'we,' (that is he, his wife and everyone) are in 'God's hand.' He wonders how the God has made their life strange that is both 'free' and 'fettered' or tied to chains at the same time.

I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!

This chamber for example—turn your head—

All that's behind us! You don't understand

Nor care to understand about my art,

But you can hear at least when people speak:

And that cartoon, the second from the door

—It is the thing, Love! so such things should be—

Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.

The speaker expresses the grief that God has put him to 'fetter.' He believes that his wife and the audience did not care to understand his art. Andrea Del Sarto mentions that there is a rare instance of happiness when people commented his 'cartoon,' as 'the thing' of 'Love!' He is now bold enough to say that his work is not understood to the extent it deserves.

I can do with my pencil what I know,

What I see, what at bottom of my heart

I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—

Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,

I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,

Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,

And just as much they used to say in France.

At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!

The speaker is very much aware of his skills and his ability to create a painting right from the 'bottom of' his heart. It is very easy for him to create a painting, 'perfectly' which others struggle to do. He stresses the fact that he is not boasting. His ease of creation was praised back in France which 'yourself,' meaning Lucrezia, as a judge had approved.

No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:

I do what many dream of, all their lives,

—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,

And fail in doing. I could count twenty such

On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,

Who strive—you don't know how the others strive

To paint a little thing like that you smeared

Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—

Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,

(I know his name, no matter)—so much less!

The speaker goes on to praise his ability that he does not need any sketch or study a subject before he paints. He is able to do what many 'strive to do, and agonize to do, And fail in doing.' There are twenty such men in this town calling themselves as painters who struggle to correct even a smear or smudge in a painting.

Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.

There burns a truer light of God in them,

In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,

Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt

This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.

Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,

Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,

Enter and take their place there sure enough,

Though they come back and cannot tell the world.

My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.

Although the speaker is a talented artist, he feels that he does not have something that the other painters have. They possess a true light of God that exists in their 'vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain.' Andrea Del Sarto speaking low about himself, that with his hands of a 'craftsman,' he creates painting with only skills and not with heart. He is depressed that his art is 'shut' out of heaven where the other artists are readily entering

NOTES

and exiting with the subjects they paint. They cannot tell that his painting is also very close to heaven but he sits there without any recognition.

The sudden blood of these men! at a word—

Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.

I, painting from myself and to myself,

Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame

Or their praise either. Somebody remarks

Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,

His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,

Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?

Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?

The speaker expresses his severe frustration at the condition of his artistic ability. He is different from the other artists in being unaffected by others comments. He sees the other artists are easily upset or disturbed both on praise or blame on their work. He is as composed and undisturbed as a mountain, whenever someone comments on his work he thinks, 'what of that?' He doesn't care and lets others to speak as they please.

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,

Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-grey,

Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!

I know both what I want and what might gain,

And yet how profitless to know, to sigh

"Had I been two, another and myself,

"Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.

Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth

The Urbinate who died five years ago.

('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)

The speaker says that a man should always reach for unachievable things. The way he looks at himself and his work in a 'Placid' way bothers him. Although he is able to see what he wants to create, he is unable to instil his art with the soul that other's works have. He sighs and thinks that if he had been 'two' different people in one body, that is himself and someone with the skill like that of Michelangelo, he would have conquered the world of art. From where the speaker is sitting he references a piece of

art across the room. He is referencing to a painting in their room that was sent to him by the famous Italian biographer of artists, 'George Vasari.'

Well, I can fancy how he did it all,

Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,

Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,

Above and through his art—for it gives way;

That arm is wrongly put—and there again—

A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,

Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,

He means right—that, a child may understand.

The speaker describes about the particular painting hanging in their room and knows how it was painted and how the artist 'Pouring[ed] his soul' into the art for 'kings and popes to see.' The art may be beautiful in its outset but as an artist Andrea del Sarto can see that the 'arm is wrongly put' and that there are faults in the 'drawing's lines.' But these faults are excused by the audience because the 'soul is right' and even a child could understand the painting.

Check your Progress-

A. Who is the speaker in the poem *Andrea del Sarto* and to whom is he speaking?

B. What is the subject of discussion between the characters?

Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:

But all the play, the insight and the stretch—

(Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?

Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,

We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!

Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—

More than I merit, yes, by many times.

But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,

And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,

And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird

The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare —

Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!

NOTES

The speaker admires that even though the arm is not right, it is still beautiful and he knows that he could fix it with his skill. Once again he moans the fact that his wife had not given the soul to rise above everyone else. They could have even become more famous than Rafael. He says that Lucrezia had met his expectations more than his worth. But with all her beauty if she had brought with her 'a mind,' (a mind to support the speaker) then his life might have improved. He blames her for his disappointment in life.

Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged

"God and the glory! never care for gain.

"The present by the future, what is that?

"Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!

"Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"

I might have done it for you. So it seems:

Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.

Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;

The rest avail not. Why do I need you?

What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?

The speaker states that some women bring brains with them into their marriages. He asks his wife why he needs her. He further says that he should never have given his wife the first place. Michelangelo and Raphael became great artists because they proposed art to be in first place rather than personal life. Both of them were not legally married to anyone. He had wished to raise his fame to the level of 'Agnolo,' (Michelangelo) or up to 'Rafael' (Raphael). If she had ordered for such a status from him, he might have done it for her. But he further says that it would not have worked because God controls everything.

In this world, who can do a thing, will not;

And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:

Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—

And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,

God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.

'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,

That I am something underrated here,

Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.

I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,

For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.

NOTES

The best is when they pass and look aside;

But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.

The speaker says that in this world the men who do something are unable to accomplish it and the men who can do it, will not do it. He and his 'half-men' had to struggle with half the talent they possessed in order to win. He hates to

accept this 'half-men' fact and decides that it is safer for him to have been given an underrated life. He finds it difficult to occasionally interact with the 'Paris lords.' He finds it better when they ignore him. This shows the development of an inferior mindset of the artist.

Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,

And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!

I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,

Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,

In that humane great monarch's golden look,—

One finger in his beard or twisted curl

Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,

One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,

The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,

I painting proudly with his breath on me,

All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,

Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls

Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—

The speaker remembers working for 'Francis,' the king of France at Fontainebleau, for a year. It was the time when he had confidence because he had equal glory as that of Raphael. He tells how enjoyed his closeness with the king. He remembers how Francis' jewellery sounded when he walked and stood over his shoulder when the speaker was painting. When he had this position, he was admired by the men in the French court. He says that is his confidence profoundly increases when his paintings could influence them.

And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,

This in the background, waiting on my work,

To crown the issue with a last reward!

A good time, was it not, my kingly days?

And had you not grown restless… but I know—

NOTES

'Tis done and past: 'twas right, my instinct said:

Too live the life grew, golden and not grey,

And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt

Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.

How could it end in any other way?

The speaker remembers that those days were his best and he felt 'kingly.' She was waiting for him, and approving of his work during that golden period. He is sure that her if she 'had (you) not grown restless…'and made him leave France, he might have had a brighter future. At this point of life he is like a 'weak-eyed bat' that cannot be tempted out of his 'four walls' (confinement) by any 'sun.' He pessimistically concludes by saying that the life could have ended in a better way.

You called me, and I came home to your heart.

The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since

I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?

Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,

You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!

"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;

"The Roman's is the better when you pray,

"But still the other's Virgin was his wife—"

Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge

Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows

My better fortune, I resolve to think.

The speaker obliged to Lucrezia's request and came home probably bored with the life in France. He thinks that although succeeding in ending living up with her, rather than painting was his 'better fortune.'

For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,

Said one day Agnolo, his very self,

To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .

(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts

Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,

Too lifted up in heart because of it)

"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub

"Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,

"Who, were he set to plan and execute

NOTES

"As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,

"Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"

The speaker continues to speak to his wife pleading her to understand the daily suffering he undergoes when he thinks about his low position compared to the great artists. He imagines a conversation about him, done by the two great painters, Raphael and Michelangelo. Michelangelo says, as he paints in Rome, that there is another unacknowledged artist (Andrea del Sato) who paints well in Florence. Michelanchelo further adds up that if he were to be given the same support as received by Raphael, then he would give him a serious competition. Raphael would have 'sweat' on his 'brow' to retain his place if Andrea del Sato was given a fair chance. That is Raphael would have feared to maintain his position in the art world if Andrea del Sarto was given an equal opportunity.

To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.

I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,

Give the chalk here—quick, thus, the line should go!

Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!

Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,

(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?

Do you forget already words like those?)

If really there was such a chance, so lost,—

Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.

Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!

This hour has been an hour! Another smile?

The speaker tries to correct the mistake in Rafael's painting but then backs up not wanting to destroy the 'soul of the painting.' If 'really there was such a chance,' he could have created a famous painting and Lucrezia would have been pleased of him. He comes to the reality that already an hour has passed by doing this productive conversation.

If you would sit thus by me every night

I should work better, do you comprehend?

I mean that I should earn more, give you more.

See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;

Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,

NOTES

The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.

Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,

Inside the melancholy little house

We built to be so gay with. God is just.

The speaker tells her that he would create better work, earn more and care more for her if she sits with him every night like that day. In the 'settled dusk,' there is a star in the sky and the owls are hooting. He pleads her to come away from the window. He requests her to come deeper into his life and into their 'melancholy little house' which was very happy once upon a time.

King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights

When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,

The walls become illumined, brick from brick

Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,

That gold of his I did cement them with!

Let us but love each other. Must you go?

That Cousin here again? he waits outside?

Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?

More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?

Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?

The speaker thinks of how the king of France regarded him; he stares around the room imagining the house to have transformed into a palace. But his dream is interrupted by the appearance of his wife's Cousin who is waiting outside, demanding money to pay off his gambling debts. He now doubts that if she had kindly smiled at him over the last hour in an order to get some money for her cousin's needs. But he says that a real concerned smile is the need of the hour which would bring them good fortunes for her to spend.

While hand and eye and something of a heart

Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?

I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit

The grey remainder of the evening out,

Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly

How I could paint, were I but back in France,

One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,

NOTES

Not yours this time! I want you at my side

To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—

Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.

Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.

Andrea del Sarto expresses pain of loss because his wife is going to leave him then. He adds that he agrees to pay the money her cousin wants only if he can be let alone to think for the rest of the evening. He thinks that he wants to paint one more picture which would depict the 'Virgin's face,' not modelled after Lucrezia. He wants her just to sit there beside him and hear all the praise that the others (Michelangelo) will say about him after judging that new painting. He begs her not to go away that day and requests she can 'satisfy'' her friend's (cousin) request the next day.

I take the subjects for his corridor,

Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,

And throw him in another thing or two

If he demurs; the whole should prove enough

To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,

What's better and what's all I care about,

Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!

Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,

The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

These lines clearly show the romantic relationship between the cousin and Lucrezia. Although the speaker seems to understand this, he can do nothing to stop her. He gives her the 'thirteen scudi' (nineteenth century Italian coin) to give it to her 'ruff' (ruffian) cousin and asks her if that amount pleases her. He helplessly asks her what she finds better in her cousin that pleases her more than the care offered by him.

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.

I regret little, I would change still less.

Since there my past life lies, why alter it?

The very wrong to Francis!—it is true

I took his coin, was tempted and complied,

And built this house and sinned, and all is said.

My father and my mother died of want.

Well, had I riches of my own? you see

NOTES

How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.

The speaker says that he has grown older and weary that night after looking back on his life. Although he claims to 'regret little,' he desires to 'change still less.' This assertion is different because until now he has got no regrets in his life and he was hopeful for betterment in his life. But in this line he says he does not hope to change. He also regrets that the time he spent in France under the King Francis' support was wrong. He should have never taken 'his coin' (fortune) to live or build his house. He thinks that if he had been able to earn money independently without the king's support, he would have been more confident and successful.

They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:

And I have laboured somewhat in my time

And not been paid profusely. Some good son

Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!

No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,

You loved me quite enough. it seems to-night.

This must suffice me here. What would one have?

In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,

Meted on each side by the angel's reed,

For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me

To cover—the three first without a wife,

While I have mine! So—still they overcome

Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

The poem ends on a very sad note with the speaker telling that his life was similar to that of his parents. They were 'born poor, lived poor, and poor they died.' He questions whether other 'good sons' would be able to paint the 'two hundred pictures' that he had 'laboured' in his life. He turns to Lucrezia and tells her that 'You loved me quite enough,' that night. Although he must be happy with what he has received from her, he still concludes the poem with the blame on his wife for his failure. He thinks although he will have a new chance at success in heaven, but still he will have his wife. When Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael go to heaven, still they will not be married, but he will be married. He lets her to go as her Cousin is calling her by whistling.

2.6 Form of the poem

Many of Browning's poetic works are written in unrhymed pentameters. Browning is considered one of the foremost inventors of the

dramatic monologue style. *Andrea del Sarto* is also a dramatic monologue. It explores aesthetics and human response to aesthetics. It is written in iambic pentameter. His contemporary critics commented on his lack of rhyme scheme, known as blank verse. Browning is also known for his uniqueness, dramatic approach and new contemporary subject. These characters are complimented his lack of rhyme scheme.

Browning positions his reader in the exact scene through his uses of temporal adverbs or adverb of time. For example in the first line of the poem, 'But do not let us quarrel anymore.' 'Anymore' is a temporal adverb which also functions as a subordinate progressive tense. This literary tactic places the reader inside the action by allowing them to look both forwards and backwards in time. Browning gives his reader an insight into how the narrator or characters interpret the scene. For example in the fourth line of first stanza, 'You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?' the narrator is interpreting Lucrezia's body language for the

readers. Some literary analysts claim Browning adapted his versification according to the nature of the characters.

2.7 Let us sum up

The speaker of the poem is Andrea del Sarto who is an artist discusses with his wife Lucrezia about the renaissance art and artists. The speaker compares his artistic talents with that of other great artists. He believes that he has more talented than other famous painters such as Michelangelo or Raphael. But he feels that his art does not have the life and the soul. So he thinks that he is unable to inspire the audience through his art. The speaker tries to put most of the blame for this unrewarding life due his wife's decision to return to Italy from France. He thinks that his wife has been binding him back and obstructing his development. He is also of the notion that the other artists do not have similar problems. He describes that when he was in France working for the king, his work was most admired by the people. In the end of the poem he concludes that his life has not been what he wanted it to be and not under his control. However he is happy to have spent this time with his wife. Then on the arrival of Lucrezia's cousin the speaker asks his wife, to go away and carry on with her work. Andrea del Sarto also helps the cousin giving money to pay off his debts acquired due to gambling.

2.8 Unit End Exercises

Section A Questions (2 marks)

1. Where does the speaker and his wife discuss about their life and art?
2. Who is the king mentioned in the poem?
3. What form of art is mentioned in the poem?
4. Who are the two great painters mentioned in the poem?
5. Whom does the speaker blame for his setback in life?

Section B Questions (5 marks)

1. Give a brief account of the Victorian age art or renaissance art as per the poem *Andrea del Sarto*.

2. Analyse the Give a brief account on the Victorian age women based on Lurezia of this poem.
3. Write a short note on Robert Browning.

Section C Questions (10 marks)

1. Give a detailed note on the renaissance art and artist based upon the poem *Andrea del Sarto*.
2. Give a detailed account of the plight of the speaker in the poem *Andrea del Sarto*.

2.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

A. Who is the speaker in the poem *Andrea del Sarto* and to whom is he speaking?

The speaker of the poem is a renaissance artist called Andrea del Sarto whose original name was Andrea d' Agnolo. He is speaking to his wife Lucrezia.

B. What is the subject of discussion between the characters?

The speaker speaks about the ideal art, its value in the society, the worthiness of an artist, the attitude of great artists, and the setback in the speaker's life due to the influence of his wife.

2.10 Suggested References

1. Birch, Dinah (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Seventh Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.2009. Print. ISBN 978-0-19-280687-1.

2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature* (Volume II).New Delhi: Supernova Publishers. 2010. 993-1048. Print. ISBN 978-81-899-304-48.

3. Rickett, Arthur Compton. *A History of English Literature.* New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. 2013. 403-596. Print. ISBN 978-81-85944-63-0.

4. Kumar, Satish. *A History of English Literature.* Agra: Lakshmi Narian Agarwal Pubisher.378-441. Print. ISBN 81-85778-70-1.

5. Long, J. William. *English Literature- Its History and Its Significance.* New Delhi: Surjeet Publications. 2009. 452-568. Print.

UNIT – III: ALFRED TENNYSON – *ULYSSES*

Structure

3.1 Introduction

The literature that evolved during the reign of Queen Victoria is famously known as the **Victorian Literature**. This period which extends from 1837 to 1901, was preceded by **Romanticism** and was followed by Modernism. Much of the poetic work of the Victorian age is seen as a bridge between the romantic era and the modernist era of the next century. The two great poets of Victorian Age are **Alfred Lord Tennyson** and Robert Browning. **Elizabeth Barrett Browning** and Robert Browning were husband and wife expressed their love affair through verse and created many passionate poems.

3.2 Objectives

The reader is to be aware that all the great works of this period, has the general characteristics of realism, focussing more on human progress and practical problems. The Victorian literature seems to turn away from the strict principle of 'art for art's sake' and to an art for moral purpose. This was an age of pessimism and confusion. The influence of science and industrialisation were strongly reflected in this literature. Although the literature portrays practical and materialistic themes, it portrays themes for completely ideal life. The great principles like justice, truth, love,

NOTES

brotherhood were stressed by the poets, essayists and novelists of this age. Similar to classical literature and the medieval literature of England, reclaiming of the past was a major interest of the Victorian literature. The Victorians loved the heroic stories of knights and they hoped to regain some of that noble behaviour. The Victorian literature always has a deep influence even on the modern literature.

3.3 About the Poet

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, is one among the greatest poet of Victorian age English literature. His poems occupy many English literary courses are distinguished for their valiant heroic narratives, expressions of deep emotions, lyricism, modulations imagery and is subjected to much critical analysis. Tennyson began writing poetry when he was very young. He composed *The Devil and the Lady* when he was just fourteen. At Cambridge, he and his brother Charles published *Poems of Two Brothers* (1827). Tennyson was awarded the chancellor's prize in 1829 for his romantic poem, on the legendary African intellectual city, *Timbuctoo*. He joined the undergraduate intellectual club 'The Apostles' and became a close friend with Arthur Henry Hallam. In 1830 Tennyson published *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* which contained such works such as *Mariana*, *The Kraken*, *The Dying Swan,* and *Ode to Memory*. Tennyson continued to publish *Poems* in 1832 which included *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *Hesperides,* and *The Palace of Art.*

Tennyson was greatly grieved when Arthur Henry Hallam died in 1833 and he wrote some of his best work after his friend's untimely death. These poems and others were contained in the profound two-volume *Poems,* published in 1842 which included *The Vision of Sin*, *Locksley Hall*, *Tithonus, The Princess: A Medley,* and *Ulysses*. He was appointed the new poet laureate in 1850, after the publication of *In Memoriam,* dedicated to Hallam. His late works included the twelve blank-verse poems on King Arthur and his knights comprising *The Idylls of the King* (1859), *Crossing the Bar, The Charge of the Light Brigade,* and *Maud*.

3.4 About the Poem

Tennyson recreates the hero, 'Ulysses' on the inspiration of the ancient hero of Homer's ***Odyssey***. 'Ulysses' is the Roman form of the ancient Greek 'Odysseus' and the medieval hero of Dante's *Inferno.* This poem was written in 1833 and revised in 1842 for publication. In Homer's *Odyssey,* Ulysses learns from a prediction that he will take a final sea voyage after killing the man who desired for his wife Penelope. The details of this sea voyage are described by Dante in the *Inferno*. Dante's Ulysses is a heart-rending figure who dies while sailing too far in search of knowledge. In this Tennyson combines these two stories by making Ulysses to give this speech after returns to Ithaca, resumes his administration and before boards the ship on his final voyage. Ulysses

finds himself restless in Ithaca and driven by 'the longing I had to gain experience of the world.'

On the other hand this poem concerns about the poet's own personal journey. It was composed few weeks after the death of his dear friend in college, Arthur
Henry Hallam, in1833. This poem is also an elegy for the enchanting friend like the poem *In Memoriam* by Tennyson. Ulysses symbolizes the grieving poet, declares his pledge to move forward in life despite the knowledge that 'death closes all.' The poem expresses the poet's own 'need of going forward and
braving the struggle of life' after the loss of his beloved friend Arthur Hendry Hallam.

The final line, 'to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield,' came to serve as a slogan for the poet's Victorian contemporary poets to escape from the boredom of daily life, 'among these barren crags' and to enter a magical world 'beyond the sunset, and the baths of all the western stars.'' The poem shows the rebellion against romanticism and agreement to realism. Thus Ulysses not only holds mythological meaning, but also holds the image of a contemporary cultural icon.

Ulysses is concerned with the desire to reach beyond the limits of one's vision and the ordinary details of everyday life. Ulysses is the contrast of the poem The 'Lotos-Eaters,' by Tennyson. The mariners proclaim that 'we will no longer roam' and desire to relax in the middle of the Lotos fields. But in Ulysses the King 'cannot rest from travel' and longs to roam the globe. In the poem *The Lady of Shallot*, by Tennyson the lady longs for the worldly experiences that has been denied for her. Ulysses also has the desire to explore the untraveled world. In the dramatic monologue Ulysses, the speaker is portrayed as an incompetent ruler who trades responsibilities for longing for a wandering life. The major number of lines declares the boasting of Ulysses about his previous voyages motivating his fellow mariners for venturing into a new voyage. A few lines a dedicated to the administration of his son and his efficiency

3.5 Summary of the Poem

Ulysses (Odysseus) declares that there is no use in his staying home 'by this still hearth' with his old wife. There is no use in giving rewards and punishments for the unnamed mass of people in his kingdom in the name of administration. He declares that he 'cannot rest from travel' but wants to have a full life and cherishing every moment of it. He considers himself as a symbol for every wander who roams the earth. The travels have exposed him to many different types of people and many different ways of living. They have also given him the 'delight of battle' while fighting the Trojan War with his men. Ulysses declares that his travels and encounters have shaped his character, 'I am a part of all that I have met.' When he keeps travelling, the 'margin' of the world that he has not yet traversed shrinks.

NOTES

Ulysses declares that it is boring to be stationary in one place. It is like rusting instead of shining by encountering new experiences through travelling. Instead of staying in one place and doing a simple act of breathing, his will constantly longs for new experiences that will broaden his horizons. He wishes 'to follow knowledge like a sinking star' and gain wisdom.

Ulysses speaks about his son Telemachus, who will be his successor while he restarts his travel, is seen in the line, 'This is my son, mine own Telemachus, to whom I leave the scepter and the isle.' He speaks highly of his son's ability in administration, carefulness, dedication, and devotiono the native Gods. "He
works his work, I mine,' means that Telemachus will do governing of the island while Ulysses will do his work of traveling the seas.

In the last stanza, Ulysses speaks to his fellow mariners who accompanied him in his previous travels and weathered storms of the life for many years. He confirms that although they are old, they still have the potential to do something dignified and respectable before 'the long day wanes.' He encourages them saying that 'tis not too late to seek a newer world' and declares that his intension to sail 'beyond the sunset' until he dies. He encourages them that they could even reach the 'Happy Isles,' described in Greek mythology which is the paradise with continuous summer. Great heroes like the Achilles were believed to be there after their deaths. Although Ulysses and his mariners are not as physically strong as they were in youth, they are 'strong in will' and can push forward persistently that is, 'To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.'

Ulysses – Alfred, Lord Tennyson

It little profits that an idle king,

By this still hearth, among these barren crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,

That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink

Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd

Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;

For always roaming with a hungry heart

Much have I seen and known; cities of men

NOTES

And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

NOTES

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Many of Tennyson’s greatest works were written in the aftermath of the death of his closest friend, Arthur Henry Hallam. *Ulysses* was published in 1842, is about the famous hero of Homer's *Odyssey* Oddyseus (Greek) or

Ulysses (Roman), who faces his old age and approaching death. *Odyssey* does not want to sit "idle" and wants to make his last years meaningful by once again continuing his heroic journey doing noble acts with his men. He thinks that it is boring to wither away and be useless in his old age and simply breathing is not life. He

does not want to end his travels both at sea and on the shore. He has spent most of his life both by suffering and experiencing pleasure. He is famous and has

been honoured everywhere. He also has enjoyed the battle at Troy with his warriors. He thinks there is time for 'something more.' He laments about the weakness of his people, the 'savage race' and seeks that the strength that would come from bold adventures. His 'gray spirit' longs to achieve knowledge and follow it 'like a sinking star, Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.' He seeks what lies beyond the 'Death.'

Check your Progress-

A. Who is the speaker in the poem *Ulysses* and with whom is he living?
B. Who is Telemachus?

3.6 Critical appreciation and themes

In *Ulysses*, Odyssey complains that he is an idle king, living with his elderly wife, making laws for citizens who sleep and eat but does not know him in person. He is 'a part of all that I (he) have met,' but this is not the end of his experience. Even multiple lives would be not enough to get the highest meaning for existence in this world. As a little of his this life still remains he does not want to remain inactive. He is ashamed to be at rest even for three days.

Ulysses presumes that the port and the sea lying beyond as calling him. He remembers 'the thunder and the sunshine' of exciting travels together with his 'mariners.' He recalls their 'free hearts' and free minds during the travel and understands that everyone were old now. But he wishes that they still can do something noble as they are men who once fought with Gods.

As the light fades and the day wanes, Ulysses calls out that it is not still late to discover a 'newer world.' He wishes to depart this shore and sail beyond the horizon until the death. He says that they may even reach the Happy Isles and meet Achilles. Thus even if they are physically weak, their mental energy remains intact. They still have 'heroic hearts' which are 'strong in will' and want to continue exploring and discovering new world and never want to give up.

Ulysses is based on a Romantic Age genre called as a 'crisis lyric,' which gives a crisis and attempts to solve that crisis. The crisis here is old age

NOTES

where Ulysses is forced to live rest of his days as an 'idle' king expecting to meet death at the end. But he refuses to live the uninteresting life, like his son Telemachus who is his successor. Ulysses loves him, his capacity for governance and his ability to turn the 'rugged' people into 'mild' ones. He also praises his son to be 'blameless' and who honours the family's Gods. But he expresses the opinion that Telemachus does not have the energy for adventure like him in the line, 'He works his work, I mine.'

He has led a noble and risky life purely surviving by his intelligence in these unpredictable sea voyages. He was living by his strength of will power more than his physical power. So even if his body weakens and death is unavoidable, he knows that death-in-life and the helpless way of living is unbearable for a person like him.

We may farther the argument that Ulysses wants to understand something in life beyond death, like 'it may be' that they reach the Happy isles where Achilles resides. Ulysses says this through the lines that 'my purpose holds / To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths / Of all the western stars, until I die.' Other references in the poem that support this view are the concept of sea voyage, which is often a symbol for the travelling towards death; referring to himself and shipmates as spirits; and referring the sea to be the 'dark, broad, sea.' Ulysses seems to explore the spiritual reality after death.

But in the concluding lines Ulysses continues to challenge to push his life ahead with strength despite his old age or weak body. The poet is of the opinion that to yield to age or weakness is an inferior act of a warrior and it is not honourable to live a peaceful life without risk. If we do not venture into the unknown we may miss the most exciting aspects of life.

The poems *Ulysses*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Tiresias*, and *Tithonus* express Tennyson's feelings about the death of his close friend Arthur Henry Hallam. Tennyson first wrote *Tithonus* (1833) as a companion poem to *Ulysses*. In *Tithonus* the hero has no vision for new adventures unlike Ulysses. Although Ulysses wants to stay alive and keep adventuring, Tithonus is ready to die. Although Ulysses wants to fight his next battle despite his old age, Tithonus is caught in the eternal cycle of life and becomes weaker as he lives. In contrast to Ulysses, Tithonus understands that all the mortals or deadly people are born to live and then to die.

The poet has given contrasting opinion about old age and death in both these poems. The readers can choose the ambitious life of Ulysses or natural life of Tithonus if they lack ambition. But the readers are expected to enjoy the freshness of the every dawn in the remaining days of life.

Many of Tennyson's poetry express the reference of time. The themes of growing old, remaining weak in a difficult life are seen in poems like *Tithonus* and *The Two Voices.* Whereas the poet gives a contrasting theme of living an adventurous life as long as one can despite old age, in *Ulysses*. Life on earth can be tragic because of separation after death. The knowledge after the death is limited. The concept of time is also

complicated by science and religion. Science reveals that lifetime extends for a long time and religion tells it to be short. But both do not tell what happens after death. So the poet states that life is short-lived if wasted living in sadness or long-lived, if every moment is relished.

The poet has dedicated twenty six lines to his own declaration of liking for a adventurous life, another twenty six lines to the invitation of his fellow mariners to sail with him, offers eleven lines for praise to his son concerning the governance of the kingdom in his absence, and only two words about his 'aged

wife' Penelope. Thus by this analysis in the speaker's own words he deceives in accepting his responsibility by the praise of a wandering life.

3.7 Form of the Poem

This poem is written as a dramatic monologue. The entire poem is spoken by a single character, Ulysses whose personality is exposed through his own words. The lines are in blank verse, or unrhymed iambic pentameter, which gives a natural feel to the speech of Ulysses. Many of the lines are enjambed that is a figure of speech where there is a flow of thoughts from one line to the next or one stanza to next without any punctuation or syntactical break. This means that a thought does not end with the end of each line. The sentences often end in the middle, rather than the end, of the lines. The use of enjambment is appropriate in a poem about pushing forward, 'beyond the utmost bound of human thought.' Finally, the poem is divided into paragraph-like sections, each of which contains a distinct thematic unit of the poem.

3.8 Let us sum up

Ulysses is the aged king of Ithaca who lives with his aged wife Penolope. He finds himself restless due to the old age. He is driven by liking to travel to gain experience of the world. This poem concerns about the poet's own personal feelings about death. It was composed few weeks after the death of his dear friend in college, Arthur Henry Hallam, in1833. This poem is also considered as an elegy for his friend. Ulysses symbolizes the grieving poet, declares his pledge to move forward in life despite the knowledge that death is inevitable.

3.9 Unit End Exercises

Section A Questions (2 marks)

1. Who is the speaker of the poem *Ulysses* and what is his wife's name?
2. Who is the heir to the king mentioned in the poem *Ulysses*?
3. What war is mentioned in the poem *Ulysses*?
4. Who is the other great warrior mentioned in the poem *Ulysses*?
5. What is the speaker longing for in his life in the poem *Ulysses*?

Section B Questions (5 marks)

NOTES

1. Give a brief account of character of Ulysses based on the poem *Ulysse*s.
2. Analyse the Give a brief account on Telemachus based on the poem *Ulysses*.
3. Write a short note on Alfert, Lord Tennyson.

Section C Questions (10 marks)

1. Give a detailed note on the background theme in the poem *Ulysses.*
2. Give a detailed account of the plight of the speaker in the poem *Ulysses.*

3.10 Answers to check your progress

A. Who is the speaker in the poem *Ulysses* and with whom is he living?
The speaker in this poem is Ulysses. Tennyson recreates the hero, 'Ulysses' on the inspiration of the ancient hero of Homer's *Odyssey*. 'Ulysses' is the Roman form of the ancient Greek 'Odysseus.' The speaker lives with his 'aged wife,' Penelope.

B. Who is Telemachus?
Telemachus is the son and the successor king to Ulysses.

3.11 Suggested References

1. Birch, Dinah (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Seventh Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.2009. Print. ISBN 978-0-19-280687-1.

2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature* (Volume II).New Delhi: Supernova Publishers. 2010. 993-1048. Print. ISBN 978-81-899-304-48.

3. Rickett, Arthur Compton. *A History of English Literature.* New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. 2013. 403-596. Print. ISBN 978-81-85944-63-0.

4. Kumar, Satish. *A History of English Literature.* Agra: Lakshmi Narian Agarwal Pubisher.378-441. Print. ISBN 81-85778-70-1.

5. Long, J. William. *English Literature- Its History and Its Significance.* NewDelhi: Surjeet Publications. 2009. 452-568. Print.

UNIT – IV: MATTHEW ARNOLD - *THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY*

Structure

4.1 Introduction

The Scholar Gipsy (1853) is a poem by Matthew Arnold. It is based on an Oxford story seen in Joseph Glanvill's *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661) of the seventeenth century. It is one of the best and most popular of Arnold's poems. Ralph Vaughan Williams' choral work *An Oxford Elegy*, has taken lines from this poem and from its companion poem *Thyrsis*. The poem starts as pastoral song, calls upon a shepherd and describes the beauties of a rural scene with Oxford in the distance. He then repeats the gist of Glanvill's story, but extends it with an account of rumours that the scholar gipsy was again seen from time to time around Oxford. Arnold imagines him as a shadowy person, who can even now be noticed in the Berkshire and Oxfordshire countryside, 'waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall', and claims to have once seen him himself. He asks a doubt if the scholar gypsy could still be alive after two centuries, but then refuses the thought by convincing himself that he could not have died.

.

4.2 About the Poet

Matthew Arnold was born December 24, 1822 at Laleham, Middlesex, England. He died April 15, 1888, Liverpool. He is an English Victorian poet, a literary and social critic. He is noted especially for his typical attacks on the modern tastes and manners of the 'Barbarians' (the aristocrats), the 'Philistines' (the middle class) and the 'Populace' (the

NOTES

lower class). He became the defender of culture in his work *Culture and Anarchy* (1869).

Matthew was the eldest son of the renowned Thomas Arnold, who was the headmaster of Rugby School. Matthew entered Rugby school (1837) and then attended Oxford as a scholar of Balliol College. There he won the 'Newdigate Prize' for his poem *Cromwell* (1843) and graduated in 1844. Although Arnold had liberal religious ideas was strongly he was an admirer of John Henry
Newman, a famous Roman Catholic convert. Oxford University and Newman always remained combined symbols of spiritual beauty and culture for him.

In 1847 Arnold became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who occupied a high cabinet post during Lord John Russell's Liberal ministries. In 1851 he married Frances Lucy Wightman and became an Inspector of Schools. He continuously travelled throughout the Britain and was assigned by the government to enquire education in France, Germany, Holland, and Switzerland. Two of such Arnold's reports on schools abroad were reprinted as books and his annual reports on schools at home attracted wide attention due to its high language.

Some of his notable works are *Culture and Anarchy, Sohrab and Rustum, Empedocles on Etna, Thyrsis, The Scholar Gipsy, The Forsaken Merman, Dover Beach, Essays in Criticism, On the Study of Celtic Literature* and *The Study of Poetry.* Many of his famous works were all written in the spare time apart from his official duties. His first volume of poems was *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems. By A.*(1849). It was followed (in 1852) by another volume *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems. By A.* In 1853 appeared the first volume of poems published under his own name; it consisted partly of poems selected from the earlier volumes and also contained the well-known preface explaining why *Empedocles* was excluded from the selection. *Merope*, Arnold's classical tragedy, appeared in 1858, and *New Poems* in 1867. In 1857, Arnold was elected to the Oxford chair of poetry for ten years. The most important works during his professorship were the three lectures *On Translating Homer* (1861) and the lectures *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867).

Arnold's passion and aim in his whole life is religion. At the end of his career he wrote *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), *Literature and Dogma* (1873), *God and the Bible* (1875), and *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877). Through these books, Arnold really founded 'Anglican modernism.' He came under attack from two sides like all the liberals. The orthodox, accused him of betrayal, of turning religious belief into a 'stream of tendency' and of replacing unclear emotion for definite belief. The atheists accused him for attachment with the church and holding certain Christian beliefs which he himself had destabilized by his critical essays. Arnold considered his religious writings to be constructive and conservative. He regarded religion as the highest form of culture without which all secular education is useless. His attitude is best summed

up in his own words in the preface to *God and the Bible* as, 'At the present moment two things about the Christian religion must surely be clear to anybody with eyes in his head. One is that men cannot do without it; the other is, that they cannot do with it as it is.' He tried to find for religion a basis of 'scientific fact' that all the positive modern society must accept. A reading of Arnold's *Note Books* will convince any reader of the depth of Arnold's spirituality and of the degree to which, in his 'buried life,' he disciplined himself in constant devotion and self-forgetfulness.

The leading ideas and phrases of Arnold are found in his *Essays in Criticism* (First Series, 1865 & Second Series, 1888) and *Culture and Anarchy*.. The function of criticism, in his sense, is 'a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas.' He is trying to promote the concept of criticism is, 'to see the object as in itself it really is.' He is of the idea that the English literary critic must know literatures in other languages to reach European standards of criticism. Arnold widened the borders of criticism in *Essays in Criticism* (1865). Some of the title of the essays were 'Maurice de Guérin,' 'Eugénie de Guérin,' 'Heinrich Heine,' 'Joubert,' 'Spinoza,' 'Marcus Aurelius,' etc. In all these and later essays he applies the modern ideas of life in the context of the nineteenth century.

The first essay in the 1888 volume, 'The Study of Poetry,' was originally published as the general foreword to T.H. Ward's anthology, *The English Poets* (1880). It is an essay with many famous ideas of Arnold. It says that poetry will have to replace religion, has to interpret life for us, has to console us and has to maintain us. We must know how to differentiate between the best and the worst and the genuine and the imitation. To carry out this we must compare any work with the works of great masters, as 'touchstones.' This achieves a great improvement in the contemporary works.

His last essays deal with English poets like Milton, Gray, Keats, Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley. He judged Dryden and Pope were not 'genuine' poets because they composed in their intelligence rather than that of 'in the soul.' He called Gray a 'minor classic' in an age of prose and spiritual bareness. He calls paying too much attention to the artists like Gray, Keats and Shelley rather than their works. He says that poetry is 'at bottom a criticism of life.' He is of the opinion that the poetic truth and beauty is understood only through the criticism.

Culture and Anarchy is in some ways Arnold's most important work.

Arnold's classification of English society into Barbarians, Philistines and Populace is seen in this essay. Arnold saw that the Philistines(the middle class) held the key positions and were now the most influential section of society. It is a masterpiece to mock and at the same time to analyse the Victorian society. The same quality is seen in the not much famous eassay, *Friendship's Garland* (1871).

Arnold died suddenly, of heart failure, in the spring of 1888, at Liverpool and was buried at Laleham, with the three sons whose early loss had made his life gloomy.

4.3 About the Poem

The Scholar Gipsy was written by Matthew Arnold in 1853, probably immediately after the poem *Sohrab and Rustum*. Arnold quotes that *The Scholar Gipsy* was a remembrance of those delightful wanderings of his friends Theodore Walrond, the poet Arthur Hugh Clough and him in the Cumner hills. He has quoted this fact in a letter to his brother Tom, 1857. Arnold rewrites these scenes later in his elegy for Arthur Hugh Clough, *Thyrsis* which is

a companion poem for *The Scholar Gipsy*. *Thyrsis* is also considered as a sequel to *The Scholar Gipsy*. *The Scholar Gipsy* was first printed in Arnold's *Poems* (1853), published by Longmans. In the twentieth century it was many times published as a booklet, either alone or combined with *Thyrsis*. It appears in anthology like *The Oxford Book of English Verse* and Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* despite being; a long poem of twenty five stanzas of ten lines each making a total of 250 lines.

4.4 Summary of the Poem

The Scholar-Gipsy is set in a beautiful rural background with pastures, little away from the town of Oxford. The speaker watches the shepherd and reapers working in the field. He decides remain there until the sunset and enjoy the scenery. The poem is described as a pastoral poem with twenty-five ten-line stanzas.

The speaker always keeps a book beside him. It was a book called *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* written in 1661 by Oxford philosopher Joseph Glanvill. It tells the famous story about a poor Oxford student who discontinues his studies to join a band of Gipsyes. The student was engrossed within the Gipsyes to learn the tricks of their trade. In a short time, two of the old Oxford friends of the Scholar-Gipsy meet him. He narrates them about the traditional gipsy style of learning. He also plans to live with the Gipsyes until he learned everything and then plans to tell their secrets to the outer world. The speaker inter mixes his own feelings and starts telling, the scholar-gipsy's story. The speaker says that the scholar-gipsy is seen in the Berkshire moors as an obscure person who is waiting for the 'spark from heaven,' just like everyone else. The speaker even claims to have seen the scholar-gipsy once, although the story is supposed to have happened over two hundred years before.

The speaker does not believe the scholar-gipsy to have died despite two hundred years had passed because he had given up the life of normal earthly man. He has left the things that degenerate and lead men out to death like the 'repeated shocks, again, again' 'exhaust(ing) the energy of

strongest souls.' The Scholar-gipsy does not accept this style of life with 'shocks,' and is 'free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt.' He has escaped the hazards of modern life, which slowly creeps up and destroys the normal men like a 'strange disease.' The speaker finishes by pleading the scholar-gipsy to avoid the normal population who suffer from this 'disease,' because of the risk of getting infected.

Check your Progress

A. Who are the speakers in the double narration of the poem *The Scholar Gipsy*?
B. What is the form of the poem?

4.6 Critical Analysis of the Poem

This poem explores the themes of the depressing routine life and the hard work needed to lead the modern life. There are two levels of narrative in the poem one

of the scholar-gipsy, and the other of the speaker. Both the level of story conveys the same message. The scholar-gipsy has elevated to a higher form of gipsy life and escaped the modern life. Arnold criticizes modern life as exhaustive even for the strong willed men. He uses the word 'disease' for the modern lifestyle because it is as contagious as a disease. Even those who want to avoid the modern life will become invariably infected, that is attracted to it in due course of time.

The very clear portrayal of the pastoral scenery in the poem increases its charm, its visual delight and commitment to nature. Arnold's expression is successful in capturing and recreating the unique beauty and feeling of the countryside nearby Oxford, which he loved during his undergraduate days at Oxford. The speaker is laying on a meadow reading a book published two centuries earlier, an 'oft-read tale' by Joseph Glanvill. *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* was a reaction to philosophical and religious teachings in the middle ages called scholasticism. It was a famous analytical methodology in the universities across Europe at that time. Joseph Glanvill regarded the gipsy lifestyle to be superior to the labouring life of Oxford academics. A poor Oxford university student constitutes the central character of *The Scholar Gipsy* who abandoned his studies to learn about the supernatural powers of the Gipsy people. The poverty-incapacitated Oxford Scholar gipsy, is described by Matthew Arnold as 'who, tired of knocking at preferment's door . . . One summer-morn forsook / His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore.' A few years later a couple of the scholar gipsy's former friends meet him and enquired about his way of life. He responded in many wonderful phrases of Arnold as 'the gipsy-crew / His mates, had arts to rule as they desired / The workings of men's brains / And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.' The Scholar-Gipsy says that the acquisition of these supernatural abilities from the gipsies requires 'Heaven-sent moments', which had not yet arrived. The lifestyle of the

NOTES

gipsies was described as something heavenly and most valuable by Arnold. He then disappears and this is the last time it is heard from him, although he is seen occasionally even after two centuries!

The Scholar-gipsy watches others work with 'dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air' and waits for 'the spark from Heaven', the appearance and timing of which cannot be predicted. Arnold suggests immortality like how Peter Pan gained by refusing to grow up and by refusing the 'repeated shocks' of real life. The poem represents Matthew Arnold's inner conflict that is his desire to live an uplifting life but his inability to totally shun the society. The poet is pulled in different directions by the worldly demands. Although the poet resists the 'infection' called the modernization, it creeps into his life and work. This pressure was negatively affecting his poetry and Arnold wished that he could

escape from it like the scholar-gipsy. However he was too bent down by responsibilities to ever dream of doing such experiments of higher life.

The poem makes a comment on the conventional values. The scholar-gipsy becomes powerful because he avoids modern life and he is willing to entirely reject normal society for the sake of his elevated method of life. There is a pessimistic worldly view hidden in that idea of rejecting the normal society where one lives. It is clearly impossible to live with one's own individuality and still be a part of society. The scholar-gipsy entirely turns back his Oxford life, which symbolises learning and modernism, in order to achieve something more worthy. But the poem is overall optimistic than many of other Arnold's works like *A Summer Night* which explores the same theme but laments about the price one has to pay of separating from the society to uphold the individuality. *The Scholar-Gipsy* on contrary suggests that we can transcend if we are willing to pay the price.

The speaker has not gathered the strength to reject the world and the background helps establish this contradictory feelings. The poem begins with images of peaceful, serene rural life, a place where men behave with composure. They have been untouched by the hazards of modernism. Pastoral imagery in poetry associates with innocence, purity, humanity always adheres with nature. The speaker is seriously thinking about this type of life and the possibility of acting unnaturally like the scholar-gipsy. The scholar-gipsy had studied in the towers of Oxford which represents a rapidly changing and structured world and he has rejected it to live a gipsy life. Arnold skilfully expresses the speaker's and scholar-gipsy's different priorities through this combined narration. Although the speaker admires the scholar-gipsy at the same time he cannot refuse the modern world.

Arnold frequently refers to the exhaustion of workers in the modern world. When people are forced to work hard in their lives until there is absolutely nothing left in their life. He laments over this kind of life, and tries to break free of this exhaustion through this poetry. The danger is that man loses his courage because of such labour. The poet realises that escaping this life of

labour, as the Scholar-gipsy does introduces us new challenges. It requires the person to give up all connections to society. Although living a life of labour is tiring, escaping from it is a big burden which needs an extraordinary courage.

The Scholar Gipsy is often known as one of the best and most popular poems of Matthew Arnold. Arnold begins the poem in pastoral mode, calling upon an unnamed shepherd and describing the beautiful rural scene, with Oxford at the distance. The first stanza of the poem suggests that something is inappropriate because the speaker imagines the sheep at night on a 'moon blanched green' and then persuades the shepherd to 'again begin the quest.' The moon acts like a symbol for the power of imagination and the word 'quest' appears to be a very loaded term for the rustic job of a shepherd.

The pastoralism of the poem leads immediately to several themes. Most generally it represents, as it does for many poets, an escape from the intolerable world of current affairs. He then repeats the essence of Glanvill's story. But he extends it with an account of rumours that the scholar Gipsy was again spotted from time to time by shepherds, country boys, young girls and reapers etc. around Oxford even after two hundred years. The speaker thinks of him as a shadowy person who can even now be seen from time to time in the Berkshire and Oxford shire countryside, 'waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall,' and claims to have once seen him himself. Arnold certainly romanticizes the Oxford countryside, attributing to it his happiest days. Against this romantic background, then, Arnold places the quest for transcendence of the scholar-Gipsy, which gives added significance to the background.

This English pastoral elegy has been written in a ten-line stanza pattern, constituting a total of two hundred and fifty lines. The speaker was not sure whether the scholar Gipsy was still alive after two centuries, but rules out the thought of his death. He cannot have died like a normal man having renounced an elevated life. He is hence free from the sickness, fatigue, anxiety and the doubts of the life. The sick live a hurried life with broken dreams which characterize modern life. The poet pleads the Scholar-gipsy to avoid all who suffer from it because he too would be infected to it and die. Arnold ends the poem with an extended simile of a Tyrian merchant and seaman who flees from the eruption of Greek competitors to seek a new world in Iberia.

Initially Arnold considered Christianity was dead and nothing seemed to occupy its place, to give meaning to life. This condition resulted in a constant search for some alternative principle to fight the loneliness and emptiness in life. In other words the poem was a result of the argument between the wisdom of the heart (mind) and the wisdom of head (brain). The brain is aware of the real condition of the modern world, but the mind is naturally drawn to the simpler life.

In this poem the feelings of Arnold towards the Gipsy is similar to the feelings of an adult towards a child. Arnold appreciates and envies the innocence of the Gipsy and at the same time realises that he could not return to such a state of innocence. Arnold believed that a child lost its innocence by developing experience and growing into an adult. The Gipsy similarly was the manifestation of an innocence that was lost. Arnold compares the Gipsy's tranquillity with himself and expresses the spiritual and emotional losses faced in the nineteenth century. To conclude *The Scholar Gipsy* is a great melancholy with spiritual and philosophical thoughts mixed with spirit of mystery and fantasy.

The poem actually offers a charm for relaxation and a break from serious ambitions in the modern world. The poem really symbolises a typical Victorian Age poetry with open logical and moral explorations. But the poet is unable to lead an ideal relaxed life like that of the Gipsyes despite knowing its advantages. Thus the poem explores the theme of disappointing boredom and hard work needed in modern life.

4.7 Glossary of the Poem

1. Wattled cotes: The poet here urges to free the flock of sheep from its shed and let be liberated. This symbolism of liberation from any sort of binding is there from the beginning in the poem.
2. Glanvil's Book: Joseph Glanvill was an English writer, philosopher and clergyman of seventeenth century who authored *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* which attacked scholasticism and religious persecution. It demanded for religious tolerance, scientific methods and freedom of thought.
3. Oxford Scholar poor: *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* by Glanvil was a reaction to philosophical and religious teachings of middle age England and the analytical methodology famous in European Universities at that time. It features a poverty-incapacitated scholar's life.
4. The Great Victorian Poets Godstowbridge: Godstow Bridge is a road bridge across the river Thames in England at Godstow near Oxford. The poem is replete with such details about the landscape around the university. For example references to landmarks like Cummer Hills or Bagley Wood.
5. Spark from Heaven: Arnold imagines the scholar Gipsy as a shadowy figure who can even now be glimpsed in the Berkshire and Oxford shire countryside, waiting for the spark from Heaven, or some theological piece of knowledge to be revealed to him by God, and claims to have once seen him himself.

4.8 Let us sum up

This poem is a pastoral elegy describing the depressing routine life and the hard work needed to lead a modern life. There are two levels of narrative in the poem one of the scholar-gipsy, and the other of the speaker. Both the level of story conveys the same message. The scholar-gipsy has elevated to a higher form of gipsy life and escaped the modern life by leaving the Oxford and adopting the gipsy life. Arnold criticizes modern life as exhaustive even for the strong willed men like the speaker. He uses the

word 'disease' for the modern lifestyle because it is as contagious as a disease. Even those who want to avoid the modern life will become invariably infected, that is attracted to it in due course of time. The scholar-gipsy is destined to live with the gipsies until he learns their tricks and talents and wants to declare the secret to the world after knowing the secret from the gipsies.

4.9 Unit End Exercise

Section A Questions (2 marks)

1. Who are the speakers of the poem *The Scholar Gipsy*?
2. Which place is described in the poem *The Scholar Gipsy*?
3. Whose life style is adorned in the poem *The Scholar Gipsy*?
4. Who are the other characters mentioned in the poem *The Scholar Gipsy*?
5. What is the speaker longing for in his life in the poem *The Scholar Gipsy*?

Section B Questions (5 marks)

1. Give a brief account of character of the scholar-gipsy based on the poem *The Scholar Gipsy*.
2. Analyse the Give a brief account on the landscapes seen in the poem *The Scholar Gipsy.*
3. Write a short note on Matthew Arnold.

Section C Questions (10 marks)

1. Give a detailed note on the background theme in the poem *The Scholar Gipsy.*
2. Give a detailed account of the plight of the speaker in the poem *The Scholar Gipsy.*

4.10 Answer to check your progress

A. Who are the speakers in the double narration of the poem *The Scholar Gipsy*?

There are two levels of narrative in the poem one is the scholar-gipsy, and the other is the speaker of the poem.

B. What is the form of the poem?
This poem is an English pastoral elegy poem. It has been written in a ten-line stanza pattern of twenty five stanzas constituting a total of two hundred and fifty lines.

Suggested References

1. Birch, Dinah (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Seventh Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.2009. Print. ISBN 978-0-19-280687-1.

NOTES

2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature* (Volume II).New Delhi: Supernova Publishers. 2010. 993-1048. Print. ISBN 978-81-899-304-48.

3. Rickett, Arthur Compton. *A History of English Literature.* New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. 2013. 403-596. Print. ISBN 978-81-85944-63-0.

4. Kumar, Satish. *A History of English Literature.* Agra: Lakshmi Narian Agarwal Pubisher.378-441. Print. ISBN 81-85778-70-1.

5. Long, J. William. *English Literature- Its History and Its Significance.* NewDelhi: Surjeet Publications. 2009. 452-568. Print.

BLOCK II: POETRY - II

UNIT –V: GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS - *THE WRECK OF THE DEUTSCHLAND*

Structure

5.1 Introduction

One of the longest poems in the Hopkins list is *The Wreck of Deutschland.* It was inspired by the real life incident in 1875. It is based on a wreck of a ship called 'Deutschland' at the mouth of the river Thames. It describes about the critical and tragic hours between the dark night of the wreck and the early hours of the next morning which ultimately took the lives of five exiled Franciscan nuns from Germany along with the other crew and passengers. It is a spiritual inquest into the accident and the meaning of theodicy according to Hopkins' own spiritual experiences with the Christ, who is a priest himself.

Hopkins' poem is based on an accurate structure based on the accent punctuated by variations from one to four syllables in the foot. This pattern proved Hopkins' inclination for internal rhyme and alliteration. The characteristic of a Hopkins poem is a rhythm that is reproduced in the natural form of spoken English. But many of his poems use a complicated sentence structure, neologisms, phrases and metaphors that build upon metaphors that are not used in everyday speech. The first time reader of Hopkins has a sense of alienation at the melodramatic language that

eventually understands to artistic intermixing of rhyming sound used in the poems.

5.2 About the Poet

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889) was born at Stratford, Essex, England, on July 28, 1844. He is regarded as one of the greatest poets of Victorian age. He was from an affluent and artistic family. He attended Balliol College, Oxford (1863) and studied Classics. He read John Henry Newman's *Apologia pro via sua*, in 1864 which became reason for converting to Catholicism became a priest

and in 1867 he entered a Jesuit apprentice near London. During that time, he took oath not to write any poetry and burnt all of the poetry he had written until
that date. His abstinence from writing poetry continued until 1875.In 1877 he was ordained after nine years of training and for the next seven years carried his duties religious teaching and preaching in various places like London, Oxford, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Stonyhurst. Hopkins began to write again after the German ship called the *Deutschland*, wrecked in 1875, at the mouth of the Thames River during a storm. Many passengers, including five Franciscan nuns, died. He introduced a 'sprung rhythm' in the poem *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. By not limiting the number of unaccented syllables he allowed for more flexibility in his lines and created new rhymes. Hopkins was also very interested in ways of revitalizing the poetic language. He used much familiar words in surprising contexts and new situations. He was inventive in using compound and unusual word combinations. Then he became a professor of Greek at the Royal University College in Dublin in 1884. He died five years later from typhoid fever. A small number of his poems that escaped the fire were published posthumously after editing by his friend poet Robert Bridges in 1918.

5.3 About the Poem

The poem *The Wreck of the Deutschland* is the first and the longest of Hopkins' major poems. When he was at St. Beuno's College in North Wales in 1875, he got a report of the sinking German passenger boat called *Deutschland* off the English coast between Harwich and the Thames Estuary. Hopkins was disturbed by news that among the fifty people drowned, there were five German nuns, who had had to leave Germany because of new and oppressive laws called the 'Falck Laws.' The Law was passed against the Catholics was issued by Bismarck, the Prussian Chancellor. Hopkins shared this news with the Principal of the College, Father Jones, who suggested him to write a poem on it. Hopkins took this as a request and permission to write poetry once again.

Hopkins had been thinking in his mind a new sort of verse, which he was to call 'sprung rhythm.' He used this as an opportunity to put into practice this rhythm in the poem *The Wreck of the Deutschland* for the first time. The rhythm is sustained through 280 lines consisting of 35 eight lined stanzas. Each stanza has the same delicate rhyme pattern and number

of feet, but the style and the rhythm are extremely complicated and quite difficult.

The poem was not received well in the beginning because of its difficult rhythm. The Jesuit magazine, *The Month*, accepted it at first but then they refused for publication because it was too difficult for its readers to understand. Even his friend Robert Bridges refused to read it for a second time. But Hopkins felt he had succeeded putting his new theory into practice and had succeeded in writing a religious poem.

Shipwrecks are fascination for many authors at all times. Hopkins' father had been in marine insurance and repots of shipwrecks must have been talked about

frequently in the Hopkins' house. So Hopkins appears well versed in writing about the details of shipwreck. A few years later, he wrote a second shipwreck poem called *The Loss of the Eudydice*. The poem is technically an ode, that is, it is poem addressed to someone or celebrating someone. The poem is initially addressed to God and it celebrates the Franciscan nuns who lost their lives in the shipwreck. The form of the poem is a 'Pindaric ode,' a complex sort of ode developed by the Greek poet, Pindar.

5.4 Critical Analysis of the Poem

The poem is divided into two main parts. The first part consists of the first ten stanzas which tell something about the poet's Catholic conversion. It explains the basis for his theodicy, an attempt to accept tragedy and suffering with a belief in a loving and a powerful God. The second part consists of twenty-five stanzas which describes the shipwreck. The poet focuses on the leading nun, describing what she would have seen and said just before her death, applying theodicy to that situation. The poet then thinks about the other drowned people and then widens his thoughts upon the God's will for the future of England.

The poem opens with an address to God according the poet's previous spiritual experience and beliefs. God had 'mastered' him in the past during his conversion and now masters him again to write the poem. The term 'mastery' is used as a key word in fist stanza. He uses the terms, such as 'head,' 'king,' 'Lord,' when referring to God. In theodicy God is considered as ultimately powerful but some people question whether God is too weak to prevent such tragedies. Hopkins confirms that God is not weak in any situation. A difficult phrase in the first stanza, 'World's strand' could have two meanings. One meaning for 'strand' is 'thread' the other is 'border.' So the phrase could mean, 'God controls the whole world with a thread' or 'God sets the limits of the world.' God ordering the poet is expressed as 'fastened me flesh.' The poet also feels that God is 'touching' him to write again. The autobiographical detail mentioned in the first stanza explains the spiritual experience of the poet. The term 'stress,'

denotes the way in which God influences on the people's consciousness and the toughness of theology. God will use force if necessary.

The third stanza continues the description of Hopkins' personal experience with God. The spiritual experiences of the poet are told through images which are to be grasped spontaneously by the reader. After Hopkins surrenders to God's power, 'And fled with a fling of the heart' there is an immediate change of consciousness. There are some theological words in the stanza like the 'Host' refers to the body of Christ and 'the flame to the flame' refers to either hellfire or the fire of spiritual regeneration. The phrase 'tower from the grace to the grace' means two graces, one the dreadful experience of God's coming to Hopkins and the second grace is of salvation. Hopkins describes himself as someone who has surrendered to God but still lives with spiritual tensions.

There are two images in forth stanza. The first image is of an hourglass, where the sand seems to be still when you look at the edges, but is in motion at the centre. The second image is of water at the bottom of the well. Water is calm on

the surface until it is drawn up by means of a rope which is recharged by an underground stream that comes down or through 'the voel,' a Welsh term meaning hill. The fifth stanza concludes with poet's personal confession. The poet uses images of nature for the first time in the poem. Thus the first five stanzas express God's communication with Hopkins.

The sixth stanza is a transitional stanza, moving from Hopkins' personal experiences with God to the laying of a foundation for the theodicy needed for understanding the shipwreck. The way in which people are forced to reach Christ is immaterial. But 'Calvary,' the place where Christ was crucified suddenly comes to their memory and they can sense suffering of others and understand how God works. In ninth and stanza Hopkins once again addresses to Christ and adores him as a 'Trinity'. The last lines of the stanza refer to God's mysterious ways and his 'dark descending', a phrase some modern poets have used in their future works. The tenth stanza gives two examples of how people have found God, by two contrasting images. One the blacksmith image meaning the suffering can bring people back to God and the next image of gentle Spring, meaning God may gently encroach upon people. But at the end, the result is the same. The people are 'mastered' by God either gently or violently. Thus the fifth to tenth stanzas make a foundation for the coming of Christ.

The eleventh stanza is a transitional stanza which starts dramatically. Death is personified as a tyrant. 'The flange and the rail' images, referring to railway accidents, they are called synecdoche which is a figure of speech where the use of part of a thing represents the whole. Hopkins finally begins the narrative of the tragedy in the twelfth stanza. The first half of the stanza gives the main facts and in the mid-point of the stanza, the poet questions God. The ambiguity in the theodicy is that in one angle God is 'supposed' to protect his people. In another angle when he does protect,

there is a doubt that whether non-protection is actually a greater form of long-term protection.

The boat had set sail on Saturday, 4th December. On a Sunday, it was navigating through heavy seas in the North Sea, driven by winds. Snow fall was obstructing any warning lights set to warn of the shallow seas and sandbanks in certain areas. The narrative continues into Sunday night in thirteenth stanza. Then, at 5 a.m. on the Monday morning, 6th December, the boat had hit a shoal (submerged sandbank). The impact of the collision drove the ship deep into the shoal that waves started to break over the vessel. The shipwrecked passengers saw the lightship that should have warned them off the shoal. The only source of light was from the distress rockets that were fired in vain, since the seas are too rough for people to be rescued. The ship was struck deeper into the shoal as waves were washing over the ship, and people were beginning to be washed overboard. 'Hope' is personified here in terms of expectation**.** One of the sailors had bravely lowered himself down on a rope from the mast to try to rescue some of the women trapped on deck. He fell and was instantly killed, though his corpse swung abnormally suspended in the rope. The horrors of Monday night are narrated as the numb and cold passengers clinging to the mast and ropes fall as they lose their grip. They are either killed by the fall or washed overboard and drown. The women and children are shrieking with terror and their noise rises

above the noise of the waves. One woman, the leader of the five nuns on board emerges when everything seems totally out of control. Hopkins uses the image of a lioness and considers her as a prophetess who can speak words from God. The word 'virginal' suggests that she is a virgin or she has a harmonious voice like a virginal, an early type of keyboard.

Check your Progress

A. What is the background of the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland*?

B. What is the rhythm of the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland*?

Hopkins turns the narrative to address his own heart, which is breaking with the sadness of the scene in the eighteenth stanza. Yet his heart can also be 'unteachably after evil' explains the human dilemma that even after getting deeply touched by the reading such events, some people do evil to others! But at least the tears express some goodness in us. In the nineteenth stanza attention is turned to the nun's sustained contemplation over her action, lasting until thirtieth stanza. This long section includes the climax of the poem in twenty eighth stanza which declares the power of theodicy. The nun calls out aloud to Christ above the commotion of the storm as, 'A master.' The divine master is given prominence as the ship's master or captain is not seen around for help. The 'tall nun' also appears more dramatic, as the newspaper accounts suggest that she was some six feet tall, most unusual at that time for a woman.

NOTES

The twentieth stanza is the weakest of all the stanzas because it focuses away from the main drama. Hopkins' anti-Protestant remarks and religious experience are seen in this stanza. He compares the double-edged associations of 'Deutschland' with the double-edged associations of Eisleben, a particular town in Germany where both a Catholic saint and a Protestant hero were born. The name of the ship is the 'Deutschland,' is the German word for 'Germany' (Prussia), the country which had expelled the five nuns. Germany was not formed at the time of writing this poem. The sinking ship becomes a metonymy (a figure of speech where name of one object is used to denote another related object) for the country.

In the twenty first stanza, a synecdoche (a figure of speech where a part is used to denote the whole or the whole to denote a part) is used to show the nun being hit by a double blow. Ill-treated at home in the River Rhine (Prussia) and shipwrecked at the mouth of River Thames (Britain) where they sought refuge. Then poet raises a question why the whole nature, like 'Surf, snow, river and earth' against the passengers. An answer is given in the second half of the stanza. God is above all weighing up that it would be better for them to die and become martyrs than to reach land. The 'snow flakes' are denoted as 'scroll-leaved flowers' and 'lily showers' (a sign of purity and of death). Such a thought may appear shocking, but any religious faith believes in an afterlife and death is not seen as the worst tragedy. And to be a martyr impacts life on earth, as and honors the afterlife. God is named 'thou Orion of light', Orion being the hunter god in Greek mythology, being linked both with storms and martyrdom.

Hopkins' thoughts on the significance of the symbolisms in number 'five,' like the five nuns, five wound 'marks' of Christ during his crucifixion, five patellate rose, cinquefoil are expressed in the twenty third stanza. In this stanza, the poet metaphorically describes the Franciscan nuns (belonging to the order founded by St. Francis of Assisi) holding hands in distress to a new cinquefoil (rose with five petals). The nuns are also caught in drowning in 'wild waters.' The oxymoron (a figure of speech where self contradictory words are used sequentially) the waters are thereby used 'to bathe in his fall-gold mercies' and the storm is used 'to breathe in his all-fire mercies!' 'Bathing' denotes baptism, and 'breathing,' denotes the feeling of the Holy Spirit.

In twenty forth stanza, Hopkins is gradually returns to the storm, but he associates that during that time he was safe in Wales. The phrase 'On a pastoral forehead', reminds us of the calm rural setting of St. Beuno. It is a common practice to think of where we were when we hear of some great disaster. The word 'christens' is a theological term denoting baptism (someone is named as a Christian after baptism). The oxymoron of 'wild-worst Best' comes to mean that in worst condition the nun is calling her best companion the Christ.

In twenty fifth stanza Hopkins asks the question: 'What did she mean?' in her cries. Then he answers that either the nun wants Christ to rescue her as a bridegroom or lover will do or she wants martyrdom. When the disciples

are in panic and wanted Jesus as their rescuer from sinking the contrast attitude of the nuns are expressed. The name ‘Gennesareth' means the Sea of Galilee, the name of the lake in northern Israel, prone to such sudden storms. The word ‘crown’ is associated to martyrdom in the Bible

The twenty sixth stanza has soft sounds are in contrast to the earlier stanzas describing the storm. Such a contrast is a beauty which seems to lift us up right out of the commotion of the storm. It is what the nun wanted, to be taken into the splendor of heaven, a ‘heaven of desire.’

In twenty seventh stanza, Hopkins rejects both the previous two suggestions for the cy of the nun. He says that the nun’s cry was neither a cry for help from Christ (her lover) nor a desire to reach heaven as a martyr. Hopkins explains that it is mainly a difficult and distressed life that would cause such cries than a sudden danger of a storm. The nun’s appeal to the ‘suffering’ Christ means that Christ too understands human suffering. The individual prayer especially in such stressful times, ‘prayer apart’ will draw us close to comfort. However the line ‘Other... her mind's burden’ means that her actual concerns at that moment was quite different from those of others seeking personal comfort or escape.

Finally in stanza twenty eight we come to understand what the nun meant by her cry, ‘O Christ, Christ come quickly.’ The poet imagines and gives the physical details of the last moments of the nun. Here, the nun experiences a mental picture of Christ coming towards her, walking on the water, coming as ‘the Master'. The word ‘Ipse' in Latin means ‘himself.’ Hence on the nun’s call, it is as if Christ has himself come to take the nun personally.

In twenty ninth stanza Hopkins establishes that a ‘good death’ meaning however bad the causes of that death may be, it is always a achievement and not a calamity. In the thirtieth stanza Hopkins addresses Christ in an intimate way as ‘Jesu,’ ‘Jesu, heart's light, Jesu, maid's son.' He relates the date of the nun's actual death, 7th December, to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8th December. In Catholic doctrine, Mary was conceived and born sinless, ‘without stain’ as a spinster. Hopkins expresses two meanings for the word ‘conceive.’ One meaning is to become pregnant as Mary conceived Jesus physically and the other meaning is that the nun conceived Jesus in her mind. The nun delivered the word ‘in a ‘heart-throe' instead of throwing in labor pains because Christ is a ‘birth of a brain’ in her context. Thus these stanzas elaborate the cry of the sinking nun.

In thirty first stanza Hopkins expresses the fact that for a Christian, the ultimate tragedy would be to die without God and for a Catholic, the ultimate tragedy is to die ‘unconfessed,’ that is to die with sins still unforgiven, with no absolution from a priest. His heart has to ‘bleed at a bitterer vein,’ with such a thought about the condition of the passenger. In the phrase ‘startle the poor sheep back’ he hopes that the nun's cry would have led some of those drowning to confess to Christ at the last minute. If some repented of their sins at the last moment before they died, then the shipwreck was worth for it, because such repenting was ‘a harvest’ to reap the ‘grain' called human souls.

NOTES

In thirty second stanza, Hopkins begins to bring down the curtain to the poem to a close. The theodicy may not be a complete explanation to any disaster. He just 'justify the ways of God to man' and re-affirms God's power, the 'master of the tides'. He still controls the world he has made as he did during the Noah's Flood, 'the Yore-flood.' So the poet seems to say that it is impossible for the humans to know all the answers. There is always a mystery about God but that should not stop the people from trusting him. The God always knows what he is doing, 'heeds but hides, bodes but abides'.

The thirty third stanza is about a transition from theodicy to celebration. The shipwreck becomes 'a mercy' or a salvation. The paradox is that the storm was not the end of the story, 'all of water' but God's mercy 'outrides' it. Firstly, the nuns became martyrs for their faith despite the injustice of the German laws against Catholics. Secondly, the nuns may have been the last means of last minute confessions by the passengers. God's mercy is available 'for the lingerer,' means that after his death Christ went to Hell and preached to those already dead. He gave them a chance to ask forgiveness and to be freed from sins. This is a 'last-minute' prayer expressed by the poet in the phrase, 'past-prayer, pent in prison.' Christ 'fetched' or came to them 'in the storm of his strides', refers to the fact that Christ was either walking on the water for the nuns or walking through the fires of hell.

The thirty forth chapter turns it into a prayer of celebration. The compound words like 'double-natured name' refers both to God's divine and human nature. The compound word 'heaven-flung' means that as it flung from heaven to come to earth. The compound word 'heart-fleshed': meaning especially meaning

physical life and emotional life. Hopkins' appeal is that Christ will make himself recognized to the citizens of England. But the poet says that this birth will neither be similar to that of in resurrection nor be similar to the secret birth by Mary, 'nor dark as he came.' But Hopkins wants the arrival of Christ as a spontaneous rain, 'A released shower,' with flashes of lightning to derive people's attention. 'Shower' in the Bible suggests God's blessing. Thus Hopkins uses the disaster of storm and the shipwreck to slowly enter into his prayer for the conversion of England into faith in God.

The final stanza is addressed to the dead nun rather than to Christ. But it is the same prayer like 'Our King back, oh, upon English souls!' As Hopkins thinks of a new beginning of Christian faith in Britain, so he closes with two lines of praise to Christ the King in a series of dazzling epithets. The word 'high-priest' is a biblical title given to Christ. Thus Hopkins finishes the poem with the power of the words, the force of rhythm moves us rather than the theological meaning. This grammatical masterpiece and his brilliance made him as a new luminary in Victorian age English poetry.

5.5 Language, Tone, Form and Poetic Devices of the Poem

The poet's choice of diction is bold and inventive for the imagery used in the poem. He uses 'neologisms' (newly-coined words) and innovative use of particular words in unfamiliar situations. He uses different words for same meaning and one word with different meaning in various situations. The frequent usage of different words to denote God, 'master' (10,19,28); 'martyr-master' (21); 'master of the tides'(32); 'mastering' (1); 'Lord' (1,35, and as a verb 28); 'King' (28,35); 'prince' (35); 'Head'(28); 'sovereignty' (32); 'throned' (32); 'reign' (35); 'sway'(1) and 'triumph' (28) are seen throughout the poem. Different words to mean binding are 'bound' (1); 'fastend' (1); 'laced' (2) and 'roped' (4) are used in the poem. Different words used to denote entrapment are 'walls' (2); 'hard at bay' (7); 'den' (9) and 'vault' (12). Varied action words to give a moving dramatic effect to the poem are used such as 'sweep' (2); 'swirling' (19); 'hurl/ing' (2,13,15); 'whirled' (3); 'brawling' (19); 'blow' (16); 'crash' (10); 'beat down'' (14); 'hurtle' (3); 'fling' (3); 'drove' (14); 'struck' (14); 'pitched' (16); and 'sloggering' (19). There are many words to express fear like 'dread'(1); 'horror' (2); 'frightful' (7); 'cringe' (11) etc., Some of the theological words used in the poem are 'Passion' (33); 'doomsday' (33); 'instress' (5); 'christen'(24) and 'mystery'(5). Some words of mercy and grace: 'grace to grace' (3); 'merciful' (9); 'his own bespoken' (22); 'mercies' (23); and 'comfort' (25) gives the poem a rich diction.

Many of the words used in the poem are onomatopoeic (formation of a word from the sound the object or action produces) the poet seems particularly fascinated with monosyllables that end in –sh, as in: 'lash/ed' (2,8); 'crash' (10); 'flash' (8); 'wash' (15); 'flesh' (8); and the trio 'lush,' 'plush' and 'flush' (8).

The use of hyphenated compound words is one of the most notable features of his style in this poem. Some examples are 'fall-gold' (23); 'rare-dear' (35);

'heaven-haven' (35); 'the-last-breath' (34) and 'sodden-with-its-sorrowing' (27). He also uses non hyphenated compound words such as 'dovewinged' (3).

Hopkins' use of neologisms is another striking feature of his diction such as 'lovescape' (23) and words made from negating adjectives, such as 'unchancelling,' 'unchilding,' 'unfathering' (13) or 'unmade' (1).

The voice or tone *The Wreck of the Deutschland* it is basically dramatic with element of internal and external conflict. The poem is an experimental poem in terms of its versification, or stanza structure.

Each verse (stanza) has eight lines with a rhyming scheme of ababcbca, an unusual scheme for an octave. The 'a' rhyme coming in the first and last lines is an attempt to bring the stanza together, which is occasionally contradicted by a sentence structure into the next stanza, for

example, between stanzas 7 and 8; stanzas 32 and 33. Hopkins does not adhere rigidly to the line lengths because his theory of sprung rhythm allows him to add 'hangers.'

The rhyming of thirtieth stanza is very clear. The 'a' rhyme is seen in 'light', 'night' and 'outright.' The b-rhyme is seen in 'son', 'nun' and 'done.' The c-rhyme is seen in 'stain' and 'brain.' In every rhyme there is a stressed syllable called masculine rhyme, and they are all majority monosyllables. The rhyme scheme of thirty first stanza is unusual. The 'a' rhyme becomes dactylic (a stressed rhyme followed by two unstressed ones) is also called as feminine rhyme) like 'pain for the'; 'vein for the', and 'grain for thee.' The 'b' rhyme is seen in 'rest of them,' 'unconfessed of them' and 'breast of the(m),' (the 'm' coming from the next line).The 'c 'rhyme is 'Providence' and 'of it, and (s)' (the 's' has to be borrowed from the next line). Thus Hopkins' rhymes are also often experimental. This stanza is the most extreme example of Hopkins' poetic rhyming plan.

Hopkins wanted his metre to be seen as fundamentally trochaic in this poem. He considers this as the basic speech rhythm. But as English speech rhythm is basically iambic, it is the metre of majority of English verse. Hopkins' scansion (metrical analysis of a stanza) in this poem is very flexible, rather than to fitting into a rigid pattern. He reverts to iambic metre more commonly in his later sonnets.

The Wreck of the Deutschland is full of images in series or layers of images. Hopkins possesses one of the great poetic minds despite being a theologian. His language is naturally abundant with figures, symbols and allusions. His imagery is figurative, metaphorical and descriptive, helping the reader to form a clear mental picture while imagining.

Water is the key image in nature imagery. Some of the images of aggressive water bodies are referred to 'high flood' (7); 'buck and the flood of the wave' (16); 'sea-romp' (17); 'sloggering brine' (19); 'endragoned seas' (27); 'Stanching quenching ocean' (32) and 'storm of his strides' (33). Some of the images of the still water are 'sway of the sea' (1) and 'water in a well' (4). Some

of the images of sand include 'strand' (1); 'hourglass' (4); 'smother of sand' (14) and the verb 'combs' (4 & 14). Some of the images of thunderstorm are 'lightning and lashed rod' (2); 'fall-gold mercies' and 'all-fire glances' (23) and 'lightning of fire hard-hurled' (34). There are many body images like 'bound bones in me' (1); 'heart' (3, 18) and 'vein' (4). More unexpected are images of music are 'virginal' (primitive form of keyboard) (17) and 'madrigal/revel/glee' (18). There are many biblical images of the Holy Spirit like 'dovewinged' and 'carrier witted' (3); 'flame to the flame' (3); and 'breath' (25). Christ is personified through a number of images such as 'lovescape crucified' (23). There are reflections of many biblical images like the harvest (31); the ark (33); a crown (as reward for the martyr) (25) and flame, or dust (11). The theological images are the Trinity (9) and rebellious mankind (9). One of the main symbolisms is

through the figure 'five' (20, 22, and 23) is an allusion (reference) to the Bible.

The main figure of speech used in this poem is the metaphor. Simile is never used once in the poem. Personification is used in case of death (11); hope (15) and heart (18). A specific type of personification called 'anthropomorphism,' in which God is given human characteristics, e.g. 'thy finger' (1); 'frown of his face' (3); 'fondler' (9) and 'feathers' (12) are artistically used in the poem. Metonymy is less used (a figure of speech where name of one object is used for another related object) for example 'maiden's knee' (7) represents the maternal love. Synecdoche (a figure of speech where a part represents the whole or the whole represents a part) is rarely used like 'telling of tongue' (9) means the act of speech.

5.6 Themes in the Poem

Theodicy is the technical term for the process of trying to understand why evil happens when the God rules the world. It is a natural question we get when we enquire into any disaster. Hopkins does not blame anyone, neither the captain for sailing into a snowstorm nor non arrival of the rescuers. But his concern is to find out what is 'meaning' for the disaster to happen. Among the drowned people five of were Catholic nuns who were forced to leave their own country by unfair laws. The poet's inquest is to find out the reason why God allowed them to suffer a double hardship. The poem concentrates mainly on this question. Only at the end does he ask what it may have meant to all the others on board. Even then he is not interested in distributing the blame to anyone. The poet is firm that 'Blame' should not be a parameter in the search for meaning.

Hopkins takes his cue from the leading nun's cry, 'O Christ, Christ come quickly' (24), a detail that had caught his eye in the newspaper account. He explores theodicy by finding what she could have meant. He proposes possible meanings in stanzas 25 to 27. In stanza 28 the poet seems to present an epiphany or revelation of what could have really happened. The nun saw Christ coming to her on or over 'the water', or through the storm through her eye of faith. This was her rescue from the world in form of death. Christ takes her and the other nuns with the passengers to heaven as martyrs for their faith.

Hopkins also hopes that the meaning of the disaster was not only the nun's personal salvation but also that her cry would have helped some of the others to make some last minute confessions (stanzas 31 & 33), leading them to Heaven. So the theodicy explains the coming of Christ to take his followers. It is the great success of the poet in not describing any punishment or anger upon the God in the poem.

God's power is expressed in most of the first part of the poem. The poet gives his own experience of God's 'mastery' over him. The poem begins; 'Thou mastering me/God!' Thus God's sovereignty is an active even in a disaster. Hopkins finds it dreadful when he is subjected to the divine approach as stanzas 1 to 3. But after having submitted to God, he

NOTES

identifies God's mercy in 'the gospel proffer' (stanza 4) and finds the meaning he is looking for in Christ's own struggle and suffering against evil. God fights back for the salvation when dying people lose their faith in God and naturally become rebellious against God as seen in ninth stanza,.

Hopkins distinguishes good and evil in the shipwreck and God's mastery related to the shipwreck. He says that God does not will the storm to happen but he wills to use that circumstance for good, in stanza 6. He adds that God reveals himself to the nun that he usually does only in crucial situations and only for staunch followers. The poet considers that death of all the nuns who were the believers, it is a great victory and for non believers for whom it was a panicking experience. He believes that although the death is inevitable the manner of dying is that which matters, (stanza 11).

Hopkins considers this disaster as a triumph because God had derived the attention of those on the ship and the whole country which has read the news. He feels that the martyrdom of the nuns could be the new beginning of Catholicism over the people of England. However Hopkins feels that God's mercy outnumbers his authority these others. Thus the poem begins and ends, with a complete influence of Christ, the lord.

There are three sorts of suffering portrayed in *The Wreck of the Deutschland* poet's personal suffering during conversion, the sufferings of the shipwrecked and the sufferings of Christ. Hopkins combines all three in this poem. The personal description of Hopkins' own spiritual and mental anguish is expressed in stanzas 2 and 3. He experiences terror, 'the swoon of the heart' at 'the hurl of thee trod.' Giddiness is felt by the poet as if when thrown from a great height. He experiences mercy when he finally submits to God is expressed in the phrase 'fled with a fling of the heart.' He experiences mercy of the 'dovewinged' God. In fact there was a sense of great excitement which is expressed in the phrase 'tower from the grace to the grace.' Naturally this personal suffering of the poet sensitizes him to understand the suffering of the shipwrecked.

The suffering of the shipwrecked people is purely due to terror and physical pain felt at death. This general fear and panic is dramatically described in stanzas 15 to 17. The suffering of the nuns is more complex because they have been

expelled from their native country and their faith in God is suffering. As a Christian, they do not physically fear for death. Their concern is to meet a 'good death,' at the God's will. In fact, in stanzas 28-29 one of the nuns has a vision of Christ actually coming over the storm waters to rescue her. The poet describes suffering of Christ also in stanzas 7 and 8. The phrase 'the driven Passion and frightful sweat' means that whatever suffering that is felt by Hopkins might have been also felt by Christ.

5.7 Let us sum up

The Wreck of Deutschland is one of the longest poems written by Hopkins. It was affected by the real life incident in 1875of a shipwreck. It is based on a wreck of a ship called 'Deutschland' at the mouth of the river Thames. It spiritually describes about the critical and tragic hours between the dark night of the wreck and the early hours of the next morning which ultimately took the lives of five exiled Franciscan nuns from Germany along with the other crew and passengers. The poem is a spiritual inquest into the accident and the meaning of theodicy according to Hopkins' own spiritual experiences with the Christ, who is a priest himself.

5.8 Unit End Exercise

Section A Questions (2 marks)

1. Why the German nuns are on the ship in the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland*?
2. What are the personifications described in the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland*?
3. What type of poem is *The Wreck of Deutschland*?
4. How are the passengers confessed at the last moment in the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland*?
5. Whose death affected the poet for writing the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland*?

Section B Questions (5 marks)

1. Give a brief account of the language and diction in the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland.*
2. Analyse the Give a brief account on various poetic devices seen in the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland.*
3. Write a short note on Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Section C Questions (10 marks)

1. Give a detailed note on the background themes in the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland.*
2. Give a detailed account of the plight of the poet, God, Nun and the passengers in the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland.*

5.9 Answer to check your progress

A. What is the background of the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland*?
Hopkins' *The Wreck of Deutschland* was inspired by the real life incident in 1875. It is based on a wreck of a ship called 'Deutschland' at the mouth of the river Thames in which among the fifty people drowned, there were five German nuns, who had had to leave Germany because of new and oppressive laws called the 'Falck Laws.'

NOTES

B. What is the rhythm of the poem *The Wreck of Deutschland*?
The sprung rhythm is experimentally used in the poem by Hopkins.

5.10 Suggested References

1. Birch, Dinah (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Seventh Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.2009. Print. ISBN 978-0-19-280687-1.

2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature* (Volume II).New Delhi: Supernova Publishers. 2010. 993-1048. Print. ISBN 978-81-899-304-48.

3. Rickett, Arthur Compton. *A History of English Literature.* New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. 2013. 403-596. Print. ISBN 978-81-85944-63-0.

4. Kumar, Satish. *A History of English Literature.* Agra: Lakshmi Narian Agarwal Pubisher.378-441. Print. ISBN 81-85778-70-1.

5. Long, J. William. *English Literature- Its History and Its Significance.* NewDelhi: Surjeet Publications. 2009. 452-568. Print.

UNIT –VI: WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS - *SAILING TO BYZANTIUM*

Structure

6.1 Introduction

The title *Sailing to Bysantium* suggests an escape in to a distant, imaginary land where the speaker achieves magical union with beautiful and eternal works of art. Byzantium is the old name of Constantinople or Istanbul, which was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. It was very famous for its advanced culture, mosaic art and metal enamelling. *Sailing to Byzantium* written in 1926. This poem is an absolute evidence of the Yeats' wholehearted interest in that historic city of Bysantium and his interests in its art and culture.

6.2 About the Poet

William Butler Yeast (1865–1939) was born in Dublin, Ireland, on June 13, 1865. He was the son of a renowned Irish painter, John Butler Yeats. He spent his childhood in County of Sligo and in London. He returned to Dublin at the age of fifteen to continue his education and study painting, but quickly discovered his interests in poetry. He was born in an Anglo-Irish Upper Class, involved himself with the Celtic Revival, a movement against the cultural influences of English rule in Ireland during the Victorian Age. The movement promoted the spirit of Ireland's native heritage. Although Yeats never learned Gaelic, a Celtic language of Scotland, his writing drew inspiration from the Irish mythology and

folklore. Yeats met an Irish revolutionary woman who was famous for her nationalist politics and her beauty called Maud Gonne in 1889. Although she influenced his poetry they were not into any official relationship. She married another man in 1903 and went away from Yeats and Yeats was

married to another woman, Georgie Hyde Lees. But Maud Gonne remained a dominant figure in his poetry despite his failed love affair.

Yeats was extremely involved in politics of Ireland, and in the nineteen twenties, despite Irish independence from England, his verse reflected pessimism about the political situation in his country and the rest of Europe. He was influenced by the conservatism of his American counterparts in London, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. After 1910, his work was strongly influenced by Pound had more modern imagery and became concise. But Yeats never stopped to stick on to a traditional verse forms and mysticism. He was appointed as a senator of the Irish Free State in 1922. He was an important cultural head, a playwright who was one of the founders of the famous Abbey Theatre in Dublin and one of the greatest poets. He was a Nobel Prize in recipient in 1923. He died in 1939 at the age of seventy-three.

Some of his famous poems among the many that he had written are *Leda and the Swan, Death, The Second Coming, He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven, Long-Legged Fly, An Irish Airman Foresees His Death, Sailing to Bysantium, Easter 1916, The Lake Isle of Innisfree Among School Children* etc., One of the most successful play of Yeats was *The Countess Cathleen.* Yeats produced majority of his greatest work between the ages of 50 and 75.

6.3 About the Poem

Sailing to Byzantium is written in a very old verse form consisting of four stanzas of eight-line each. They are in iambic pentameter and rhymed in a scheme with two trios of alternating rhyme followed by a couplet that has a rhyme scheme of abababcc.

Sailing to Bysantium (1926) is one of the greatest poems of Yeats. It is one of the most inspirational works of the twentieth century. It is one of the poems in Yeats' single poetry collection *The Tower* (1928). Yeats states about the pain of the old age. Even when the heart is 'fastened to a dying animal' called the body, the imaginative power and spiritual power are required by everyone to remain alive as an individual. So Yeats decides to leave the country of the youth and travel to Byzantium. The sages in that city's famous gold mosaics could become the 'singing-masters' of his soul. He hopes the sages will appear in fire and 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.' In the astonishing final stanza of the poem, he declares that once he is out of his body, he will never again reappear in the form of any natural thing. But he wishes to 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').

Yeats has an attraction with the artificial and often considers that superior to the natural. It is one of the most prevalent themes in the poem. In his earlier poem,

The Lover Tells of the Rose in His Heart (1899), the poet expresses a longing to re-make the world 'in a casket of gold' and to eliminate the world's ugliness and imperfection. In the poem *The Dolls* (1914) the poet writes the praise of a group of dolls on a shelf sickened by the sight of a human baby. In all the poems the

artificial golden casket, the beautiful doll and the golden bird are seen to be perfect while the natural world, the human baby and the human body are considered ugly and prone to decay. But the speaker sees deep spiritual truth rather than the simple external beauty in his dream of artificiality. As he wishes his soul to learn to sing and so he wishes to transform into a golden bird.

6.4 Summary of the Poem

In the first stanza, the speaker speaks about the country (Ireland) that he has left. He says that it is 'no country for old men.' The poet means that Ireland or this earth is not the right place for old men because all the people caught in a sensual music which makes them neglect the ageless artistic achievements of the intellect. So the speaker describes old men as 'Monuments of unageing intellect.' The young men and women, the lovers are embraced in one another's arm. During 'all summer long' period, the birds on the trees are singing, salmon fishes and mackerel fishes inhabit the seas. All these creatures the 'fish, flesh and fowl' which sing the sensual song belong to the dying generation. This 'sensual music' makes the young neglect the old.

In the second stanza, the speaker says that an old man is a 'paltry thing,' an unimportant object in that country (Ireland). An old man is considered as a torn coat hung upon a stick. He says that until his soul can clap its hands and sing the newly learnt song which has to become louder and louder because the physical powers of the old man has worsened. It is difficult to get the right school in that country where the soul can get an education because every singing school, instead of caring for monuments of unageing intellect is busy studying the monuments of its own materialistic importance. As a result of the difficulty in finding the right school for his soul to be educated in that country, the poet decides to sail across seas and go to the holy city of Byzantium.

In the third stanza, the speaker addresses the sages 'standing in God's holy fire / As in the gold mosaic of a wall,' and asks them to be his soul 'singing-masters.' Addressing the sages standing in God's holy fire in Byzantium, the poet compares the sages to figures standing in the gold mosaic works, inlaid work of coloured marble or glass of a wall. He requests them to climb down from their position (wall) in a spiral movement and become the educator of his soul. He wants his soul can to learn the right kind of song. The song which becomes louder as the body decays more. He hopes they will consume his heart away, for his heart 'knows not what it is' . . . it is 'sick with desire / And fastened to a dying

animal.' The speaker wishes to be included 'Into the artifice of eternity.' The first thing necessary of an individual is to purify one's heart which is tied to the animal instincts of the body and is sick with physical desire. The narrator most desires that once one has purified or consumed his heart, it will be easier for him to gather into the artifice of eternity. In other words, the narrator wants to become part of those things which are beyond the cycle of birth and death.

In the forth stanza, the speaker says that once he has died and taken out of the natural world, he will no longer adopt his 'bodily form' of any other 'natural

thing.' But wishes himself to be born as a singing bird made up of hammered gold, by the Grecian goldsmiths. "To keep a drowsy Emperor awake," or set upon a tree of gold "to sing / To lords and ladies of Byzantium / Or what is past, or passing, or to come." Once the narrator is out of this circle of nature of being 'begotten, born and dying,' he will break all contact with natural things i.e., with the physical world. Instead of taking his bodily form from any natural thing he shall take a form that was hammered into golden shape with golden enamelling by Grecian goldsmiths. The Grecian goldsmiths made a golden bird that could sing to a sleepy Emperor and keep him awake. He also wants to be that golden bird gathered into the artifice of eternity, so that he is perched upon a golden bough (branch) in the court of Byzantium. That would enable him to sing of all times- past, present and future (of what is past, or passing or to come) to the Lords and Ladies of Byzantium. This song of the narrator will be different from the sensual music of dying generations and will sing of monuments of unageing intellect.

6.5 Critical Analysis of the Poem

Sailing to Byzantium- William Butler Yeats

I

That is no country for old men. 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.

II

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

III

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.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

IV

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.

The poem *Sailing to Byzantium* focuses on the journey of the soul to reach Byzantium. The speaker travels on a ship leaving behind a country of youth who do not care for old men. Yeats could be mean the country to be either Ireland or may symbolically mean the earthly world.

The first line of the first stanza is a famous line in the poetic world. This line has been adapted as the title for a crime thriller novel and a film *NO*

COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN. The speaker is leaving his country because he feels himself too old to be in a country where many young people are seen around doing what they like. Nature also does not help old it is full of resources like the birds and fishes in the summer month. The life cycle of conception, birth, growth and death happens continuously. There is so much of merriment in the 'sensual music' than the 'Monuments of unaging intellect' that is the wisdom of the old men are neglected by the youth. In another way of interpreting, the poet describes the natural world, where the young of all species the birds, fish and people are busy loving, reproducing and appreciating the flesh. Though these generations are dying from the moment of their birth, they do not notice it. They are caught in the sensual music called life. They 'neglect monuments of unaging intellect.' The works of art, religion or philosophy, the products of man's intellect are ignored. But there is no place for an old man whose senses have already begun to fail.

In the second stanza old age life is the main point. The old man is worthlessness and he is nothing but a 'tattered coat upon a stick,' that is a scarecrow-like appearance. It is necessary for the soul to clap and sing the soul music. But unfortunately there are no singing schools to sing the song of the soul. There is only study of materialistic monuments, of things that are subject to degeneration and death. So the speaker sails away from all of that and has now approached the paradise called Byzantium. So these two stanzas give out the reason for the journey to Byzantium to probably escape from the mortal life to attain 'eternity.'

The third stanza is a direct request of the speaker to the divine sages to make him sing the song of the soul. The sages are like 'perne in a gyre,' where perne or pirn is a bobbin or a spool and gyre means to spiral down in a conical shape. The poet requests the sages to come down spiralling from a wave of history to make his soul to sing. He also requests them to free his heart which is full of sickness of desire and tied down to the 'dying animal' or the destroyable human body in order to reach the eternity. There are images of Byzantine art the gold mosaic and unknown philosophy of the gyre in this stanza. The longing of the humans for immortality has been a fantasy from kings of ancient Egypt who took many measures to have their dead body preserved for years to be resurrected into life, to the modern man using cryogenic technology and cloning. Yeats also wants to know or understand the art of eternal existence, 'artifice of eternity.'

This final stanza confirms the desire of eternal living of the speaker in Byzantium. The speaker does not want to take any living natural form after his death. But he prefers to take the form of any eternal object made by the Grecian goldsmith or a form of a golden bird perching on a golden 'bough,' which will sing all time. The bird's song will keep the drowsy emperor awake and will be ever enjoyed by the lords and ladies of Byzantium.

Byzantium saw the revival of Greek art and culture after its conquest by the Turks in 1453. In this poem 'Byzantium' is a symbol of a country with treasures of art and philosophy which is beyond the limits of time and nature. Byzantium is referred to be holy, because it is the centre of spiritual or intellectual pleasure rather than physical or sensuous pleasures of life.

The speaker invites the sages to come down in a spinning motion to teach him how experience and enjoyed beauty of art. He wants them to become the 'Singing masters of his soul' and to purify his heart. In other words he wants them to teach him to listen to spiritual music contrast from the sensual music. The poet after getting rid of all sensual desires would like to be transformed into some object of art having an eternal value, in Byzantium. Then he will have no age; past, present and future are all one there.

Check your Progress

A. Where does the speaker sail and from where does he sail in the poem *Sailing to Byzantium*?
B. What are the songs mentioned in the poem *Sailing to Byzantium*?

6.6 Poetic Devices in the Poem

Alliteration is a literary device when there are two or more words close together in a line beginning with the same consonant they are alliterative, for example 'Fish, flesh or fowl'; 'begotten, born'; 'singing school but studying;' 'sages standing'; 'Grecian goldsmiths'; 'lords and ladies'; 'past, or passing' etc.,
Assonance is a literary device when words close together in a line have similar sounding vowels like 'salmon-falls,' 'the mackerel-crowded,' 'clap its hands,' 'gold mosaic,' etc.,

Caesura is a literary device **w**hen a line has punctuation in midway and where the reader has to pause for example the line 'Whatever is begotten, born, and dies' needs adequate pause when reading it.

Enjambment is a literary technique where a line runs on into the next with no punctuation and it is used where the logic or thought is to be maintained. The reader is encouraged to carry on reading it as if there is no line break at all. For example in the third stanza, there are three lines that come as enjambment.
'Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.'

Metaphor, the whole poem is a metaphorical journey sailing to the ultimate city of Byzantium. The specific metaphors seen in the poem are the **'**dying

animal' meaning the physical body, 'tattered coat upon a stick' meaning a thin old man and 'country' meaning the real world.

Personification is a literary technique of giving a human status to objects or things like
'Soul clap its hands and sing,' the soul is personified as a human.

6.7 Form of the Poem

Sailing To Byzantium is an ottava rima poem, that has stanzas with eight lines and a rhyme scheme of 'abababcc.' There are full rhymes like 'song and long'; 'thing and sing' etc. There are some slant rhymes like 'sees and dies'; 'dress and magnificence' etc. They bring both agreement and disagreement to certain parts of the poem. The rhyming couplets (a pair of successive line with rhyming words) with full rhyme 'neglect and intellect' 'me and eternity' bringing definite closure of the thoughts.

Sailing to Byzantium is supposed to have basic iambic pentameter lines which are the traditional metre in the ottava rima form. Yeats, however, modifies the form to suit his own purpose, using ten syllables instead of the original eleven and using slant rhymes instead of exact ones.

6.8 Let us sum up

Sailing to Bysantium (1926) is one of the greatest poems of Yeats and twentieth century. Yeats expresses the pain of the old age. Even when the heart is fastened to a destroyable body, the imaginative power and spiritual power are required by

everyone to remain alive as an individual. So Yeats decides to leave the country of the youth (Ireland) and travel to Byzantium. The sages in that city's famous gold mosaics could become the 'singing-masters' of his soul. He hopes the sages will appear in fire and take him away from his body into an existence outside time, where, like a great work of art, he could exist for an eternity. Finally he declares that once he is out of his body, he will never again reappear in the form of any natural thing. But he wishes to become a golden bird, sitting on a golden branch of a golden tree, singing of the past, the present, and the future.

6.9 Unit End Exercise

Section A Questions (2 marks)

1. Who has no importance in the poem *Sailing to Byzantium*?

2. What are the personifications described in the poem *Sailing to Byzantium*?
3. What type of poem is *Sailing to Byzantium*?
4. How teaches the spiritual song to the speaker in the poem *Sailing to Byzantium*?

5. What does the poet want to become after death in the poem *Sailing to Byzantium*?

Section B Questions (5 marks)

1. Give a brief account of the artistic excellence in Byzantium, in the poem, *Sailing to Byzantium.*
2. Analyse the Give a brief account on various poetic devices seen in the poem, *Sailing to Byzantium.*
3. Write a short note on William Butler Yeats.

Section C Questions (10 marks)

1. Give a detailed note on the background themes in the poem, *Sailing to Byzantium.*
2. Give a detailed account of the dilemma of the speaker in the poem, *Sailing to Byzantium.*

6.10 Answer to check your progress

A. Where does the speaker sail and from where does he sail in the poem *Sailing to Byzantium*?
The speaker sails from his country Ireland or this earthly world and sails to the ideal city Byzantium.

B. What are the songs mentioned in the poem *Sailing to Byzantium*?

There are four songs mentioned in the poem. They are the sensual song sung by the youngsters, the song sung by the soul, the spiritual songs sung by the sages and the song sung by the golden bird, sitting on the golden branches in Byzantium.

6.11 Suggested References

1. Birch, Dinah (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Seventh Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.2009. Print. ISBN 978-0-19-280687-1.

2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature* (Volume II).New Delhi: Supernova Publishers. 2010. 993-1048. Print. ISBN 978-81-899-304-48.

3. Rickett, Arthur Compton. *A History of English Literature.* New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. 2013. 403-596. Print. ISBN 978-81-85944-63-0.

4. Kumar, Satish. *A History of English Literature.* Agra: Lakshmi Narian Agarwal Pubisher.378-441. Print. ISBN 81-85778-70-1.

5. Long, J. William. *English Literature- Its History and Its Significance.* NewDelhi: Surjeet Publications. 2009. 452-568. Print.

NOTES

UNIT –VII: T. S. ELIOT - *THE WASTE LAND*

Structure

7.1 Introduction

The Waste Land (1922) was written by T.S. Eliot based on the consequences of First World War. Eliot saw pain, disharmony, fragmentation of country and false hopes among people, in contrary to the belief that the World War I was a war to end all wars. He comments the world as 'a heap of broken images' after the war. The poem is a dramatic monologue and is divided into five sections. *Burial of the Dead, A Game of Chess, The Fire Sermon, Death by Water* and *What the Thunder Said.*

7.2 About the Poet

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born on 26 September, 1888, at St. Louis, Missouri which is an industrial city in the centre of the U. S. A. His ancestors immigrated to America in 1668 from East Coker in Somersetshire, England. They had become flourishing merchants at Boston, New England. T. S. Eliot's grandfather had founded a Unitarian Church in St. Louis. He was interested in academic pursuits and founded the Washington University at St. Louis. The poet's father, Henry Eliot, had no academic interests. He took to brick-trade and was quite successful in it. He married Charlotte Steam who was a writer. Her writings are characterized by technical innovations. Eliot had inherited his passion for technical innovations in writing from his mother and his business ability from his father. He was also the head of a successful publishing company.

Eliot lived in St. Louis during the first eighteen years of his life where he had his schooling in 1905. He went to Harvard University and pursued an extensive course of studies in language and literature. He was very much interested in the German, French and English literatures and in the classics.

He was particularly interested in comparative literature. He contributed several poems to the *Harvard Advocate* when he was perusing his studies in Harvard. Then he left the United States to Sorbonne, France in1910. After a year in Paris, he returned to Harvard to pursue a doctorate in philosophy. But he again returned to Europe and then ultimately settled in England in 1914. Then in 1915, he married Vivienne Haigh-Wood. He began working in London, first as a teacher, and later for Lloyd's Bank.

The influence of his teachers, Irving Babbit and George Santayana was deep in his works. Their influence added to his already great sense of tradition. Another major influence that Eliot had was that of Arthur Symon. His book called *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* stimulated Eliot's interest in the poetry and the French symbolists, Laforgue also greatly influenced him.

Ezra Pound recognized Eliot's poetic genius and assisted in the publication of his work in a number of magazines. The poem, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' was published in *Poetry* in 1915. His first collection of poems, *Prufrock and Other Observations,* was published in 1917, established his name in the world of poetry. The publication of *The Waste Land* in 1922, a most influential poetic work of the twentieth century, increased Eliot's reputation many times. From 1930 he became the most dominant figure in poetry and literary criticism for the next thirty years.

His affinity for the English metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century like John Donne and the nineteenth century French symbolist poets like Baudelaire and Laforgue, made him attempt poetry with major innovations in poetic technique and subject. His poems expressed the plights of the post World War I, younger generation and infused them with the better values and conventions of literary and social Victorian era. He had an enormous impact on contemporary literary works as a critic. After his conversion to orthodox Christianity in the late thirties, his works were increasingly based in social and religious conservatism also.

His major later poetry collections include *Ash Wednesday* (1930) and *Four Quartets* (1943); his books of literary and social criticism include *The Sacred Wood* (1920), *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933), *After Strange Gods* (1934), and *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1940). Eliot's major verse dramas include *Murder in the Cathedral*, *The Family Reunion*, and *The Cocktail Party*.

He became a British citizen in 1927. He was related for a long time with the Faber & Faber publishing house and he published the works of many younger poets. He ultimately became director of the publishing firm. T. S. Eliot received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948. He died in London on January 4, 1965.

NOTES

7.3 About the Poem

The title of the poem, subject and the mixture of Latin, Greek and English words makes the poem complex. It also refers to spiritual dryness and the search for the Holy Grail. The quotation beneath the title is in Latin and Greek, and comes from the *Satyricon,* a Latin fiction by Petronious. The dedication to fellow poet Ezra Pound who suggested changes in the poem is also in Latin, 'il miglor fabbro,' meaning 'to the better craftsman,' were the words used by the Italian poet Dante.

The poem is a dramatic monologue and is divided into five sections. *Burial of the Dead, A Game of Chess, The Fire Sermon, Death by Water* and *What the Thunder Said.* In *Burial of the Dead* the speaker is in the land of the not only physically dead but also the spiritually and emotionally dead. Those who are alive are moving through life as shades. *A Game of Chess* considers the way in which the people forget their own history. *The Fire Sermon has* many references to the great personalities of the past, including Tiresias (a blind prophet of God of medicine, Apollo), Cleopatra, Shakespeare, Philomel (princess of Athens), and Dante. These great writers and their characters were not able to figure out the complexities of pain and suffering than anyone has ever been. *Death by Water* is a reminder of the temporary nature of life. *Death by Thunder* finds humanity trapped by a device invented by it. The poem is followed by dozens of notes by Eliot on how to read certain lines because of the criticism by many critics that the poem was incomprehensible and discontinuous. He had deleted half of the verse from the lengthy poem after the suggestion of the poet Ezra Pound.

7.4 Summary and Critical Analysis of the Poem

Section I: *The Burial of the Dead*

Summary

The first section of *The Waste Land* takes its title from a line in the Anglican burial service. It is made up of four scenes; each is apparently from the viewpoint of a different speaker. The first scene is an autobiographical short tale from the childhood of an aristocratic woman, in which she recalls sledding and claims that she is German, not Russian (this would be important if the woman is meant to be a member of the recently defeated Austrian imperial family). The woman mixes a thought on the seasons with remarks on the useless nature of her current life ('I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter').

The second scene is a prophetic, apocalyptic invitation to journey into a waste desert. The speaker will show the reader 'something different from either / Your shadow at morning striding behind you / Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you; / [He] will show you fear in a handful of dust.' Evelyn Waugh, a British Author, took the title *A Handful of Dust* for one of his novels from these lines. The almost threatening prophetic tone is mixed with childhood memories

about a 'hyacinth girl' and an inner revelation of the speaker's mind after meeting her. These reminiscences are quoted with references from Wagner's operatic version of *Tristan und Isolde,* an Arthurian tale of adultery and loss.

The third scene in this section describes an imaginative Tarot reading (cards used for foretelling), in which some of the cards Eliot includes in the reading are not part of an actual tarot deck. The fourth scene of the section is the most unreal. The speaker walks through a London populated by ghosts of the dead. He meets a ghost of a person with whom he once fought in a battle that seems to merge the World War I with the Punic Wars fought between Rome and Carthage. Both the wars are useless and much destructive wars. The speaker asks the ghostly person called Stetson about the fate of a dead body buried in his garden. The episode concludes with a famous line from the preface to Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*, a important collection of Symbolist poetry, accusing the reader regarding the sharing of the poet's sins.

Critical Analysis

The Waste Land by Eliot is a great poem which was written in 1921 and was printed in 1922. Eliot received a great amount of guidance from Ezra Pound, who suggested him to cut large sections of the work and to break up the rhyme scheme. Vivien, Eliot's wife, also played a significant role in reshaping the poem into the present form. *The Waste Land* talks about the destroyed Europe degraded modern culture and the confusion that resulted due to First World War. Eliot approaches the poem with a sign of the pessimism. The epigraph is taken from the *Satyricon,* in which the 'Sibyl,' a woman with prophetic powers, who ages but never dies, looks at the future and declares that she only wants to die. The Sibyl's dilemma reflects the desire of Eliot also. He lives in a culture that has decayed and shrunken. He is forced to live with reminders of former magnificent culture.

The Waste Land revolves around Eliot's reading of two extraordinarily influential contemporary cultural or anthropological texts, Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and Sir James Frazier's *The Golden Bough.* Both of these works focus on the persistence of ancient fertility rituals in modern thought and religion. Both the authors have particular interest in the story of the Fisher King, who has been wounded in the genitals and whose lack of potency is the cause of his country becoming a dried out 'waste land.' The legend says that if the Fisher King is healed the land will regain its fertility. According to Weston and Frazier, healing the Fisher King has been the subject of mythic tales from ancient Egypt to Arthurian England. Eliot picks up on the image of the Fisher King legend's wasteland as an appropriate description for the state of modern society. The important difference is that in Eliot's world there is no way to heal the Fisher King or perhaps there is no Fisher King at all. The legend's imperfect integration into a modern thought highlights the lack of a unifying narrative, like religion or mythology in the modern world.

NOTES

The poem is inspired from various sources. Eliot's footnotes with the poem are an excellent source for knowing various references of the poem, like the Bible.

The poem is a set of broken fragments which must be pieced together to get a logical meaning. He tries to expose an imitative life in the twentieth century's confusing world. It opens with a reference to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* The poem opens with a statement that 'April is the cruellest month,' because flowers and plants grow in the spring but they have to grow 'out of the dead land.' The April month is considered as a month of regeneration after a long winter. It is not the happy month for pilgrimages or storytelling. The regeneration is painful because it brings back the memories of a fertile and a happy past. The winter is considered better because it is the time of forgetfulness and numbness. When compared to spring or summer the winter keeps the speaker warm because it covers up the dead land (a waste land) with snow. The 'wasteland' is a metaphoric reference to the devastation caused by the First World War and also the Spanish Flu of 1918-19.

Marie painfully recalls her stay at her Archduke Cousin's house during her childhood. The happy world of cousins, sledding, and coffee in the park has been replaced by emotional settings due to politics of the war. Memory creates an argument of the past with the present and this combination points out a present decayed life. There is a sense of fear and uncertainty regarding the future and fear of rebuilding the culture. *The Burial of the Dead* is a reference to the Anglican Prayer Book, and its prayer for the burial of the dead: 'Ashes to ashes; dust to dust.'

Then with a sudden change of the setting, speaker, and subject the poem refers to Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*. Tristan and Isolde was a doomed romantic couple who fell in love, although Isolde was betrothed to the King. The relevance of this opera to the rest of 'The Burial of the Dead' is not clear. Then a woman addresses her lover and recalls how her lover gave her hyacinths. The lover replies that when they returned from the hyacinth garden, he experienced a sense of emptiness which was either euphoria or numbness. He says that he was neither living nor dead, though, suggesting a strange feeling somewhere in between these two.

In the next change of setting we find ourselves in the company of Madame Sosostris, a Tarot reader, who uses Tarot cards to try to predict the future. She is compared to the Sibyl in the epigraph to *The Waste Land.* 'Sibyls' is a female figure who prophesies the future. The phrase 'Fear death by water' is a reference to Ferdinand's drowned father from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Then the setting changes to London where the speaker notices a crowd of people moving over the London Bridge who have been undone by death. It is referred from medieval Italian poet Dante's *Inferno.* The speaker then meets a man named 'Stetson.' The speaker tells him that they both had

fought at Mylae in the First Punic War between Rome and Carthage during 260 BC. War continues to be a part of life at all ages. The speaker then asks Stetson if the dead body that he has planted in his garden has begun to grow. This is an unusual idea of birth taking place out of the land and the live people live with the dead. This analysis

of *The Burial of the Dead* highlights the fact that dead will not lie down but get up and walk again. *The Burial of the Dead* establishes some of the core themes
of *The Waste Land* like death, burial and rebirth. It also gives hints of the impact of the First World War on the people of Europe.

Section II: *A Game of Chess*

Summary

This section focuses on two contrasting scenes, one of high class and other of the lower class. The first half of the section shows a wealthy, highly groomed woman and neurotic woman surrounded by lavish furnishings. She waits for a lover and plans for an excursion and a game of chess that day. The second half of this section shifts to an East London barroom, where two women discuss about a third woman, Lil. Lil's husband has just been discharged from the army duties. She suggests that Lil gets herself some false teeth to improve her appearance or else her husband will seek out the company of other women. Lil claims that the cause of her old looks is the medication she took to induce an abortion. She has been nearly suffering to give birth to five children and does not want to have another. But her husband 'won't leave [her] alone.' The women leave the bar to a chorus of 'good night(s)' indicative of Ophelia's farewell speech in *Hamlet.*

Critical Analysis

A Game of Chess is the second section of the poem *The Waste Land*. The title partly refers to Jacobean Era dramatist Thomas Middleton's play *Women Beware Women* and *A Game at Chess*. It begins with a long description of a lavishly decorated room in which a woman is sitting on a 'Chair' like a throne. This first line is actually a reference to a line from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* 'The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne …' The room is lavishly decorated, with the carving of a dolphin and Philomela being transformed into a nightingale. The woman is explicitly compared to Philomela (princess of Athens). She is a character out of the Greek myth retold in Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* She is raped by her brother-in-law Tereus who is the king. Tereus cuts her tongue to keep her quiet. But Philomela manages to tell her grievances to her sister. The sister helps her to revenge by killing the king's son and feeding him to the king. The sisters are then changed into birds, Philomela into a nightingale by the God. This comparison suggests that the women are unable to communicate their inner self to the world. Although the women are considered to be aesthetically pleasing, their lives are meaningless similar to the nonsense song that she sings as a bird. This artistic depiction of sexual violence is

NOTES

seen in the poem in many occasions; the woman Lil who is harassed by her husband and the young man who assaults the typist in *The Fire Sermon*.

A women like 'Belinda' from Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* lives an upper-class, false life. Her perfumes cover up the 'female stench' and her make-up covers her natural look. After a long description of the woman in her room, a

conversation between a woman and her lover is given. The woman angrily accuses the man of remaining quiet and of not revealing his thoughts to her. The man replies in mysterious manner. He thinks that they are living in rats' alley, a likely reference to the trenches of the First World War. When she asks about the noise that she hears, he dismisses it as the wind. When she asks him what he remembers, he replies by quoting the Shakespearean allusion 'Those are pearls that were his eyes.' It strongly suggests that the man is jammed in his life and does not want to speak or think about it due to some huge trauma. Finally, when the woman asks him if anything is there in his head, he quotes from other works rather than giving genuine answers.

The woman desperately asks the man what they are going to do and what they are *ever* going to do, reinforcing the fact that their lives are meaningless and they struggle to exist. The man replies with a list of things they routinely do. The hot water goes on at ten, a roof over the convertible car at four, to be taken out if it's raining and a game of chess while they were waiting for threatening knock at the door. We cannot say who knocks at the door, whether it is a ghost from the past or a guest who can bring meaning to their lives.

Then the scene moves to a pub in the East End of London. The poem moves to other end of the social spectrum where the working-class women are talking together. One of them is telling about another friend, Lil whose husband has been discharged from the army. Although she is only thirty-one years old, she already looks old because the abortion pills she took. As Lil has aged quickly and she is running out of time highlights the fact that Lil is harassed in her marriage and reproductive life. Death is the only relief for her. As the women leave the pub, their words of 'Good night' merges with the final dialogue of 'Ophelia' said as she leaves the stage in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* 'Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night.' Ophelia becomes mad, influenced by Hamlet and used as a pawn by her father Polonius in his political scheming. She will be found dead, having drowned herself shortly after this scene 'Fear death by water.' The Tarot reading in the previous section, *The Burial of the Dead* already warns us about such a death.

A Game of Chess is the analysis about two modern world women of different social class and their unsatisfactory relationships with men. Both of them are trapped in a cycle of routine. Their only escape is death and that seems unthinkable. Although the women they are compared with like Cleopatra (in the case of the first), Ophelia (in the case of the second) took

their own unpleasant lives, the modern age women cannot escape from life so easily. Eliot means to suggest that sexuality of both women is not regenerative in this modern world.

Check your Progress

A. Name some characters mentioned in the poem *The Burial of the Dead* (section I) of *The Waste Land*?

B. Who are the two women mentioned in the poem *A Game of Chess* (section II) of *The Waste Land*?

Section III: *The Fire Sermon*

Summary

The title of this, the longest section of *The Waste Land*, is taken from a discourse given by Buddha in which he encourages his followers to give up earthly passion which is symbolized by fire and to seek freedom from earthly things. The poem has a chain of immoral sexual engagements which concludes with a river-song and a religious prayer. The section opens with an isolated riverside scene: Rats and garbage surround the speaker, who is fishing and 'musing on the king my brother's wreck.' The river-song begins, with the reference from Spenser's *Prothalamion* 'Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song.' A short fragment from an offensive soldier's ballad follows, with a reference to Philomela. Then the speaker is proposed by Mr. Eugenides, the one-eyed merchant of Madame Sosostris's Tarot pack for homosexual union. The speaker then proclaims himself to be Tiresias, a figure from classical mythology who has both male and female features, 'Old man with wrinkled female breasts' and is blind but can see into the future. The speaker observes a young typist at home for tea, who awaits her lover, a dull and arrogant clerk. The woman allows the clerk to have sex and he leaves victorious. After her lover's departure, the typist thinks only that she's glad the encounter is done and over, not really satisfied.

Then Thames-daughters, borrowed from Spenser's poem, strike in with a nonsense chorus. The scene shifts again, to Queen Elizabeth I in an affectionate encounter with the Earl of Leicester. The queen seems unmoved by her lover's declarations, and she thinks only of her 'people humble people who expect / Nothing.' The section then comes to an abrupt end with a few lines from St. Augustine's *Confessions* and a vague reference to the Buddha's Fire Sermon.

Critical Analysis

The Fire Sermon is the third section of the poem has a reference to the Fire Sermon of the Buddhist, which encourages the individual to liberate themselves from suffering through detachment from the five senses and the

NOTES

conscious mind. It opens with the River Thames, and a description of the litter that was spread over its surface, during the summer. The 'nymphs,' have departed has two meanings. On the one hand, Eliot says that in the modern times the litter spread Thames has lost its magic and spiritualism. The rivers of the ancient world were populated by nymphs and the modern Thames just has just litter. But on the other hand, 'nymphs' can be interpreted as euphemism for prostitutes. The latter meaning may be that the sons of rich bankers have been giving business to the prostitutes who do their business in the banks of the river. But as the summer holidays are over, these rich men have gone the 'nymphs' have gone also. This is a modern day deterioration, where sex is sold cheap commodity and is no longer considered as a spiritual union after the holy ritual of marriage. This meaning is compared with a repeated line from Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser's *Prothalamion* (1596), a poem written to celebrate the double marriage
of two noblewomen. This poem was written in honour of the holy union of marriage but the only unions going on near the Thames in Eliot's time are those between the 'nymphs' and the bankers' sons.

But this thought is brought back to the waste land and moves from the river to a canal, where the speaker is fishing reminds us of the Fisher King. He is ruminating upon his brother's shipwreck and his father's death, which could partly be another reference to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Then we see the signs of modern destruction in the sound of car horns signalling the arrival of 'Sweeney.' He is a Neanderthal figure, a modern caveman in a modern suit who comes to meet 'Mrs Porter,' a brothel-owner. But Eliot once again cleverly compares this scene of modern destruction where sex has lost its deeper meaning.

There is a mention of 'Actaeon.' A mythological character who was torn apart by his own hounds because he dared to look at the naked body of the beautiful goddess Diana when she was bathing. According to this classical myth, the punishment for deriving even an elementary sexual gratification by seeing a beautiful pure woman was enough to get you violently killed. In contrast of this view of sexual chastity Eliot seems to be saying that nowadays to look at naked women all you need is money, like Sweeney. The poet ends this particular passage with a quotation from the French poet Verlaine's poem *Parsifal* 'And O the voice of the children, singing in the cupola!' Parsifal or Perceval was the Arthurian legend who went to find the Holy Grail. But only the pure and chaste would be able to find it. Perceval, like Michael Palin's Galahad in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, must sacrifice all sexual attraction and keep himself pure if he is to find the Grail. Even the seductive song of the children is enough to distract him from his task. This is followed by a sexual proposal probably made to the speaker by a Mr Eugenides, a merchant from modern-day Turkey. The speaker turns down this offer of a dirty weekend in Brighton.

Then we come to yet another example of disgusting sex. A blind seer or a prophet Tiresias is associated with ancient Greek mythological story of Oedipus. He describes watching a female typist have unsatisfactory sex

with her young lover, a house agent's clerk. Tiresias is one of the first transgender figures in modern English poetry: the gods condemned him to be a man for seven years of his life and then the next seven as a woman. Eliot ends with a reference to Oliver Goldsmith's song from *The Vicar of Wakefield,* a novel in which the daughter of the title character succumbs to the seductive charms of the novel's immoral character.

Britain is an island that has lost its spiritual magic. The river is so filled with filthy oil and tar from industrialisation. We are then transported once again back to the Thames of the days of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603), and her flirting with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. The Queen Elizabeth's reputation as 'the Virgin Queen, 'unlike the typist or those nymphs or the women in Mrs Porter's brothel washing their feet in soda-water never surrendered her body to a man she was not going to marry.

The Fire Sermon then ends with a quotation from St. Augustine's *Confessions* 'To Carthage then I came,' which takes us back to the First Punic War mentioned in *The Burial of the Dead*. Augustine was the one who said, 'Give me chastity and continence, O lord, but not yet.' It means to let us accept our sensual passions and then give up all of it. The Fire Sermon is designed by the Buddhist to enable this cleansing but this also what Eliot's 'Fire Sermon' is about.

The wasteland is cold, dry, barren land and covered in garbage with few scurrying rats. Even the river, a symbol of renewal, has been reduced to a 'dull canal.' The ugliness is understood in contrast to the 'Sweet Thames' of Spenser's time. The contemporary world is represented by the sound of horns and motors in the distance, announcing a sexual connection.

The actual sexual encounters that take place are unfruitful. Eugenides proposes a homosexual union, which opposes the nature and reproduction. The typist and her lover are equally barren in their way, even though reproduction is possible for the two. The typist is impoverished in a manner that she does not even have a bed and is certainly not interested in a family. For political reasons, Queen Elizabeth showed herself as constantly available for marriage, in front of the royalty from countries with whom England may have wanted an alliance.

Elizabeth supported the myth of the 'Virgin Queen' to protect her country by compromising her own sexuality, whereas in the Fisher King story, the renewal of the land comes with the renewal of the Fisher King's sexual potency. Her union with Leicester was an event that never happened.

Section IV: *Death by Water*
Summary

The shortest section of the poem, *Death by Water* describes a Phoenician man called Phlebas who has died by drowning. In death he has forgotten his worldly cares as the creatures of the sea have ripped out his body. The

speaker asks his reader to think about Phlebas and recollect their own mortality.

Critical Analysis

Any analysis of *Death by Water* must challenge with the question how come this fourth section is so much shorter than the other four sections. In the original drafts we discover a much longer poem involving a crew of men at sea following shipwreck, resulting in the description of the dead Phoenician sailor called Phlebas. This section was subjected an extensive cutting down by T. S. Eliot and his friend, Ezra Pound. The original poem was of nearly 1,000 lines in total and was trimmed to 434 lines.

First, it looks back to the warning from Madame Sosostris, the Tarot-reader in *The Burial of the Dead* to 'Fear death by water.' Phoenicia was an ancient Semitic region in the eastern Mediterranean, roughly where modern Lebanon and Syria are now located. Although the Phoenicians had trade routes spanning much of the Mediterranean they traded much in *The Waste Land*. Apart from the poor Phlebas, there is the one-eyed merchant from Smyrna who proposes the speaker in *The Fire Sermon* for a homosexual union. There are reference to the 'Bradford millionaire' and numerous other financially significant references. The criticism of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which was formed after World War I, is referred to as a 'Carthaginian peace.' He forgets the 'profit and loss' in death. Profit and loss is referred to life and death. The poem turns on pairings which are joined by 'and' or 'or,' like 'up and down', 'rose and fell', 'age and youth', 'Gentile or Jew', all pairs of opposites which the death makes immaterial.

Phlebas is healed through his death by water. His drowning is a blessed release, a sort of spiritual immersion like baptism, or a tragedy to show the uselessness of trade and empire building. Eliot's opinion about the cleansing and spiritual renewal is often done by the fire.

The major point of this short section is to disprove ideas of rebirth and regeneration. Phlebas just dies and that is the end of it. Unlike Stetson's dead body in the first section, Phlebas's body does not grow and ultimately decays. Initially this section fulfils one of the prophecies of Madame Sosostris in the poem after pulling the card of the drowned sailor in the first section, 'Fear death by water.' Then, this section's language and form, mimics other literary forms like parables and biblical stories. These two ironies suggest that something of great significance lies here. In reality the only lesson that Phlebas offers is that the reality of death and decay triumphs over all other acts performed during life. Phlebas is not resurrected or transformed in this section after death.

Section V: *What the Thunder Said*

Summary

The final section of *The Waste Land* is dramatic in both its imagery and its events. The first half of the section develops into a prophetic climax. As the suffering people become 'hooded hordes swarming' and the 'unreal

cities' of Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, and London are destroyed, rebuilt to be destroyed again. A falling to pieces chapel is described, which suggests the chapel in the legend of the Holy Grail. At the top the chapel a cock crows and the rains arrive, relieving the drought and bringing life back to the land. It is strange that no heroic figure has appeared to claim the Grail.

The scene then shifts to the Ganges, away from Europe, where thunder rumbles. Eliot draws on the traditional interpretation of what the thunder says, is taken from the Hindu fables called *Upanishads*. According to the *Upanishads* the
thunder 'gives,' 'sympathizes,' and 'controls' through its 'speech.' Eliot goes into thinking on each of these aspects of the thunder's power. The poem ends

with a series of unlike fragments from a children's song, from Dante, and from Elizabethan drama, leading to a final chant of 'Shantih shantih shantih,' the traditional ending to an Upanishad. Eliot, in his notes to the poem, translates this chant as 'the peace which passeth understanding,' which is the expression of ultimate appreciation.

This is the most difficult section of *The Waste Land* to analyse. T. S. Eliot wrote this section, he was getting better in Lausanne, and claims to have written it very quickly, in a sort of trance. He even claimed that he was not even bothering to check that what he wrote was making any sense.

Much of this final section of the poem is about a desire for water in the waste land. It is a land of drought where little will grow. Water is needed to restore life to the soil and to turn a sterile land into fertile land. The speaker is asking about a hallucinated third person. He imagines the third person walking alongside his travelling companion. Eliot tells us in his notes this detail was inspired by one of Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions, where one of the men suffered from the delusion that there was an extra person among them. Influence of the Gothic style is echoed by the bats with the baby faces in the chapel. We are also subjected to the Arthurian myth, the quest for holy Grail and the confusion of one to remain spiritually pure and focused or will he get the attracted to the bodily needs.

Then rain comes to the land with a thunder. The sound of the thunder is analysed and interpreted in different ways by different people. It is interpreted as *datta* (to 'give'), *dayadhvam* (to 'sympathise'), and *damyata* (to 'control'), taken from the *Upanishads*. They are a series of sacred texts important to both Hinduism and Buddhism followed by reference to 'a moment's surrender' or a giving up of oneself.

The knowledge of the consequences of World War I is important to understand the poem. The War can be seen through various references like a demobbed soldier, rats, or the archduke (Franz Ferdinand) who had been the assassinated and that incident had precipitated the outbreak of World

NOTES

War I. The final lines signal that peace has been attained by surrendering to oneself.

The initial imagery associated with the apocalyptical death is taken from the crucifixion of Christ. Significantly, we are told, 'He who was living is now dead.' The rest of the poem refers to contemporary events in Eastern Europe and symbolism associated with the quest for the Holy Grail. The harsh imagery of this section suggests that there will be no renewal and there will be no survival in this modern world. Cities are destroyed, rebuilt, and destroyed again, denotes the downfall of cultures: Jerusalem, Greece, Egypt, and Austria and re-growth of other cultures. There is something like a looming disaster. As philosophical end would be inappropriate for such a wretched civilization, the end seems to be accompanied by a sense of boredom and surrender.

There is no heroic act and release comes from the random call of a bird in the farm. The symbolism surrounding the Holy Grail myth still exists, but it is without people trying to reach it. This is symbolised as no one comes to the
ruined chapel. The symbols that had deep meaning still exist but they are unused as the ruined chapel. A flash of light probably like a lightning gives a quick hint of truth and strength. Then perhaps with the release of the rain the poem ends.

The speaker of the poem fails to find signs of giving and he searches in vain for acts of sympathy is the characteristic of this section. He recalls that individuals are caught in their own fate, thinking about getting the key to their own prison. The next idea expressed in this section is that it is never realized although authority and control holds a great potential in dominant relationships, the surrender to the self is ultimate.

Form and Poetic devices of the Poem

The first section of *The Waste Land* called *The Burial of the Dead* can be seen as a modified dramatic monologue. The four speakers in this section are anxious to speak and need audience to hear them, but unfortunately they find only dead people due to wars. The poem uses only partial rhyme schemes and short bursts of structure. The incoherent fragments, various stories, complex allusions, and complex images in the poem have produced a new form that is suitable to denote the mess of the modern world. There are many imageries used in the poem like the water, fire, River Thames, ghosts, Tarot cards, keys to prison, thunder etc., Further the use of multiple languages in the poem reflects the complexities of the modern culture. There are many references from other great works of all genre, from great operas to nursery rhymes which are purposefully inducted by the poet to establish the morally better culture of olden times in comparison to the destroyed modern culture.

7.6 Let us sum up

The poem is a dramatic monologue and is divided into five sections. *Burial of the Dead, A Game of Chess, The Fire Sermon, Death by Water* and *What*

the Thunder Said. In *Burial of the Dead* the speaker is in the land of the not only physically dead but also the spiritually and emotionally dead. Those who are alive are moving through life as shadows. *A Game of Chess* is the analysis about two modern world women of different social class and their unsatisfactory relationships with men. Both of them are trapped in a cycle of routine. Their only escape is death which seems unthinkable. *The Fire Sermon has* many references to the great personalities of the past, including Tiresias (a blind prophet of God of medicine, Apollo), Philomel (princess of Athens), Actaeon etc., and the disgusting loveless sex of the modern people. *Death by Water* is a reminder of the temporary nature of life. A dead sailor named Phlebas is eaten by sea creatures at the bottom of the ocean. The poem tells you to think of this young man whenever you start feeling too proud. *Death by Thunder* finds humanity trapped by a device invented by it. There are two people walking, and one notices in his vision that a third person is walking with them in a stony landscape with no water. The third person disappears. The thunder cracks, its noise seems to say three words in Sanskrit, *Datta, Dayadhvam,* and *Damyata*, which command you to 'Give,' 'Sympathize,' and 'Control.' This is followed by a repetition of the word *Shantih,* three times which means the peace that surpasses all understanding. The poem is followed by dozens of notes by Eliot

on how to read certain lines because of the criticism by many critics that the poem was incomprehensible and discontinuous. He had deleted half of the verse from the lengthy poem after the suggestion of the poet Ezra Pound.

7.7 Unit End Exercises

Section A Questions (2 marks)

1. What are the names of the five sections in the poem *The Waste Land?*
2. Who dies and how does he die in the poem *Death by Water* (section IV) of *The Waste Land*?
3. What does the thunder say in the poem *What the Thunder Said* (section V) of *The Waste Land*?
4. What does the fire denote in the poem *The Fire Sermon* (Section III) of *The Waste Land*?
5. Who are the women characters from Shakespeare compared with the women in the poem *A Game of Chess* (section II) of *The Waste Land*?

Section B Questions (5 marks)

1. Give a brief account of the immoral sexual encounters in the poem *The Fire Sermon* (Section III) of *The Waste Land.*
2. Analyse the Give a brief account on various imageries seen in the poem *The Waste Land.*
3. Write a short note on Thomas Stearns Eliot.

Section C Questions (10 marks)

NOTES

1. Give a detailed note on the various references in all the sections of the poem *The Waste Land.*
2. Give a detailed account of the core theme of the T. S. Eliot in the poem *The Waste Land.*

7.8 Answer to check your progress

A. Name some characters mentioned in the poem *The Burial of the Dead* (section I) of *The Waste Land*?

Marie and Archduke Cousin, Tristan and Isolde, Madame Sosostris and Mrs. Equitone, Stetson and the speaker are some of the characters mentioned in the poem *The Burial of the Dead* (section I) of *The Waste Land*.

B. Who are the two women mentioned in the poem *A Game of Chess* (section II) of *The Waste Land*?

The High Class women and the Low Class women called Lil are the two women mentioned in the poem *A Game of Chess* (section II) of *The Waste Land.*

7.9 Suggested References

1. Birch, Dinah (Ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Seventh Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.2009. Print. ISBN 978-0-19-280687-1.

2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature* (Volume II).New Delhi: Supernova Publishers. 2010. 993-1048. Print. ISBN 978-81-899-304-48.

3. Rickett, Arthur Compton. *A History of English Literature.* New Delhi: UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. 2013. 403-596. Print. ISBN 978-81-85944-63-0.

4. Kumar, Satish. *A History of English Literature.* Agra: Lakshmi Narian Agarwal Pubisher.378-441. Print. ISBN 81-85778-70-1.

5. Long, J. William. *English Literature- Its History and Its Significance.* NewDelhi: Surjeet Publications. 2009. 452-568. Print.

BLOCK III: CRITICISM

UNIT - VIII MATTHEW ARNOLD

Structure

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Age is an era of Realism that bloomed after the Romantic Age in the history of English Literature. The reign of Queen Victoria is known as the Victorian era. The literature of the Victorian age (1837-1901) was the age of realism and had the three common characteristics, reflection on human problems and interests, an assertive moral tone that deviated from the principle of "art for art's sake" and thirdly an age of agnosticism and confusion. There was a paradigm shift from spiritualism to pragmatism and nature to industry in Victorian Age. The literature of the Victorian age depicts values like truth, love, justice, brotherhood as seen in the works of Matthew Arnold, the Bronte sisters, Christina Rossetti, Joseph Conrad, Robert Browning, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, Thomas Hardy, A. E. Housman, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, Alfred Lord Tennyson , William Thackeray, George MacDonald, G.M. Hopkins, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Carroll and others.

The Victorian Era 1837 - 1901, is fragmented into the early Victorian, mid-Victorian, and late Victorian, each of which has its own characteristics. The rapidly growing phase of industrialization during the years 1830 - 1850, influenced early Victorian works with social issues such as child labour and poverty in "The Cry of the Children" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the novel "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens.

Mid Victorian era witnessed the bloom of the British Empire and times of great national identity in 1851 as signified by Prince Albert's Great Exhibition. The literature of this period had psychological realism and patriotism as portrayed in the novels of George Eliot and poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and patriotic verses such as "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

NOTES

The later years of the Victorian Era saw aninclination towards the deconstruction of Victorian values. Playwrights Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw presented sarcasm in their works the flaws of their society in plays such as The Importance of Being Earnest and Mrs. Warren's Profession. Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde also pointed out the hypocrisy of those who would live dual lives in a surprising detective type story with a Gothic twist. In poetry, Robert Browning's fascinating dramatic monologues foreshadowed the 20th century's use of the natural rhythms of speech over the strict metrical arrangements of traditional poetry.

Thus Victorian literature represents a pinnacle of English language literary achievement in terms of the exquisiteness of its linguistic beauty and thought, reproducing traditional ideals and using provenliterary forms to express its themes.

8.2. OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the nature of Victorian Literature
- Discuss the life history of the critic Matthew Arnold
- Explain Arnold's view on literary criticism
- Describe the Arnold's Touchstone Method

8.3. CRITICISM IN THE VICTORIAN AGE.

According to Matthew Arnold, 'Literature is a criticism of life. It is an interpretation of life, as life shapes itself in the mind of the interpreter'. It is impossible to give a concrete definition of literature.

Literary criticism, literary theory and literary history are also parts of a single cognitive system that assists the pragmatic function: to form and facilitate a particular type of communication which involves the producer of literature and its receiver. Literary criticism, literary theory and literary history are interconnected and interdependent, having obvious points of identification and separation. And despite the huge debates over their functions, importance and even necessity, these approaches represent three distinct scientific disciplines having their own definitions, characteristics, terminology, objects of study, and methodologies.

The Victorian literary criticism strengthened its status also as a result of the expansion and accessibility of elementary and higher education and literature becoming a university discipline. The establishment of English literature as a university course in England was a late phenomenon. It happened at University College London in 1828, whereas at Oxford only in 1893 and at Cambridge in 1911. The reason was, on the one hand, the monopoly of the Church of England over the two universities, Oxford and Cambridge, with their subjects in classics, divinity and mathematics, and, on the other hand, the conservative forces that since the Middle Ages allowed no change in subjects, religion, and gender.

Literary Criticism in the Victorian Age:

A brief survey of the Victorian sense reveals that literary criticism during the age easily falls into three clear-cut and distinct times – the early Victorian, the mid-Victorian and the later Victorian. The early Victorian era (1835-1860) is a period of the decay and decline of literary criticism.
There is practically no talented critic, and no outstanding work of literary criticism. The only names worth mentioning are those of Keble and Brimley. No doubt, Macaulay, Carlyle and John Stuart Mill belong to this age, but they are not literary critics. Their literary criticism, though of a high standard, is only incidental; their interests are historical, social or philosophical.

To the middle period (1860-1880) belong Arnold and Ruskin, both outstanding thinkers and scholars. Of these two, Ruskin is more an art critic than a literary critic, though his literary criticism too is illuminating and original. Ruskin considered the art to be the greatest medium which conveyed to the reader the greatest number of the greatest ideas.Thus he could achieve a synthesis or compromise between art and morality. This very compromise Arnold did achieve by advocating that poetry should be a criticism of life, and that criticism should propagate the best that ever was thought or written.
In the third phase (1830-1910) this synthesis is broken, and the cult of "art for Art's sake" as distinguished from the earliest cult of "Art for life's sake" acquires prominence. Pater and Oscar Wilde are the most powerful exponents of this cult. They stand in the front rank of the English aesthetes, who made the pursuit of Beauty, to the total exclusion of life and reality, the concern of their art.
Victorian criticism rejects the characteristics of the earlier criticism, namely subjective, defensive, prescriptive, defensive, normative, and literature dependent features. Criticism assumes new purposes – such as to find in literature what is the best, the most valuable and moral, and help reader with apprehending all that, as for Matthew Arnold – and becomes didactic and reader-oriented.

8.4. LIFE HISTORY OF MATHEW ARNOLD

Matthew Arnold
Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), the Victorian poet and critic, was 'the first modern critic' and could be called 'the critic's critic', being a champion not only of great poetry, but of literary criticism itself.
Matthew Arnold was born in 1822 at Laleham in England. Matthew was the eldest son of the renowned Thomas Arnold, who was appointed headmaster of Rugby School in 1828. Matthew entered Rugby (1837) and he attended Oxford as a scholar of Balliol College; there he won the Newdigate Prize with his poem Cromwell (1843) and was graduated with second-class honours in 1844. His poem Cromwell won the Newdigate prize in 1843. In 1845, he started teaching at Rugby. For Oxford Arnold retained an impassioned affection. His Oxford was the Oxford of John Henry Newman—of Newman just about to be received into the Roman Catholic Church; and although Arnold's own religious thought, like his father's, was strongly liberal, Oxford and Newman always remained for him joint symbols of spiritual beauty and culture.

NOTES

In 1847 Arnold became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who occupied a high cabinet post during Lord John Russell's Liberal ministries. And in 1851, in order to secure the income needed for his marriage (June 1851) with Frances Lucy Wightman, he accepted from Lansdowne an appointment as inspector of schools. This was to be his routine occupation until within two years of his death. He engaged in incessant travelling throughout the British provinces and also several times was sent by the government to inquire into the state of education in France, Germany, Holland, and Switzerland. Two of his reports on schools abroad were reprinted as books, and his annual reports on schools at home attracted wide attention, written, as they were, in Arnold's own urbane and civilized prose. In the same year, after a short interlude of teaching at Rugby, he was elected as the Fellow of Oriel College, distinction at Oxford. In 1847, he became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, Lord President of the Council of U.K. He remained loyal to France and French connection throughout his life. He died in 1888.

8.5. REVIEW of THE STUDY OF POETRY

In this unit, we will discuss Arnold's essay 'The Study of Poetry' and his views on the art and functions of poetry.

The works of Matthew Arnold (1822-88) represents the essence of the Victorian Age in a more reflective way as the Victorian realists brooding over loss of faith and the meaning of life. A Study of Poetry' is a critical essay by Matthew Arnold. He says thatThe Future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of itshigh destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay.

There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is notshown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten todissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; ithas attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetrythe idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetryattaches its emotion to the idea; the idea is the fact. The strongest part of ourreligion to-day is its unconscious poetry.

In this essay Arnold criticizes the art of poetry as well as the art of criticism. Arnold believes that the art of poetry is capable of high fortunes. It is the art in which the idea itself is the fact. He says that we should understand the worth of poetry as it is the mirror of life. Science, according to Arnold, is incomplete without poetry, and, religion and philosophy will give way to poetry. Arnold terms poetry as a criticism of life thereby disproving the accusation of Plato and says that as time goes on man will continue to find comfort and solace in poetry.

Arnold believes that poetry has significant use in the process of knowledge creation and progression of human beings. As an artistic endeavour, Poetry provides reflection and commentary on the finer aspects of survival and struggles. Arnold says that when one reads poetry he tends to estimate whether it is of the best form or not. It happens in three ways- the real estimate, the historic estimate, and the personal estimate. The real estimate is an unbiased viewpoint that takes into account both the historical context and the creative faculty to judge the worth of poetry. But the real estimate

is often surpassed by the historic and personal estimate. The historic estimate places the historical context above the value of the art itself. The personal estimate on the other hand depends on the personal taste, the likes and dislikes of the reader which affects his judgment of poetry. Arnold says that both these estimates tend to be fallacious.

The historic and personal estimate often overshadows the real estimate. But Arnold also says that it is natural. The study of the historical background of poetry and its development often leads to the critic skipping over the shortcomings because of its historical significance. Historic estimate raises poetry to a high pedestal and thus hinders one from noticing its weaknesses. It is the historic estimate that leads to the creation of classics and raises the poet to a nearly God like standard. Arnold says that if a poet is truly a classic his poetry will give the reader real pleasure and enable him to compare and contrast other poetry which are not of the same high standard. This according to Arnold is the real estimate of poetry. Thus Arnold appeals to his readers to read classics with an open eye and not be blind to its faults. This will enable one to rate poetry with its proper value.

Arnold here speaks about the idea of imitation. He says that whatever one reads or knows keeps on coming back to him. Thus if a poet wants to reach the high standards of the classics he might consciously or unconsciously imitate them. This is also true for critics who tend to revert to the historic and personal estimate instead of an unbiased real estimate. The historic estimate affects the study of ancient poets while the personal estimate affects the study of modern or contemporary poets.

Arnold proposes the 'touchstone' method of analyzing poetry in order to determine whether it is of a high standard or not. He borrows this method from Longinus who said in his idea of the sublime that if a certain example of sublimity can please anyone regardless of habits, tastes or age and can please at all times it can be considered as a true example of the sublime. This method was first suggested in England by Addison who said that he would have a man read classical works which have stood the test of time and place and also those modern works which find high praise among contemporaries. If the man fails to find any delight in poetry he would conclude that it is not the author who lacks quality but the reader who is incapable of discovering them.

Arnold applies the touchstone method by taking examples from the time tested classics and comparing them with other poetry to determine whether they possess the high poetic standard of the classics. He says that the poems need not resemble or possess any similarity to the touchstones. Once the critic has lodged the touchstones in his mind in order to detect the possession of high poetic quality he will have the tact of finding it in other poetry that he compares to the touchstones. Arnold quotes Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton in an attempt to exemplify touchstone poetry. He says that the examples he has quoted are very dissimilar to one another but they all possess a high poetic quality. He says that a critic need not labour in vain trying to explain the greatness of poetry. He can do so by merely pointing at some specimens of the highest poetic quality. Arnold says that the high quality of poetry lies in its matter and its manner. Arnold goes by Aristotle's observation and says that the best form of poetry possesses high truth and seriousness that makes up its subject matter along with superior

NOTES

diction that marks its manner. However, Arnold mentions that the true force of this method lies in its application. He therefore urges critics to apply the touchstone method to analyse and rate poetry.

Arnold also speaks about French poetry which had a tremendous influence on the poetry of England. He differentiates between the poetry of northern France and the poetry of southern France. The poetry of southern France influenced Italian literature. But it is the poetry of northern France that was dominant in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth century. This poetry came to England with the Anglo- Normans and had a tremendous impact on English poetry. It was the romance- poems of France that was popular during that time. But Arnold says that it did not have any special characteristics and lacked the high truth, seriousness and diction of classic poetry and remain significant only from the historical point of view.

Next Arnold speaks about Chaucer who was much influenced by French and Italian poetry. Arnold says that Chaucer's poetic importance is a result of the real estimate and not the historic estimate. The superiority of Chaucer's verse lies both in his subject matter and his style. He writes about human life and nature as he sees it. Arnold speaks highly of Chaucer's diction and calls it 'liquid diction' to emphasise the fluidity in the manner of Chaucer's writing which he considers to be an irresistible virtue. Arnold however says that Chaucer is not a classic. He compares Chaucer to Dante and points out that Chaucer lacks the high seriousness of the classics thereby depriving him of the high honour.

Next Arnold mentions Milton and Shakespeare and credits them as classics and moves on to speak about Dryden and Pope. According to the historic estimate Dryden and Pope are no doubt great poets of the eighteenth century. Arnold observes that Dryden and Pope were better prose writers than poets. The restoration period faced the necessity of a fit prose with proper imaginative quality and this is what Dryden and Pope provided. Arnold therefore concludes that they are classics not of poetry but of prose.

After Dryden and Pope Arnold speaks about Gray. Gray did not write much but what he wrote has high poetic value. Arnold therefore considers Gray to be a classic.

Arnold now speaks about Robert Burns in the late eighteenth century and says that this is the period from which the personal estimate begins to affect the real estimate. Burns, according to Arnold, is a better poet in Scottish than in English. Like Chaucer Arnold does not consider Burns to be a classic. He says that Burns too lacks the high seriousness desired of poetry. He compares Burns to Chaucer and finds that Burns' manner of presentation is deeper than that of Chaucer. According to the real estimate Burns lacks the high seriousness of the classics but his poetry nevertheless has truthful substance and style.

Arnold speaks about Byron, Shelley and Wordsworth but does not pass any judgement on their poetry. Arnold believes that his estimate of these poets will be influenced by his personal passion as they are closer to his age than the classics and also because their writings are of a more personal nature.

Finally Arnold speaks about the self-preservation of the classics. Any amount of good literature will not be able to surpass the supremacy of the classics as they have already stood the test of time and people will continue to enjoy them for the ages to come. Arnold says that this is the result of the

self preserving nature of humanity. Human nature will remain the same throughout the ages and those parts of the classics dealing with the subject will remain relevant at all times thus preserving themselves from being lost in time.

8.5.1 POETRY AS SUPERIOR TO ALL KNOWLEDGE

The Study of Poetry is a most famous work of literary criticism as it is fundamentally concerned with poetry's high destiny. He is of the view that poetry can be our sustenance and stay in an era where religious beliefs are fast losing their hold. As discussed above, Arnold lived in a materialistic world where advancement of science had led society in a strange darkness. Importance of religion was submerged. People were becoming fact seekers. A gap was being developed and he believed that poetry could fill that gap by noble and profound application of ideas to life which should be of moral nature. Therefore, he believes that with the passing of time mankind will discover that they have to turn to poetry in order to interpret life and to console and sustain themselves as science and philosophy will eventually prove flimsy and unstable. He demanded that poetry should serve a greater purpose instead of becoming a mere medium of gaining pleasure and appreciating beauty. He claims that poetry is superior to philosophy, science and religion because religion attaches its emotions to ideas and ideas are infallible and science in his view is incomplete without poetry.
Arnold's classic poets include Dante, Milton, Homer and Shakespeare. He quotes the famous line of Milton:

Nor thy life nor hate; but what thou livest
Live well: how long or short, permit to heaven

Arnold said poetry should deal with ideas not facts. Ideas should be moral. He said morality should not be taken in narrow sense. He said "poetry of revolt against life; a poetry of indifference towards moral idea is a poetry of indifference towards life".

8.6 SUMMARY

- Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), the Victorian poet and critic, is thought to be 'the first modern critic.' He championed not only of great poetry, but also literary criticism itself.
- The poetry of Matthew Arnold (1822-88) represented the Victorian intellectual brooding over inevitable loss of faith and the meaning of life.
- Mathew Arnold's critical essay 'The Study of Poetry' (Published in 1880 as the General Introduction to The English Poets, edited by T. H. Ward.) not only traces the history of English poetry critically but also provides the readers with a parameter of judging good poetry.
- Poetry is the 'criticism of life' which is ruled by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. It is in this aspect of poetry as 'criticism of life' that poetry would provide some respite to the human race, whenother aspects of human life fall apart .
- The purpose of literary criticism, in Arnold's view, was 'to know thebest that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn makingthis known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas.'

NOTES

- In 'The Study of Poetry', Mathew Arnold points out the importanceof poetry in human life and says that 'poetry is criticism of life.'
- Arnold championed the Touchstone method – a method in which thecritic compares poems to passages taken from works of great mastersof poetry, and that these passages should be applied as touchstones toother poetry.
- While Mathew Arnold chooses passages from various poets to set thestandard for the Touchstone method, he is using his personal judgmentin choosing those passages, which he thinks are the sublime creationof the poets and can be set as standards for evaluation of other worksof art. Some other critic may disagree and vary from him.

8.7 KEY WORDS

Victorian Era : The Victorian era of the United Kingdom was the period of Queen Victoria's reign from 20 June 1837 until her death on 22 January 1901.

The Touchstone method – a method in which thecritic compares poems to passages taken from works of great masters of poetry, and that these passages should be applied as touchstones to other poetry.

Homer: The Classical Greek poet who is known for his two epics – The Iliad and The Odyssey

. 8.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on the characteristics of Victorian Era Literature.
2. What according to Arnold is the objective of his critical essay 'Theory of Poetry'?
3. Describe in brief Arnold's estimate of English Poetry.
4. Who, according to Arnold, is the poetic genius of the eighteenth century and why?
5. Write a short-note on the life history of Matthew Arnold.
6. What is Touchstone Method? What are the earlier methods of judging literature?
7. Do you agree to Mathew Arnold's view that 'poetry is criticism of life'?
2. Why does Arnold think that poetry has taken the place of religion?

8.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

Day, G. (2008). Literary Criticism: A New History. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Golban, Petru&Antoanetaciobanu, Estella. (2007). A Short History Of Literary Criticism.

Literary Theory And Criticism - An Oxford Guide

Leavis, F.R. 'T. S. Eliot's Stature As A Critic", Commentary Xxvi. No. 5 (November 1958), Pp. 399-410.

Daiches, David. 1967. Critical Approaches To Literature, Indian Edition.

Mumbai: Orient Longman.

Welleck, Rene. 1955. A History Of Modern Criticism, Volume Two.

London: Jonathan Cape.

Wimsatt And Brooks. 1957. Literary Criticism: A Short History, Volume Three. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

NOTES

NOTES

UNIT – IX T. S. ELIOT

STRUCTURE

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Age is an era of Realism that bloomed after the Romantic Age in the history of English Literature. The reign of Queen Victoria is known as the Victorian era. The literature of the Victorian age (1837-1901) was the age of realism and had the three common characteristics, reflection on human problems and interests, an assertive moral tone that deviated from the principle of "art for art's sake" and thirdly an age of agnosticism and confusion. There was a paradigm shift from spiritualism to pragmatism and nature to industry in Victorian Age. The literature of the Victorian age depicts values like truth, love, justice, brotherhood as seen in the works of Matthew Arnold, the Bronte sisters, Christina Rossetti, Joseph Conrad, Robert Browning, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, Thomas Hardy, A. E. Housman, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, Alfred Lord Tennyson , William Thackeray, George MacDonald, G.M. Hopkins, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Carroll and others.

The Victorian Era 1837 - 1901, is fragmented into the early Victorian, mid-Victorian, and late Victorian, each of which has its own characteristics. The rapidly growing phase of industrialization during the years 1830 - 1850, influenced early Victorian works with social issues such as child labour and poverty in "The Cry of the Children" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the novel "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens.

Mid Victorian era witnessed the bloom of the British Empire and times of great national identity in 1851 as signified by Prince Albert's Great Exhibition. The literature of this period had psychological realism and patriotism as portrayed in the novels of George Eliot and poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and patriotic verses such as "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

The later years of the Victorian Era saw aninclination towards the deconstruction of Victorian values. Playwrights Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw presented sarcasm in their works the flaws of their society in plays such as The Importance of Being Earnest and Mrs. Warren's Profession. Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde also pointed out the hypocrisy of those who would live dual lives in a surprising detective type story with a Gothic twist. In poetry, Robert Browning's fascinating dramatic monologues foreshadowed the 20th

century's use of the natural rhythms of speech over the strict metrical arrangements of traditional poetry.

Thus Victorian literature represents a pinnacle of English language literary achievement in terms of the exquisiteness of its linguistic beauty and thought, reproducing traditional ideals and using provenliterary forms to express its themes.

9.2. OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the nature of Victorian Literature
- Discuss the life history of the critic T.S. Eliot
- Discuss Eliot's re

CRITICISM IN THE VICTORIAN AGE.

Literary criticism, literary theory and literary history are also parts of a single cognitive system that assists the pragmatic function: to form and facilitate a particular type of communication which involves the producer of literature and its receiver. Literary criticism, literary theory and literary history are interconnected and interdependent, having obvious points of identification and separation. And despite the huge debates over their functions, importance and even necessity, these approaches represent three distinct scientific disciplines having their own definitions, characteristics, terminology, objects of study, and methodologies.

The Victorian literary criticism strengthened its status also as a result of the expansion and accessibility of elementary and higher education and literature becoming a university discipline. The establishment of English literature as a university course in England was a late phenomenon. It happened at University College London in 1828, whereas at Oxford only in 1893 and at Cambridge in 1911. The reason was, on the one hand, the monopoly of the Church of England over the two universities, Oxford and Cambridge, with their subjects in classics, divinity and mathematics, and, on the other hand, the conservative forces that since the Middle Ages allowed no change in subjects, religion, and gender.

The modern literary critic of the 20th century, T. S. Eliot, is more closely associated with the theories of the Victorian artist than any other literary critic or poet. However, their relation is not easy to define and bares not only im-mense analogies but also many divergences and contradictions.Eliot's essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" constitutes the basis for his conception of a literary theory in general. Eliot's impersonal theory of poetry is contradictory to Arnold's concept where the poet's feelings and emotion are neglected. Eliot emphasizes the importance of the artistic process itself and regards the poet's mind as a medium which works in a passive, subcon-scious manner. "The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality". Eliot consequently accuses Arnold of "putting the emphasis upon the poet's feelings, instead of upon the poetry." The effect the poem produces is the important aspect for Eliot, which he himself applies in his poetic theory.

Three phases of Literary Criticism in the Victorian Age:

NOTES

A brief review of the Victorian age reveals that literary criticism during the age easily falls into three clear-cut and distinct times – the early Victorian, the mid-Victorian and the later Victorian. The early Victorian era (1835-1860) is a period of the decay and decline of literary criticism.

There is practically no talented critic, and no outstanding work of literary criticism. The only names worth mentioning are those of Keble and Brimley. No doubt, Macaulay, Carlyle and John Stuart Mill belong to this age, but they are not literary critics. Their literary criticism, though of a high standard, is only incidental; their interests are historical, social or philosophical.

To the middle period (1860-1880) belong Arnold and Ruskin, both outstanding thinkers and scholars. Of these two, Ruskin is more an art critic than a literary critic, though his literary criticism too is illuminating and original. Ruskin considered the art to be the greatest medium which conveyed to the reader the greatest number of the greatest ideas.Thus he could achieve a synthesis or compromise between art and morality. This very compromise Arnold did achieve by advocating that poetry should be a criticism of life, and that criticism should propagate the best that ever was thought or written.

In the third phase (1830-1910) this synthesis is broken, and the cult of "art for Art's sake" as distinguished from the earliest cult of "Art for life's sake" acquires prominence. Pater and Oscar Wilde are the most powerful exponents of this cult. They stand in the front rank of the English aesthetes, who made the pursuit of Beauty, to the total exclusion of life and reality, the concern of their art.

Victorian criticism rejects the characteristics of the earlier criticism, namely subjective, defensive, prescriptive, defensive, normative, and literature dependent features. Criticism assumes new purposes – such as to find in literature what is the best, the most valuable and moral, and help reader with apprehending all that, as for Matthew Arnold – and becomes didactic and reader-oriented.

9.3 LIFE HISTORY OF T.S ELIOT

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born on 26 September 1888 in St Louis, Missouri. His ancestors had lived in America for the last couple of centuries, since Andrew Elliott had left East Coker in Somerset for Massachusetts in the 1660s. Eliot was also related to three US presidents: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and Rutherford B. Hayes. His family belonged to the New England aristocracy, meaning that Eliot was a New Englander by descent, and he would become an Englander by emigration: he moved to England in 1914, and swapped his US passport for UK citizenship in 1927.

STUDIES AND CAREER

He lived in St. Louis during the first eighteen years of his life and attended Harvard University. In 1910, he left the United States for the Sorbonne, having earned both undergraduate and masters degrees and having contributed several poems to the Harvard Advocate.

After a year in Paris, he returned to Harvard to pursue a doctorate in philosophy, but returned to Europe and settled in England in 1914. The following year, he married Vivienne Haigh-Wood and began working in London, first as a teacher, and later for Lloyd's Bank.

After spells of study at Harvard and at Oxford, Eliot became part of the London literary scene, following a meeting with Ezra Pound in 1914. Pound would champion Eliot and promote his work – he even helped to pay for the publication of Eliot's first volume of poems, Prufrock and Other Observations, in 1917.

Eliot's early poetry took its cue from several different sources: from French Symbolists, especially the French-Uruguayan Jules Laforgue (1860-1887); the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists; and the seventeenth-century Metaphysical poets. He would write numerous lectures and essays about the dramatists and Metaphysical poets in particular. In 1919, in an influential essay titled 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', he set himself squarely against the Romantic notion of poetry as (in Wordsworth's words) 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', instead seeing it as an 'escape from emotion' and an 'escape from personality'. He was becoming associated with other poets of the time whose work would later become known as 'modernist' – Ezra Pound was another leading modernist poet who was born in the US but moved to Europe in his youth.

As a poet, he transfigured his affinity for the English metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century (most notably John Donne) and the nineteenth century French symbolist poets (including Baudelaire and Laforgue) into radical innovations in poetic technique and subject matter. His poems in many respects articulated the disillusionment of a younger post–World War I generation with the values and conventions—both literary and social—of the Victorian era.

As a critic, he had an enormous impact on contemporary literary taste, propounding views that, after his conversion to orthodox Christianity in the late thirties, were increasingly based in social and religious conservatism. His major later poetry collections include Ash Wednesday (1930) and Four Quartets (1943); his books of literary and social criticism include The Sacred Wood (1920), The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933), After Strange Gods (1934), and Notes Towards the Definition of Culture (1940). Eliot was also an important playwright, whose verse dramas include Murder in the Cathedral, The Family Reunion, and The Cocktail Party.

After a notoriously unhappy first marriage, Eliot separated from his first wife in 1933, and remarried Valerie Fletcher in 1956. T. S. Eliot received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948. He died in London on January 4, 1965.

9.4. 'TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL TALENT'

The essay "Tradition and Individual Talent" was first published in "The Egoist" in 1919. "The Egoist" was a literary magazine, which is considered today as "England's Most Important Modernist Periodical". This essay was later published in "The Sacred Wood", which is Eliot's first book of criticism.

T. S. Eliot was very practical. He called himself "a classicist in literature". According to Eliot, a critic must obey the objective standards to analyse any work. He thought criticism as a science. Eliot's criticism became revolutionary at that time. 20th century got 'metaphysical revival' because of Eliot. He first recognized or accepted the uniqueness of 'metaphysical poets' of 17th century. Eliot came with new ideas in criticism's world in19th century. Eliot believed that when the old and new will become readjusted, it will be the end of criticism. He says:

"From time to time it is desirable, that some critic shall appear to review the past of our literature and set the poets and the poems in a new order."

9.4.1 : SUMMARY

In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919) Eliot defends the role of tradition in facilitating new writers to be modern.

CONCEPT OF TRADITION:

Eliot begins the essay by pointing out that the word 'tradition' is generally regarded as a word of censure. It is a word unlikable to the English ears. When the English praise a poet, they praise him for those-aspects of his work which are 'creative' and original. It is supposed that his chief merit lies in such parts. This undue stress on individuality shows that the English have an uncritical turn of mind. They praise the poet for the wrong thing. If they examine the matter critically with an unprejudiced mind, they will realise that the best and the most individual part of a poet's work is that which shows the maximum influence of the writers of the past.

To quote his own words: "Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice, we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual part of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously"

This is one of the essential paradoxes of Eliot's writing where he looks to the past in order to move forward depicting modernism. T. S. Eliot in his theory of tradition depicts anti-Romanticism. Unlike the Romantics' idea of original creation and inspiration, Eliot's concept of tradition focusseson how important older writers are to contemporary writers: Homer and Dante are Eliot's contemporaries because they inform his work as much as those alive in the twentieth century do.

In the story of Odysseus, James Joyce looked back to ancient Greek myth for his novel set in modern Dublin, *Ulysses* (1922). H. D.'s Imagist poetry was immersedwith Greek references and ideas. As Eliot puts it, 'Some one said: "The dead writers are remote from us because we know so much more than they did."

He goes on to argue that a modern poet should write with the literature of all previous ages 'in his bones', as though Homer and Shakespeare were his (or her) contemporaries:

'This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.'

Eliot says:

"No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His

significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation o the dead poets and artists. You can't value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison among the dead."

Eliot's own poetry, for instance, is both in the tradition of Homer and Dante and the work of a modern poet. This sounds like a paradox, just like as Shakespeare who is considered both a 'timeless' poet whose work is constantly being reproduced, but is also understood in the context of Elizabethan and Jacobean social and political outlooks. Similarly, in using Dante in his own poetry, Eliot at once makes Dante 'modern' and contemporary, and himself – by association – part of the wider poetic tradition.

The whole order of existing monument is recreated with the addition of new work. So, by this Eliot breaks that belief that 'past is unchangeable'. He says that past and present have a strong connection with each other. That is the conformity between the old and the new.

Eliot says:

"…the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities".

Eliot's essay goes on to champion impersonality over personality. That is, the poet's personality does not matter, as it's the poetry that s/he produces that is important.

"Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry."

Eliot says that in most of the criticisms, we rejoice the name and the creativity of poet, but when we seek for the delight of poetry we seldom ignore it. Eliot's example of Homer is pertinent here: we know nothing of the poet who wrote *The Odyssey* for certain, but we don't need to. *The Odyssey* itself is what matters, not the man (or men – or woman!) who wrote it. Poetry should be timeless and universal, surpassing the circumstances out of which it grew, and transcending the poet's own generation and lifetime.

Eliot gives an illustration from chemistry. Two gases are required to produce sulphurous acid: oxygen and sulphur dioxide. And also they must have the presence of filament 'platinum'. He compares this platinum with the poet. In this whole process filament of platinum plays vital and inevitable role. But yet that role is indirect. In the process platinum remains quite unaffected by any gases. It remains inert, neutral and unchanged. Similarly the result (sulphurous acid) that comes out from the process has no any trace of platinum. Eliot tells that the mind of the poet should be like that strip of platinum. The poets create the poems but remain separated once it is done.

"The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who

NOTES

suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material."

According to Eliot the poet's mind is like a tare or utensil in which numerous feelings, phrases and images can be stored or seized. When a poet wants them he utilizes them and unites them. It doesn't mean that the poem created by the poet shows his personality or nature.

Eliot explains very basic thing of his point that, what is expressed by the poet is merely a medium, not a personality. He says:

"…the poet has not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality…"

In this medium, the impressions and experiences come together in unusual and unexpected ways.

Eliot says about context that without context nothing can be understood. He says:

"This balance of constructed emotion is in the dramatic situation to which the speech is pertinent, but that situation alone is inadequate to it."

Eliot says:

"There are many people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse, and there is smaller number of people who can appreciate technical excellence. But very few know when there is expression of significant emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet."

By this statement, he says that to admire a poem with the poet's skill and his name is easiest thing. The harder is to know technical skill or art of the POEM. But the hardest thing is to find the significant emotions from the poem, which separates the poet from the poem. The reader must know that after giving birth of the work of art, the connection between that art and artist gets disconnected. And a poet must know that to reach at the level of impersonality, he has to surrender himself totally to that work.

9.5 LET US SUM UP

T.S. Eliot highlights the value of tradition and he tells that tradition represents the collected wisdom and experience of ages, and so its knowledge is essential for really great and noble achievements. He points out that no writer has his value and significance in isolation. Eliot's conception of tradition is a dynamic one.

According to his view, tradition is not anything fixed and static; it is constantly changing, growing, and becoming different from what it is. The personal emotions and experiences of a young poet may find some expression in his composition, but, says Eliot, "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him "will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates." The test of the maturity of an artist is the wholeness with which he digests and transformshis passions which forms the substance of his poetry. The man suffers and undergo pains, but it is his mind which transforms his experiences into something new and different.

The personality of the poet does not find expression in his poetry; it acts like a catalytic agent in the process of poetic composition.

The experiences which enter the poetic process, says Eliot, may be of two kinds. They are emotions and feelings. Poetry may be composed out of emotions only or out of feelings only, or out of both.T.S. Eliot here distinguishes between emotions and feelings, but he does not state the difference. The more intense the poetic process, the greater the poem.

There is always a difference between the artistic emotion and the personal emotions of the poet. For example, the famous Ode to Nightingale of Keats contains a number of emotions which have nothing to do with the Nightingale. "The difference between art and the event is always absolute." The poet has no personality to express, he is merely a medium in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may find no place in his poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may have no significance for the man. Eliot thus rejects romantic subjectivism and impersonality of poetry in this work.

The poet concludes: "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality." Thus Eliot does not deny personality or emotion to the poet. Only, he must depersonalise his emotions. There should be an extinction of his personality

9.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss "Honest Criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry".
2. What is the relationship between "tradition" and the "individual talent" according to T.S Eliot?
3. According to T.S. Eliot what is the Sense of Tradition in its Real Meaning?
4. Explain The Analogy of the Catalyst .
5. Discuss the Extinction of Personality and impersonality of poetry.

9.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Day, G. (2008). Literary Criticism: A New History. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Fokkema, D., &Ibsch, E. (1995).

Theories of Literature in the Twentieth Century: Structuralism, Marxism, Aesthetics of Reception, Semiotics. New York: St Martin's Press

Golban, Petru&AntoanetaCiobanu, Estella. (2007). A Short History of Literary Criticism.

LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM - AN OXFORD GUIDE

BLOCK IV: FICTION AND PLAYS

UNIT – X CHARLES DICKENS : GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Structure

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The Victorian era was the great era of the English novel—realistic, densely plotted, packed with characters, and extensive. The novel was thebest form to describe contemporary life and the middle class were amused with the themes they were written. Humour, drama and intense characterisation with complicated plots was the spirit of the novels of Charles Dickens.
Vanity Fair (1848) of William Makepeace Thackeray satirically portrays hypocrisy and greediness.

Emily Bronte's masterpiece, Wuthering Heights (1847), is propelled by a vision of fundamental passions but controlled by a tenacious artistic sense. The fine novels of Emily's sister Charlotte Bronte, especially Jane Eyre (1847) and Villette (1853), are deep-rooted in convention, but daring in their own ways. The novels of George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) were written during the 1860s and 70s. A woman of great intellect and moral zeal, Eliot was concerned with ethical conflicts and social problems. George Meredith created comic novels noted for their psychological insight. Anthony Trollope was famous for sequences of related novels that explore social, religious, and political life in England.

Thomas Hardy'sdeeply pessimistic novels are all set in the punitive, strenuous midland county Wessex. Samuel Butler produced novels satirizing the Victorian ethos, and Robert Louis Stevenson , a master of his craft, wrote impressive adventure fiction and children's verse. The mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, writing under the name Lewis Carroll , produced the complex and refined children's classic Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865) andThrough the Looking Glass (1871).

Some other novelists of importance include Benjamin Disraeli, George Gissing, Elizabeth Gaskell, and WilkieCollins .The end of Victorian era, considered novel as not only the chief form of entertainment but also a means of analysing and proposing solutions to social and political problems.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

- To learn the life of Pip and his Great Ambitions.
- To study how the novel “Great Expectations” reflect the life of the Victorian age.

10.3 LIFE HISTORY OF CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens was born on February 7, 1812. He was the son of John and Elizabeth Dickens. His father, a clerk in the Naval Pay Office, was sent to prison for debt. Young Charles was only twelve years old when he was sent to work at Warren's Blacking Factory, while the rest of his family joined his father in the Marshalsea Prison. During this time, Charles lived alone in a lodging house, ashamed and frightened. These early experiences became a source of creative energy and a reason for his preoccupation with themes of alienation and betrayal. These early experiences also made him self-reliant, a trait which would later turn him into a hard-working and dedicated writer.

Dickens returned to school after the financial difficulties were over. When he was fifteen, he went to work as a clerk in a law firm. Later he became a free-lance reporter, first reporting on dull law cases and then the more exciting parliamentary debates. These experiences helped shape his social consciousness. In 1830, he fell in love with Maria Beadwell, the daughter of a banker. The relationship was short-lived, since Dickens was not considered a good match for her, by her parents' standards. He then met and married Catherine Hogarth on April 2, 1836.

Dickens' first published story appeared in 1835. He also started writing under the famous pseudonym "Boz", with the first sketches published in 1836. His success as a writer truly began with the Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club (1836-37), now known as The Pickwick Papers. Its popularity allowed him to embark on a full-time career as a novelist. He wrote Oliver Twist in 1837, followed by Nicholas Nickleby, The Olde Curiosity Shop, and Barnaby Rudge. Dickens also had a social conscience. He visited Canada and the United States in 1842 and advocated international copyright laws and the abolition of slavery. His American Notes appeared in October of that year and, along with the novel Martin Chuzzlewit, did not portray America flatteringly.

Dickens' enormously successful A Christmas Carol was published in 1844. From 1844 onward, the family spent a lot of time abroad, especially in Italy, Switzerland, and France. The Chimes, The Cricket on the Hearth, and Pictures from Italy belong to this period. He published Domby and Son in 1846, and began the serial David Copperfield in 1849. He published Bleak House in 1852, Hard Times in 1854, LittleDorrit in 1855, and collaborated with W. Collins on a play, The Frozen Deep, in 1856. He also founded and

became the editor of the weekly Household Words and opened a theatrical company. In 1859 he began to edit All the Year Round, a weekly magazine. A serialization of A Tale of Two Cities appeared in this weekly in 1859. Great Expectations began to appear in 1860 and ended in 1861.

Dickens, being a much loved author, started the public reading of his works in 1853; this activity continued until 1870, when he gave his final public reading. He suffered a stroke on June 8, 1870, at Gad's Hill, the estate he had bought. He died on June 9, 1870. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and his unfinished work, The Mystery of Edward Drood, appeared in September.

10.4 'GREAT EXPECTATIONS'

10.4.1 : PLOT OVERVIEW

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens tells the story of Pip, a young boy who grows up and learns many valuable life lessons about himself and others.

Pip, a young orphan living with his sister and her husband in the marshes of Kent, sits in a cemetery one evening gazing at his parents' tomb. Suddenly, a convict springs up from behind a tombstone, grabs Pip, and orders him to bring him food and a file for his leg irons. Pip obeys, but the convict is soon arrested. The convict protects Pip by claiming to have stolen the items himself.

Later Pip is taken by his Uncle Pumblechook to play at Satis House, owned by a wealthy dowager Miss Havisham, an eccentric lady who has shut herself away ever since her wedding was called off at the last minute. Miss Havisham wears an old bridalgown and despises all men. Pip meets a beautiful young girl named Estella the adopted daughter of Miss Havisham, who treats him formally and contemptuously. But, he falls in love with her and wishes to becomerich so that he might be worthy of her. He even desires that Miss Havisham will make him a rich gentleman and marry him to Estella, but his dreams are faded when, Miss Havisham chooses him to be just alabourer in their family's business.

With Miss Havisham's guidance, Pip is apprenticed to her brother-in-law, Joe, who is the village blacksmith. Pip works in the forge discontentedly, struggling to better his education with the help of the kind Biddy and Joe's malicious day labourer, Orlick. One night, after an argument with Orlick, Pip's sister, known as Mrs. Joe, is viciously attacked and becomes a mute. From her signs, Pip doubts that Orlickwas guilty for the attack.

One day a lawyer named Jaggersbrings a shocking happy news that a secret sponsor has given Pip a large fortune, and Pip need to move to London immediately to begin his education as a gentleman. Pip believes that his wishes of the past have come true and thinks that Miss Havisham is his secret sponsor and that the old woman plans for him to marry Estella.

Pip befriends Herbert Pocketand Jaggers's law clerk, Wemmick in London.He expresses contempt for his former friends and loved ones,

especially Joe, but he continues to pine after Estella. He continues his education studying with the tutor Matthew Pocket, Herbert's father. Herbert teaches Pip on how to act like a gentleman. When Pip turns twenty-one and begins to receive an income from his fortune, he will secretly help Herbert buy his way into the business he has chosen for himself. Herbert and Pip lead anunruly life in London, enjoying themselves and consecutivelyheaping up debts. Orlick reappears in Pip's life, employed as Miss Havisham's porter, but is promptly fired by Jaggers after Pip reveals Orlick'sunsavory past. Pip attends the funeral of Mrs. Joe back home with tremendous grief. After several years, Pip learns the shocking truth that when Magwitch, the convict reveals that he and not Miss Havisham is the sponsor of his fortune.He reveals how Pip's compassion has touched him that has made him move to Australia to earn wealth for making Pip a respected gentleman.

Pip is shocked, but he feels morally bound to help Magwitch escape London, as the convict is shadowed both by the police and by Compeyson, his former partner in crime. A complicated mystery begins to fall into place when Pip discovers that Compeyson was the man who abandoned Miss Havisham at the altar and that Estella is Magwitch's daughter. Miss Havisham has brought her up to break men's hearts, as revenge for the pain caused in her own life. Pip was merely a boy for the young Estella to practice on; Miss Havisham enchanted in Estella's ability to toy with his fondness.

Pip sees the good in Magwitch and begins to care for him deeply. Estella marries an upper-class lout named Bentley Drummle, before Magwitch's attempts to escape. Pip visitsSatis House, and forgives Miss Havisham who asks for forgiveness and regrets for having illtreated him in the past. To her misfortune later that day, when she bends over the fireplace, her clothing catches fire and she goes up in flames. Pip saves her from the accident. In her final days, she will continue to repent for her misdeeds and to plead for Pip's forgiveness.

The time comes for Pip and his friends to spirit Magwitch away from London. Just before the escape attempt, Pip is called to a shadowy meeting in the marshes, where he encounters the vengeful, evil Orlick. Orlick is on the verge of killing Pip when Herbert arrives with a group of friends and saves Pip's life. Pip and Herbert hurry back to effect Magwitch's escape. They try to sneak Magwitch down the river on a rowboat, but they are discovered by the police, who Compeyson tipped off. Magwitch and Compeyson fight in the river, and Compeyson is drowned. Magwitch is sentenced to death, and Pip loses his fortune. Magwitch feels that his sentence is God's forgiveness and dies at peace. Pip falls ill; Joe comes to London to care for him, and they are reconciled. Joe gives him the news from home: Orlick, after robbing Pumblechook, is now in jail; Miss Havisham has died and left most of her fortune to the Pockets; Biddy has taught Joe how to read and write. After Joe leaves, Pip decides to rush home after him and marry Biddy, but when he arrives there he discovers that she and Joe have already married.

Pip decides to go abroad with Herbert to work in the mercantile trade. Returning many years later, he encounters Estella in the ruined garden at Satis House. Drummle, her husband, who treated her badly, is now dead. Pip finds that Estella's coldness and cruelty have been replaced by a sad kindness, and the two leave the garden hand in hand, Pip believing that they will never part again.

10.5 THEMES

The major themes in the novel are correlated to ambition, i.e. "Great Expectations." The themes explored are greed, jealousy, vanity, ingratitude and cruelty. Pip learns contentment and humility and returns to the kindness and generosity that characterized him when he was young. The primary lesson Pip learns is that uncommon-ness on the inside is more important than uncommon-ness on the outside. Some other themes are Suffering, Parenthood, Revenge, motivation and determination.

The main conflict is undoubtedly between Pip himself and his extremely powerful conscience.

STYLE

The style of Great Expectations is largely sardonic and comical. Pip often describes events that are quite sad and hurtful, but he typically does so in a way that relies on dark humour rather than evoking pity. For example, when he mentions the death of his five siblings he refers to them as having "gave up trying to get a living exceeding early in the universal struggle." When he describes the rude relationship between his sister and Joe, he jokes that "I suppose both Joe Gargery and I were brought up by hand." The comical style shows Pip's tendency to avoid being vulnerable both with readers and with the characters around him, since he does not want to be an object of pity, or be defined by his difficult childhood circumstances. He even jokes about the bad decisions of his younger self, making fun of how badly he managed his money and noting that he saw writing down his debts and actually paying them off as "in point of meritorious character … about equal."

10.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Who are Estella's parents?
2. Who is Pip's benefactor?
3. Why does Pip become ashamed of Joe?
4. Why does Estella reject Pip's love?
5. How does Miss Havisham feel about her behavior at the end of her life?
6. Examine critically the view that The Great Expectations exposes a society riddled with injustices.
7. How did the political life of the Victorian age got reflected in the literature?

10.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Bloom, Harold, Ed. *Charles Dickens's* Great Expectations: *Modern Critical Interpretations.* New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2000.
2. A selection of critical essays as well as a bibliography and overview of key biographical events.
3. Chesterton, G. K. *Appreciations And Criticisms Of The Works Of Charles Dickens.* North Yorkshire, UK: House Of Stratus, 2001
4. SparkNotes Editors. "SparkNote on Great Expectations." SparkNotes.com. SparkNotes LLC. 2007. Web

UNIT – XI THOMAS HARDY :TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

Structure

11. 1. INTRODUCTION

Tess of the D'Urbervilles is regarded as Hardy's tragic masterpiece, and also his most ambitious tragic novel. It is an incident of innocence and sophistication, of man and nature, and of history and its relation to the present, concerted on the fate of a simple country girl.

Much of the poignancy of this novel is due to its depiction of the helplessness of the condition of its central figure, Tess, in the face of Fate or Providence, which forms one of Hardy's recurring themes.Soon after he completed Tess of the D'Urbervilles in 1891, Thomas Hardy wrote of the novel's heroine, Tess Durbeyfield, "I lost my heart to her as I went on with her history." Sadly for Hardy, his affection for his protagonist did not translate into an immediately loving popular reception for his book. Now regarded as a masterwork of realist fiction, Tess of the D'Urbervillesstunned Hardy's Victorian readership with its frank portrayals of sexual desire and its candid indictment of both divine and human injustice.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

- To study the Life history of Thomas Hardy
- To examine Hardy's style in the novel.
- Discuss the narrative technique of Hardy in Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

11.3 LIFE HISTORY OF THOMAS HARDY

Thomas Hardy was born June 2, 1840 in the village of Upper Bockhampton, located in South western England. His father was a stone-mason and violinist. His mother enjoyed reading and retelling folk songs and legends popular in the region. From his family, Hardy gained the interests that influenced his life and portrayed in his novels: architecture and music, the lifestyles of the country folk, and literature itself.

Hardy attended Julia Martin's school in Bockhampton between the ages of 8 and 16. However, most of his education came from the books he found in Dorchester, the nearby town. He taught himself French, German, and Latin. At sixteen, Hardy's father apprenticed his son to a local architect, John Hicks. Under Hicks's tutelage, Hardy learned about architectural drawing and the restoration of old houses and churches. Hardy loved the apprenticeship because it allowed him to study the histories of the houses and the families that lived there. Despite his work, Hardy did not abandon his academics; in the evenings, Hardy would study with the Greek scholar Horace Moule.

In 1862, Hardy was sent to London to work with the architect Arthur Blomfield. During his five years in London, Hardy occupied himself in the cultural heritage by visiting museums and theaters, and studying classic literature. He even began to write his own poetry. Back in Dorchester in 1867 working for Hicks, he wrote a novel, The Poor Man and the Lady, which he was advised not to publish on the ground that it was too satirical for genteel Victorian tastes. His novel Desperate Remedies (1871), was unsuccessful.

From 1867, Hardy wrote poetry and novels, though the first part of his career was devoted mostly to novels. At first, he published anonymously, but after people became interested in his work, he began to use his own name. Like the work of his contemporary Charles Dickens, Hardy's novels were published serially in magazines, and they became popular in both England and America. His first popular novel was Under the Greenwood Tree, published in 1872. The next great novel, Far from the Madding Crowd (1874), was so popular that the profits allowed Hardy to give up architecture and marry Emma Gifford. Other popular novels followed in quick succession: The Return of the Native (1878), The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), The Woodlanders (1887), Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891), and Jude the Obscure (1895). In addition to these long works, Hardy published three collections of short stories and five shorter novels, all moderately successful. However, despite the praise Hardy's fiction received, many critics were offended by their violence and sexual content, especially in Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. The outcry against Jude was so great that Hardy decided to stop writing novels and return to his first great love, poetry.

Over the years, Hardy had divided his time between his home, Max Gate in Dorchester, and his lodgings in London. In his later years, he remained in

Dorchester to focus completely on his poetry. In 1898, his dream of becoming a poet was realized with the publication of Wessex Poems. He then turned his attentions to an epic drama in verse, The Dynasts; it was finally completed in 1908. Before his death, he had written over 800 poems, many of which were published while he was in his eighties.

Hardy also found happiness late in his personal life. His first wife, Emma, died in 1912. Although their marriage had not been happy, Hardy grieved at her sudden death. In 1914, he married Florence Dugdale, and she was extremely devoted to him. By the last two decades of Hardy's life, he had achieved a level of fame equal to that of Dickens. In 1910, he was awarded the Order of Merit.

After a long and highly successful career, Thomas Hardy died on January 11, 1928, at the age of 87. His ashes were buried in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey. After his death, Florence published Hardy's autobiography in two parts under her own name. Hardy bequeathed many of his possessions to the nation, most notably his pens. Hardy personally engraved each bone handle with the name of the text it was used to write.

Although Hardy's novels were received badly by critics when they were first published, Hardy has been consistently recognized since his death as one of the great English novelists. He was an important influence on Modernism, and many later writers, including Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, and Robert Graves, named Hardy as influences.

Hardy wrote short stories, poems, and plays. Two further volumes of poetry and short stories appeared, The Dynasts: A Drama of the Napoleonic Wars (1903-08) and Winter Words (1928), a volume of verse.

11.4.1 SUMMARY

Tess Durbeyfield is a 16-year-old simple country girl, the eldest daughter of John and Joan Durbeyfield. In a chance meeting with Parson Tringham along the road one night, John Durbeyfield discovers that he is the descendent of the d'Urbervilles, an ancient family who had land holdings as far back as William the Conqueror in 1066. Upon this discovery, the financially strapped Durbeyfield family learns of a nearby "relative," and John and his wife Joan send Tess to "claim kin" in order to alleviate their impoverished condition. While visiting the d'Urbervilles at The Slopes, Tess meets Alec d'Urberville, who finds himself attracted to Tess. Alec arranges for Tess to become the caretaker for his blind mother's poultry, and Tess moves to The Slopes to take up the position. While in residence at the d'Urbervilles, Alec seduces and rapes Tess.

Tess then returns to Marlott, and later gives birth to Alec's child. She avoids the other townspeople out of shame. Her baby soon gets sick, and Tess worries about his soul. She baptizes him herself, and names him Sorrow before he dies.After a while Tess gets worn down by her community's judgment and decides to look for work elsewhere. She

becomes a milkmaid at Talbothays dairy farm, and enjoys a time of contentment. She befriends three other girls, Izz, Retty, and Marian, and discovers that the man from the May-Day dance, Angel Clare, is also working there. He is the son of a parson, but is at Talbothays to learn about farming methods. All four women soon fall in love with him, but he chooses Tess and they begin a period of courtship. Angel asks her to marry him, but Tess refuses, feeling that she is not worthy of marriage. She is afraid to tell him the details of her past.

Angel returns home briefly and finds that his brothers, who are becoming parsons or deans, have grown more narrow-minded and disapproving. Strengthened in his convictions, he goes back and renews his proposal to Tess. She finally accepts, but is in constant turmoil. On their wedding night Angel admits that he had an affair with a woman in London, so Tess feels able to tell the truth about Alec. Angel is shocked and unforgiving, and he becomes distraught thinking of what his family and society would say if they found out. He gives Tess some money and leaves to clear his mind. He decides to seek his fortunes in Brazil, and asks Tess to not follow him.

Tess's money soon runs out and she feels ever more guilty and depressed. She works at a bleak starveacre farm with Marian, who has started drinking since Angel rejected her. Tess randomly meets Alec d'Urberville again, but now he has become an evangelical preacher, converted by Angel's father. When he sees Tess he becomes enamoured once more, and quickly gives up Christianity to try and seduce her. Tess goes home to care for her mother, but soon afterward her father dies. The family is then evicted, and Alec offers to help them if Tess will return to him.

Meanwhile Angel, who has grown sick in Brazil, decides to come home and forgive Tess. When he finally finds her she is in a fancy boardinghouse, and she says it is too late for her, she has relented to Alec. Angel leaves, stricken, and Tess argues with Alec, ultimately stabbing him to death. Tess and Angel then escape together, with Angel unsure if Tess actually committed murder.

They hide in an empty mansion and have a few happy days, but then move on. One night they stop at Stonehenge, and Tess falls asleep on a monolith. At dawn the police arrest her. Later Angel and Tess's sister, Liza-Lu, hold hands and see the black flag,the sign that Tess has been executed.

11.4. 2 CRITICAL REVIEW

Tess of the d'Urbervilles was the twelfth novel published by Thomas Hardy. He began the novel in 1889 and it was originally serialized in the Graphic after being rejected by several other periodicals from July to December in 1891. It was finally published as a novel in December of 1891. The novel questions society's sexual morals by empathetically portraying a heroine who is seduced by the son of her employer and who is considered a tainted and corrupted woman by the society. Upon its publication, Tess of the d'Urbervilles came across brutally hostile reviews;

although it is now considered a major work of fiction, the poor reception of Tess and Jude the Obscure precipitated Thomas Hardy's transition from writing fiction to poetry. However, the novel was commercially successful and secured Hardy's financial security.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles deals with several important contemporary subjects for Hardy, including the struggles of religious belief that occurred during Hardy's lifetime. Hardy was largely influenced by the Oxford movement, a spiritual movement involving extremely devout thinking and actions. Hardy's family members were primarily orthodox Christians and Hardy himself considered entering the clergy, as did many of his relatives. Yet Hardy eventually abandoned his devout faith in God based on the scientific advances of his contemporaries, including most prominently Darwin's On the Origin of Species. Hardy's own religious experiences can thus be seen in the character of Angel Clare, who resists the conservative religious beliefs of his parents to take a more religious and secular view of philosophy.

The novel also reflects Hardy's preoccupation with social class that continues through his novels. Hardy had connections to both the working and the upper class, but felt that he belonged to neither. This is reflected in the pessimism contained in Tess of the d'Urbervilles toward the chances for Tess to ascend in society and Angel's precarious position as neither a member of the upper class nor a working person equivalent to his fellow mates at Talbothays. Again, like Angel Clare, Thomas Hardy found himself torn between different social spheres with which he could not fully align himself. Tess of the d'Urbervilles reflects that divide.

11.5. STYLE AND THEME

The style of the novel is narrative in nature that differentiates itself from the way it is told. The Victorian tone of existentialism is not found in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, and Thomas Hardy expresses his frustration, exhaustion, and an overwhelming sense of injustice at the cruelty of our universal Fate of disappointment and disillusionment. He takes great pains to relate the characters to their environment, especially in the parallelism between Tess' emotional temper and her physical situation. Thomas Hardy's Tess portrays a central character who is at the mercy of both circumstance and fate. Tess, by Victorian definition, is a fallen woman and, as such, not accountable for her own fate. Courtship and persuasion are also portrayed in a different form than in Persuasion… Hardy has used Tragedy to highlight the flaws in the Victorian society rather than using a "happy" one.

WORKING-CLASS GIRLS

Literacy rates for girls were low among the working classes, though it gradually increased through the century. Many were apathetic or even hostile to the idea of girls reading. Working-class females generallyRagged School doorway, through Creative Commons learnt the basics through a

network of voluntary schools, such as church schools, Sunday schools, workhouse schools, and the so-called 'Dame schools' and 'Ragged schools'. Education was haphazard until state intervention and subsidies brought some standards to the grades.

After 1870, girls could expect to be given a Primary School education (initially to age 11, then to 13). Tess in Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles, gets up to the sixth standard, which would have enabled her to attend a Teacher Training College, as Hardy's two sisters and cousin did.

VISUAL QUALITY

Hardy was a poet as well as a novelist, writing within the Romantic tradition. One of the consequences of this is his dense use of imagery and symbolism, especially nature imagery. The setting is rural, and many of the images are drawn quite naturally from the countryside and landscape. These images are often used symbolically to denote meaning as well as likeness, especially in terms of Tess's various states of being.

This does not mean the style is obviously 'poetic' or flowery, weighed down by lengthy descriptions. In many places, the narrative is quite plain and unadorned. But it always has a strong visual quality: the reader can ‘see' the landscape. The detail given is concrete and ordered.

11.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the narrative technique of Hardy in Tess of the D'Urbervilles.
2. Discuss the ways in which Hardy uses the different locations of Tess of the d'Urbervilles in order to emphasise the themes of the novel.
3. Is Tess of the D’Urbervilles more accurately seen as a protest against unjust moral and social tenets, or an acknowledgment that such structures will always exist?How would this help the reader to understand the themes of the novel?
4. Describe the narrative structure of Tess of the d'Urbervilles and discuss how it may affect the reader's understanding of the novel.
5. What are the causes of Tess's feelings of guilt and hesitation? How does Hardy present them and their consequences?
6. ‘A male author can never fully expect to portray a woman as she really is.' Discuss this in reference to Hardy's portrayal of Tess.
7. How do you respond to the view that the novel shows “the destruction of the English peasantry”?

11.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Ross, Jeremy. "Tess of the D'Urbervilles Bibliography". GradeSaver, 23 July 2000 Web. 1 September 2019.

2. Tess of the D’Urbervilles Reader’s Guide by Thomas Hardy

UNIT – XII D. H. LAWRENCE : 'SONS AND LOVERS'

Structure

12.1 INTRODUCTION

D. H. Lawrence is considered one of the twentieth century's greatest and most visionary English novelists. His novel Sons and Lovers is an autobiographical novel which adheres to the notion of bildungsroman. The novel also highlights issues such as sex and psychology to the readers. However, the novel is largely known for its incorporation of the Freudian theory of Oedipus complex. In this unit, you will study about the Oedipus complex, the concept of bildungsroman, the significance of women characters and the significance of the ending of the novel Sons and Lovers.

12.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Know the history of D.H. Lawrence
- Learn about Oedipus complex
- Explain the concept of bildungsroman in the novel

12.3. LIFE HISTORY OF D. H. LAWRENCE

D.H. LAWRENCE (1885–1930)

David Herbert Lawrence, novelist, short-story writer, poet, and essayist, was born in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, England, on September 11, 1885. Though better known as a novelist, Lawrence's first-published works (in 1909) were poems, and his poetry, especially his evocations of the natural world, have since had a significant influence on many poets on both sides of the Atlantic. His early poems reflect the influence of Ezra Pound and Imagist movement, which reached its peak in the early teens of the twentieth century. When Pound attempted to draw Lawrence into his circle of writer-followers, however, Lawrence decided to pursue a more independent path.

He believed in writing poetry that was stark, immediate and true to the mysterious inner force which motivated it. Many of his best-loved poems treat the physical and inner life of plants and animals; others are bitterly satiric and express his outrage at the puritanism and hypocrisy of conventional Anglo-Saxon society. Lawrence was a rebellious and profoundly polemical writer with radical views, who regarded sex, the primitive subconscious, and nature as cures to what he considered the evils of modern industrialized society. Tremendously prolific, his work was often uneven in quality, and he was a continual source of controversy, often involved in widely-publicized censorship cases, most famously for his novel Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928). His collections of poetry include Look! We Have Come Through (1917), a collection of poems about his wife; Birds, Beasts, and Flowers (1923); and Pansies (1929), which was banned on publication in England.

Besides his troubles with the censors, Lawrence was persecuted as well during World War I, for the supposed pro-German sympathies of his wife, Frieda. As a consequence, the Lawrences left England and travelled restlessly to Italy, Germany, Ceylon, Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, the French Riviera, Mexico and the United States, unsuccessfully searching for a new homeland. In Taos, New Mexico, he became the centre of a group of female admirers who considered themselves his disciples, and whose quarrels for his attention became a literary legend. A lifelong sufferer from tuberculosis, Lawrence died in 1930 in France, at the age of forty-four.

12.3.1 'SONS AND LOVERS'

12.3.2 SUMMARY

The relationship between a mother and son is shown in a profound way in D.H. Lawrences's Sons and Lovers. The story narrates the unhappy married life of Mrs. Morel. Her husband is a miner and alcoholic. They have many arguments and end up in painful events like she being locked out of the house and being hit with a drawer that bleeds her head. Mrs. Morel finds solace in her four children, especially her sons.

When William her first son, moves to London where he takes a job Mrs. Morel is hurt and upset. When William dies a few years later due to sickness, she is broken and loses her attention on her other children until she almost loses Paul as well. She then focuses on Paul and the two seem to live for each other.

Paul meets Miriam Leivers, who lives on a farm not too far from the Morel family and falls in love with her. They move on a very intimate, but platonic, relationship for many years. Paul does not marry her as Mrs. Morel does not approve of Miriam, and he constantly wavers in his feelings toward her.

Paul meets Clara Dawes, a suffragette who is separated from her husband, through Miriam. They discuss his relationship with Miriam, and Claratells him that he should think of consummating their love and he returns to Miriam. Paul and Miriam are briefly happy after consummating their love, but shortly afterward Paul decides not to marry Miriam, and he breaks off with her. She still feels that his soul belongs to her, and, in part agrees unwillingly. Paul cherishes his mother's love the most.

After breaking off his relationship with Miriam, Paul begins to spend more time with Clara and they begin an extremely passionate affair. However, she does not want to divorce her husband Baxter, and so they can never be married. Paul's mother falls ill and he devotes much of his time to caring for her. When she finally dies, he is broken-hearted and, after a final plea from Miriam, goes off alone at the end of the novel.

12.3.3 CRITICAL REVIEW

This novel is a portrayal of her mother's love for her children. The mother and son shares a very beautiful and powerful bond. As Ann Oakley quotes, "Women as the guardians of children possess a great power. They mould their children's personalities and the arbiters of their development." It is a mother's nature that causes her to love and nurture her son. It is the first form of love that any son can receive. As Hamilton Wright Mabie writes, "The mother loves her child most divinely, not when she surrounds him with comfort and anticipates his wants, but when she resolutely holds him to the highest standards and is content with nothing less than his best."

It is also important for the mother to know when to let go of her son and allow him into the world. The bond between mother and son will last a lifetime. That does not mean that control is the only way for that bond. In D.H. Lawrences's Sons and Lovers, the bond between mother and son is exemplified in a profound way. However, Mrs. Morel's relationship with her sons, especially Paul, proves to be harmful to the growth of her sons. As Eleanor Sullo agrees, "Paul Morel's imprisoning relationship with his mother cripples all his other relationships," .Mrs. Morel's obsessive controls over her sons ultimately leads to Paul's dependence and need for her, but becomes destructive when he is left alone after her death. Paul is not able to face the world alone after he loses his mother.

Gertrude Morel is a strong character. Throughout the novel, she deals with many problems and goes through a lot of hard times. She has had to deal

with her husband Walter who is an alcoholic, abusive and does not help her in the raising of her children. She attempted to make her home a better place by continually trying to revive her relationship with her irresponsible husband.

Gertrude is also very protective of her children. Twice she protects them from Walter. Gertrude is extremely happy when her sons do well which compels her to think that she is doing a good job in raising them. Mrs. Morel is a strong and confident woman. On the other side she is strict and short-tempered.

Mrs Morel was dying of cancer she still holds Paul who was tormented, 'A furious storm, he knew not what, seemed to ravage him.' Mrs. Morel died by an overdose of a drug given by Annie and Paul and this brought another storm. He kneeled down, and put his face to hers and his arms around her and whispered 'my love-my love-oh- my love' again and again. The neurotic conflict and uncertainty was faded in overwhelming pain; the sense of release came only later. Paul then wanted to die. 'He would not admit that he wanted to die, to have done....So the weeks went on. Always alone, his soul oscillated, first on the side of death, then on the side of life, doggedly. The real agony was that he had nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to say, and was nothing himself.' The author ends the novel with the lonely and deserted Paul walking toward the city, and it can be like he is on the beginning of a new episode of his life or to live the life over again as left to the choice of the audience.

12.3.4 STYLE AND THEME

Sons and Lovers, novel can be both a psychological study and autobiographical text.

OEDIPUS COMPLEX

Oedipus complex takes its name from the title character of the Greek play Oedipus Rex. In the story, Oedipus is prophesied to murder his father and have sex with his mother (and he does, though unwittingly). Most critics read Sons and Lovers as an oedipal novel, influenced by Sigmund Freud's controversial theory of sexual desire. The Oedipus complex tells that young boys may romantically desire their mothers and envy their fathers. The female version is called the Electra complex.

D.H. Lawrence was aware of Sigmund Freud's theory, and Oedipus complex is the base for exploring Paul's relationship with his mother in Sons and Lovers. Paul is hopelessly ardent to his mother, and that love often borders on romantic desire. Lawrence writes many scenes between the two that go beyond the bounds of conventional mother-son love. Completing the Oedipal equation, Paul murderously hates his father and often fantasizes about his death.

Paul alleviates his guilty feelings by transferring them on Miriam and Clara. However, Paul cannot love either woman as much as he loves his mother and he is not aware of this as an obstruction to his personal life. But Lawrence adds a twist to the Oedipus complex: Mrs. Morel is saddled with it as well. She desires both William and Paul in near-romantic ways, and

she despises all their girlfriends. She, too, engages in transference, projecting her dissatisfaction with her marriage onto her smothering love for her sons. At the end of the novel, Paul takes a major step in releasing himself from his Oedipus complex. He intentionally overdoses his dying mother with morphia, an act that reduces her suffering but also subverts his Oedipal fate, since he does not kill his father, but his mother.

THE BILDUNGSROMAN NOVEL

Sons and Lovers can also be seen as a traditional bildungsroman. The hero is viewed as an individual in whom the personal-psychological aspect cannot be distinguished from the historical and cultural forces in which he is entangled. The term bildungsroman is referred to as the 'novel of self-development' or 'apprenticeship novel' in English. It features a protagonist, an apprentice to life, whose goal is to master it so that he can achieve an ideal or ambition, fulfilment of which will heighten his sense of self. The bildungsroman protagonist is usually passive, reflective, intellectual and artistic probably because the author has drawn the character of the hero based on his own experiences.

A second characteristic of all bildungsroman novels is that their heroes must always decide on a suitable companion or at least define the ideal that waits in the nearfuture. This aspect of Sons and Lovers has received close attention from critics. The way in which the novel appears to blame Gertrude for dominating and almost destroying Paul and indicting Clara and Miriam for their sensuality or nearfrigidity, has given rise to a great deal of discussion among literary critics.

BONDAGE

Lawrence discusses bondage in two ways: social and romantic. Socially, Mrs. Morel feels bound by her status as a woman and by industrialism. She complains of feeling "'buried alive,'" a logical lament for someone married to a miner, and even the children feel they are in a "tight place of anxiety." Though she joins a women's group, she must remain a housewife for life, and thus is jealous of Miriam, who is able to utilize her intellect in more opportunities. Ironically, Paul feels free in his job at the factory, enjoying the work and the company of the working-class women, though one gets the sense that he would still rather be painting.

Romantic bondage is given far more emphasis in the novel. Paul (and William, to a somewhat lesser extent) feels bound to his mother, and cannot imagine ever abandoning her or even marrying anyone else. He is preoccupied with the notion of lovers "belonging" to each other, and his true desire, revealed at the end, is for a woman to claim him forcefully as her own. He feels the sacrificial Miriam fails in this regard and that Clara always belonged to Baxter Dawes. It is clear that no woman could ever match the intensity and steadfastness of his mother's claim.

JEALOUSY

Mrs. Morel is jealous of her sons' lovers, and she masks this jealousy very thinly. Morel, too, is jealous over his wife's closer relationships with his sons and over their successes. Paul frequently rouses jealousy in Miriam

with his flirtations with Agatha Leiver and Beatrice, and Dawes is violently jealous of Paul's romance with Clara.

XII. JAMES JOYCE : A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN

12.4. LIFE HISTORY OF JAMES JOYCE

James Joyce was one of the most important and innovative writers of the 20th century. He has authored the short story collection Dubliners (1914) and the novels A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916), Ulysses (1922), and Finnegans Wake (1939) and poems including Chamber Music (1907) and Pomes Penyeach (1927).

James Joyce was born in a suburb of Dublin. He attended a Jesuit school until his parents could not afford the tuition, and then Belvedere College and University College, Dublin. After graduating Joyce moved to Paris, returned to Ireland only occasionally. He lived in Trieste with his partner and later wife, Nora Barnacle, and their children. During World War I the family was living in Zurich, moving to Paris after the war, and later to the South of France before the Nazi invasion. The family was living in Zurich when Joyce died.

Joyce's novels, with their innovative language, use of dialogue, characteristic modernist forms, and social frankness, met with resistance when they first appeared in print. Ulysses was serialized in the United States and England before Sylvia Beach, of the bookstore Shakespeare & Co. in Paris, published it as a complete book. It was banned in the United States from 1922 until 1933.

Joyce's first published book was Chamber Music, a collection of 36 love poems. His poetry was noticed by Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot and included in Pound's influential Imagist Anthology of 1914. Pound wrote of Chamber Music: "the quality and distinction of the poems in the first half … is due in part to their author's strict musical training … the wording is Elizabethan, the metres at times suggesting Herrick." Known as a lyric poet, Joyce based some of his poems on songs. His poems have been set to music by composers including Geoffrey Moyneux Palmer, Ross Lee Finney, Samuel Barber, and Syd Barrett of Pink Floyd, as well as the group Sonic Youth. Despite his poetic success, Joyce is better known as a novelist, and by 1932 he had stopped writing poetry altogether**.**

12.4.1 'A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'

12.4.2 SUMMARY

The life and childhood of Stephen Dedalus is portrayed by James Joyce in his novel 'A Portrait of the Artist' . Stephen is a little boy who grows in Europe and at the age of eighteen he decides to leave his country to be an artist.

Stephen is a young boy of five years in the beginning of the novel. He is one of the younger students at Clongowes Wood College for boys a Jesuit elementary school. He gets ill as he was pushed into a drainage by a student named Wells. Stephen yearns of going home for Christmas holidays while in the infirmary.

The next part portrays Dedalus family at Christmas dinner, and an argument erupts between Stephen's father and Dante, Stephen's governess, about Parnell and the Catholic church. Stephen has broken his glasses and has been excused from class work by his teacher, Father Arnall in school., Father Dolan, a perfectionist walks into the class to control the students, and points out Stephen as a "lazy idle little loafer." Stephen is hit with a bat in his knuckles and he feels the injustice of his punishment deeply and embarrassed in front of the class. The other students insist on him taking the issue to the rector of the college. Stephen speaks to the rector and he promises him to discuss the same with Father Dolan. Stephen is cheered by the other students.

In the second chapter, Stephen is has grown little older. He is now at Belvedere College. He has developed interest in literature, and tends to fascinate and romanticize his life based on what he reads. He fails in his attempt to write a poem to the girl whom he loves. He is in a play at Belvedere, and outside of the theatre he is teased by two students, Heron and Wallis, and make him recite the Confiteor. Stephen, then, remembers a recent incident when his English teacher suspected him of heresy. Stephen takes a trip to Cork with his father, and his father shows him the town where he was born and raised, and the school he attended when he was Stephen's age. Back in Dublin, Stephen wins a sum of money for an essay competition, and, for a brief time, treats himself and his family to a "season of pleasure." When the money runs out, we can see him drifting the red light districts of Dublin, fantasizing about the prostitutes. As the chapter ends, Stephen has his first experience with a prostitute.

Stephen has made a habit of visiting prostitutes as seen in the third chapter. He is not worried about the duplicity of his life and once when undergoes a religious retreat he is touched by the Sermon about sin and gets affected deeply. Stephen goes to confession at the chapel across town, and receives communion on repenting for his sins.

Stephen has now dedicated his life to God. He prays constantly, and goes about mortifying his senses. He has completely renounced his sinful relations with the prostitutes, and the director at Belvedere speaks to him about becoming a priest. The idea first seems to appeal to Stephen, but he ultimately decides that he could not become a priest.

At sixteen, Stephen's father draws plans for him to enter the university. Walking along the seashore one afternoon, thinking about poetry, Stephen sees a young woman bathing. They stare at each other, but do not speak. Stephen takes this as a spiritual sign, and he excitedly decides to dedicate his life to art.

In the final chapter, Stephen is at the university. He is lazy about his classes but passionate about his developing theory of aesthetics. He refuses to sign a political appeal, trying to set himself apart from the concerns of his country's politics or religion. Talking to his close friend, Cranly, Stephen announces that he has decided to leave Ireland for Europe to pursue his artistic vocation. The novel closes with a few pages out of Stephen's diary, as he makes plans to leave for the continent.

12.4.3 CRITICAL REVIEW

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man follows the intellectual, moral and spiritual development of a young Catholic Irishman, Stephen Dedalus, and his struggle against the restrictions his culture imposes. Portrait can be placed in the tradition of the bildungsroman – novels that trace the personal development of the protagonist, usually from childhood through to adulthood. Joyce contrasts the rebellion and the experimentation of adolescence with the sombre influence of Stephen's Catholic education. For example, his startled enjoyment of a sexual experience in chapter two is followed by the famous 'Hellfire sermon' in chapter three which leaves him fearing for his soul. The name Dedalus links to Ovid's mythological story of Daedalus – the 'old artificer' – and his son Icarus, who flies too close to the sun. We are reminded of this image when Stephen tells his friend Davin: 'When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets'.

Though the technique used in much of the novel's narration can be described as 'stream-of-consciousness', some critics complain that this term tells us little about the effect it achieves. Joyce traces Stephen's various stages of development, by adjusting the style of his language as his protagonist grows up. From the baby-talk of the opening, to the high-minded aesthetic discussion towards the end, Joyce's language play mimics Stephen's phonetic, linguistic and intellectual growth. By the end of the novel, Stephen has resolved to follow his calling as an artist and to leave Ireland in order to 'forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race'.

In many respects, the novel represents Joyce's own artistic development, and Stephen portrays a fictionalised version of Joyce in many instances. The novel was published as episodes in the modernist magazine, The Egoist, between 1914 and 1915, starting on 2 February (Joyce's 32nd birthday). It was printed as a complete book in 1916 in the US and in 1917 in the UK.

12.4.4 THEMES

REJECTION OF AUTHORITY

Stephen's ultimate rebellion is a classic example of a young person's struggle against the conformity demanded of him by society. The young

Stephen possesses a childish faith in (a) his family, (b) his religion, and (c) his country. As he matures, he comes to feel these institutions are attempting to destroy his independent spirit. He must escape them to find himself

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTIST

Stephen's discovery of his artist's calling designs the major framework for the novel. Certainly, from the opening pages of the novel to its end, Joyce emphasizes the boy's sensitive responses to language and to the sights and sounds of the world around him. Words define life: as a schoolboy, he tries to arrange them to see where he fits in the scheme of the universe. He turns to writing poetry to express the emotions he cannot express in speech. In time he writes prize essays and even shapes his own theories of beauty. Stephen relates three separate—but closely related—aspects of his, and perhaps Joyce's, attitudes toward art: (a) art as a vocation or calling; (b) art as flight; and (c) art as religion.

THEME OF TRANSFORMATION

One might argue that the only things that actually happen in Portrait of the Artist are aseries of transformations. One might then argue that this demonstrates that growing up issimply a series of transformations. Either way, transformation in this text is associatedwith two things. First, it's related to the slow shift from childhood to adulthood. Stephenhas to pass through distinct phases before he is an independent adult. Secondly,transformation is likened to the process of artistic development; his intellectualtransformations help forge his identity as an artist and shape his future writing. The proofof this is Joyce himself – after all, this story partially stems from his own experiences.

PROUD EGOTIST

Some feel that the central theme is the character study of an arrogant, unhappy egotist, an intensely self-absorbed young man. An egotist is interested only in the self and is intensely critical of other people and the world. In this instance, Stephen often feels superior to others and finds caring for others to be difficult, even for his own family.

12. 5 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write a short note on the life of D. H. Lawrence.

2. What is a bildungsroman novel?

3.Sketch the character of Mrs. Morel.

5'Sons and Lovers' was based on the surface and the depths of human life and relationships. .Do you agree?

6. What is Oedipus complex? Do you see Sons and Loversas an adequate rendering of this complex? Explain.

7. Examine the nature of Paul-Miriam relationship.

8. Describe Paul's attitude towards his mother?

12.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Introduction and Notes for The Tenant of Wild fell Hall. Penguin Books.1996.
2. Stedman, Jane W. (1996). W. S. Gilbert, A Classic Victorian & His Theatre, pp. 26–29. Oxford UniversityPress.
3. Evans, Denise; Onorato, Mary."Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism". Enotes. Gale Cengage. Retrieved 16 June2014.
4. Khale, Brewster. "Early Children's Literature". Children's Books in the Victorian Era. International Library of Children's Literature. Retrieved 16 June2014.
5. Dawson,Carl(1979).VictorianHighNoon:EnglishLiteraturein 1850.Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. Press.
6. Portrait of the Artist as a Young Adult: The Arts in Young Adult Literature By Lois Thomas Stover, Connie S. Zitlow
7. Fatherhood and Paternity in Joyce's "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" By Theresa Schneiderwind

NOTES

UNIT – XIII T.S. ELIOT: MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

Structure

13.1 INTRODUCTION - 'MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL'

'Murder in the Cathedral' is a verse drama by T. S. Eliot and depicts the assassination of Archbishop Thomas Beckett in Canterbury Cathedral that took place in 1170. It was performed first of all in 1935. The play includes incidents taking place between 2nd and 29th of December, 1170. The play highlights the internal struggle faced by Thomas Beckett which reveals his psychology as well as the conditions predominant in the society that results in bloodshed. The struggle between the Archbishop and the authorities also reflect the effect of the rise of fascism in Central Europe at the times of Eliot.

13.2. OBJECTIVES

- Learn about the life and work of T.S. Eliot
- Know the story of Murder in the Cathedral
- Understand the characters and themes of Murder in the Cathedral

13.3.1 LIFE HISTORY OF T.S ELIOT

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born on 26 September 1888 in St Louis, Missouri. His ancestors had lived in America for the last couple of centuries, since Andrew Elliott had left East Coker in Somerset for Massachusetts in the 1660s. Eliot was also related to three US presidents: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and Rutherford B. Hayes. His family belonged to the New England aristocracy, meaning that Eliot was a New Englander by descent, and he would become an Englander by emigration: he moved to England in 1914, and swapped his US passport for UK citizenship in 1927.

Studies and Career

He lived in St. Louis during the first eighteen years of his life and attended Harvard University. In 1910, he left the United States for the Sorbonne, having earned both undergraduate and masters degrees and having contributed several poems to the Harvard Advocate.

After a year in Paris, he returned to Harvard to pursue a doctorate in philosophy, but returned to Europe and settled in England in 1914. The following year, he married Vivienne Haigh-Wood and began working in London, first as a teacher, and later for Lloyd's Bank.

After spells of study at Harvard and at Oxford, Eliot became part of the London literary scene, following a meeting with Ezra Pound in 1914. Pound would champion Eliot and promote his work – he even helped to pay for the publication of Eliot's first volume of poems, Prufrock and Other Observations, in 1917.

Eliot's early poetry took its cue from several different sources: from French Symbolists, especially the French-Uruguayan Jules Laforgue (1860-1887); the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists; and the seventeenth-century Metaphysical poets. He would write numerous lectures and essays about the dramatists and Metaphysical poets in particular. In 1919, in an influential essay titled 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', he set himself squarely against the Romantic notion of poetry as (in Wordsworth's words) 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', instead seeing it as an 'escape from emotion' and an 'escape from personality'. He was becoming associated with other poets of the time whose work would later become known as 'modernist' – Ezra Pound was another leading modernist poet who was born in the US but moved to Europe in his youth.

As a poet, he transfigured his affinity for the English metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century (most notably John Donne) and the nineteenth century French symbolist poets (including Baudelaire and Laforgue) into radical innovations in poetic technique and subject matter. His poems in many respects articulated the disillusionment of a younger post–World

War I generation with the values and conventions—both literary and social—of the Victorian era.

As a critic, he had an enormous impact on contemporary literary taste, propounding views that, after his conversion to orthodox Christianity in the late thirties, were increasingly based in social and religious conservatism. His major later poetry collections include Ash Wednesday (1930) and Four Quartets (1943); his books of literary and social criticism include The Sacred Wood (1920), The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933), After Strange Gods (1934), and Notes Towards the Definition of Culture (1940). Eliot was also an important playwright, whose verse dramas include Murder in the Cathedral, The Family Reunion, and The Cocktail Party.

After a notoriously unhappy first marriage, Eliot separated from his first wife in 1933, and remarried Valerie Fletcher in 1956. T. S. Eliot received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948. He died in London on January 4, 1965.

13.3.2 SUMMARY

The book has been divided into 2 parts. The first part reveals the action taking place inside Archbishop Thomas Beckett's hall on 2 December 1170. Thomas Beckett had been away from France for 7 years. The chorus informs about his absence over this period, his return, the rise of temporal powers and the possibility of violence in the coming days. Beckett is ready to accept his martyrdom which he believes is very likely. He confronts the tempters who offer him physical safety; prosperity and fame; coalition with the barons against the King; and, the glory of martyrdom, respectively. The concept of the tempters as well as the offers forwarded by the first three of them resembles the same in case of Christ. Beckett responds against the temptations stating his determination to not fall for them. He particularly denounces the last temptation which is similar to doing something praiseworthy with a wrong intention in mind.

The interlude includes a sermon by Beckett on Christmas morning which highlights the contradiction that Christians mourn as well as rejoice for martyrs on Christmas. The sermon reflects his peace of mind and his resolve to accept death without seeking sainthood.

The second part of the play includes incidents taking place on 29th of December. Four knights arrive who heard the King's expression of his frustration regarding Beckett. They analyzed this expression to be his wish to have Beckett killed. They accuse him of betrayal and he defends himself. He demands to be tried before public. He is saved by the priests' intervention when the knights try to attack him. he refuses to do so when the priests ask him to leave so as to protect himself. The knights leave for the time being but he again announces that he is ready to die. The chorus states its prior awareness about the possibility of such a conflict. It also announces the possibility of destruction in near future. Beckett is sent to the Cathedral where the knights, coming back, kill him. The chorus

laments on his death and the knights come forward to justify their action. The murder is justified since church should not undermine state power.

13.3.3 CRITICAL REVIEW

The play is about Thomas Beckett who served as Archbishop while King Henry II attempted to reduce the powers available to the Catholic Church. Beckett was the only member of the church who did not stop opposing the King's decision. The king, ultimately, convicted Beckett for having shown contempt to the royal authority. Beckett fled. Beckett excommunicated members of English court from the church which led to further rift between him and the King. Ultimately, four knights found Beckett out and killed him. However, whether the King had actually ordered for his assassination or the knights had misunderstood his intentions has always been debatable. The church canonized Beckett and pronounced him to be a martyr.

One of the most unique features of 'Murder in the Cathedral' is that it is in verse. Eliot produced a verse drama in an era when such an attempt was highly uncommon.

The play makes use of the chorus just like the Greek dramas. The chorus plays a very significant part in the play by providing necessary links and information the audience. It also guides the emotions of the audience by changing the tone of its own voice as per the situation.

Eliot seems to be following the popular beliefs regarding Beckett's story without introducing many emotions on his own. Even the debate about whether the King actually ordered Beckett's assassination or not has been presented in the usual doubtful manner in the play.

13.3.4 THEME

GOD'S PLAN

The question of destiny and how could one influence his destiny is seen throughout the play. Thomas Becket and the priests allude to the wheel, which spins and brings good or evil out of the control of the humans it turns. Becket even talks about how things that seem evil at first, because they are part of God's divine plan, will be so entwined with good that one is difficult to tell from another. A true Christian has to submit to God's will and accept what life brings to them. The poor women of Canterbury, the chorus who represent the audience suffer and struggle with this submission. Although they have no power to affect their situation, they suffer and fear. They protest that they can bear it, but they dread the future and especially the martyrdom of Becket, in whom they take a sort of spiritual comfort.

Becket accepts God's plan, but for selfish reasons. He takes pride in his virtue and craves the power and the honour of sainthood. When he is shown this about himself, it shakes him deeply. On Christmas Day he

preaches his farewell sermon, in which he expresses that no man can will himself to become a saint: it is either in God's plan or it is not. He also talks about the peace that God promised the world through Jesus, saying that it is not a freedom from strife or earthly suffering but the spiritual peace that allows one to endure these things with faith and confidence.

PRIDE

Becket's pride is a major source of conflict within the play. His first introduction is in the report given by a priest who says,

"I fear for the archbishop ... His pride always feeding upon his own virtues, / Pride drawing sustenance from impartiality, / Pride drawing sustenance from generosity."

The context of the quote is in relation to his time as chancellor, but this early characterization sets up the temptations that will cause him to question his path, as well as the accusations against him. Thomas Becket takes pride in his goodness as a priest and in his repudiation of his earlier lifestyle. He comes to Canterbury desiring martyrdom and the spiritual power and recognition attendant to that honour. He takes pride in his office as a servant of the pope, and although he is technically refusing temptation with his first three offers, his replies have a telling note of pride in the office he does hold and is being asked to sacrifice.

This is the reason the fourth tempter is so vexing to him. The fourth tempter urges him on his current course of action and asks nothing from him he was not already prepared to do. However, the fourth tempter frames his martyrdom in such a way that he is unable to deny he wants it for his own purposes—not for God's glory. This tempter also addresses Becket's fear that, in time, all the spiritual aspects of his struggle will be forgotten, and he will be regarded as nothing more than a historical figure. In the end Becket accepts the correction and assents humbly to whatever is the will of God.

EARTHLY VERSUS SPIRITUAL ORIENTATION

Throughout the play the spiritual orientation displayed by Becket at his best—that of accepting God's will—is portrayed as the ideal state for any Christian. Within spiritual orientation, joy and suffering are united. Without it they exist independently and in conflict with each other; this is an earthly orientation. The chorus provides an example of this earthly orientation in practice. Although they talk about saints and martyrs and take joy in Becket's presence, they admit to finding their happiness even more upsetting because without it keeps them conscious of how much they have to lose. A total earthly orientation would allow them to continue existing in a prosaic but predictable and stable sort of drudgery. The fact that they are moved by Becket and by horror at the violence of the story speaks well of them; as Becket says "they speak better than they know." However, they are unable to reconcile either their earthly fears and

troubles, or their earthly comforts with the divine plan. They endure but are unable to rejoice in the larger picture. Their joys are fleeting and easily destroyed because they do not have the peace offered by a spiritual orientation and submission to God's plan. However, there is hope for them through the inspiration of the martyrs' stories.

Becket in the first act has a mostly spiritual orientation but maintains a level of earthly pride that makes him imperfect for his purpose. Because he wants martyrdom for his own glory, he is not qualified to be a martyr. It is only after he renounces his spiritual ambitions as well as his earthly ones that he can be at one with God's plan.

The knights, by contrast, seem to lack any spiritual orientation. Instead, they support a state in which, where the church exists at all, it exists to support the will of the government. They casually blaspheme before murdering Becket inside the church, and afterward their defenses proceed from purely secular rationales. Their prose defenses stand in stark contrast to the emotional poetry employed by the other characters.

13.4 BERNARD SHAW: PYGMALION

13.4.1 LIFE HISTORY OF BERNARD SHAW

George Bernard Shaw was born in Ireland in 1856. He insisted on being known as Bernard Shaw. He was a playwright and critic. Shaw wrote more than sixty plays. His plays covered areas from contemporary satire to historical morality. In 1925 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, and in 1938 he was awarded an Academy Award for the screenplay version of Pygmalion. He refused all state honors including the Order of Merit in 1946.

In addition to being a prolific playwright, he was also the most prolific pamphleteer since Jonathan Swift and the most well-read music critic and best theater critic of his time . He was also one of the literature’s great letter writers. He was inwardly shy and generous while at the same time ruthless as a social critic. Shaw was irreverent toward institutions. His plays are dramas as well as comedies.

After attending both Catholic and Protestant day schools, Shaw took a job in the clerical field at the age of 16. From that age he was self-educated. When his parent’s marriage ended, Shaw went with his mother and sisters to London in 1876. His mother had become close to George John Lee, who might have been Shaw’s biological father, and well known in the London music scene. Their house was filled with music and began Shaw’s lifelong love of music.

In 1862 the Shaws and Lee shared a large house in Dublin and a house in the country. Since Shaw was such a shy and sensitive child, he was more comfortable in the country than the city. Lee taught music and voice so when his students brought books, Shaw read them. This gave him a love of literature as well as music.

The next decade was spent in frustration and near poverty. During this time he wrote five novels and only two of them found publishers. He also became a firm and lifelong believer in vegetarianism, a spellbinding orator, and tentatively a playwright. He was a founder of the Fabian Society, which was a middle-class socialist group in 1884. The group aimed at the transformation of English government and society. Through the other founders, he met Charlotte Payne – Townshend whom he married in 1898.

Some of his plays include Widowers' House, in 1893, The Devil's Disciple, in 1896, Caesar and Cleopatra, in 1901, Pygmalion in 1913, Saint Joan in 1923, then about one week before his ninety-fourth birthday, he wrote Why She Would Not in 1950. During his later years, he tended his gardens at Shaw's Corner. At the age of ninety-four, he died of renal failure that was brought on by injuries that occurred while pruning a tree. He was cremated and his ashes were mixed with his wife, Charlotte's. Then they were scattered along footpaths and around the statue of Saint Joan in their garden where the two spent many long afternoons.

13.4.2 SUMMARY

"Pygmalion" is a play authored by George Bernard Shaw and was staged in 1913. The play depicts a young flower girl Eliza Doolittle who is transformed into a lady by Professor Henry Higgins.

The play begins on a rainy night when a crowd of London residents take shelter under the portico of St. Paul's church. Poor and rich alike are sheltered together while the more wealthy residents try to ignore the poorer residents, a flower girl still tries to sell her wares to them. A young man is sent to find a taxi for his mother and sister. While he passes by the flower girl he hits over her flower basket and she calls to him to watch where he is going. Since she calls him by his name Freddy, his mother pays her for some flowers and asks how she knows his name. But Eliza tells her that the name is a common word she would have used for anyone.

The flower girl tries to sell her flowers to an older military gentleman, and while he is giving her some change Eliza's friend warns her being watched by another man who was taking notes about her activities. The friend thinks he may be a police informer. Eliza is panic-stricken and the listeners become very angry and hostile towards the note taker. They accuse him of being an undercover cop. But, each time someone speaks up, he has the ability to place the person's home location simply by listening to their accent. The viewers become more and more interested in this ability.

When the rain clears almost everyone leaves.The note taker, gentleman and Eliza are still there. The gentleman asks the note taker how he performed his act. He replies that it is phonetics or the science of speech. The note taker brags that he could make a duchess out of a flower girl with the use of phonetics. The note taker introduces himself as Henry Higgins and the gentleman is Colonel Pickering. Henry Higgins, a Professor in Phonetics bets Colonel Pickering that he could transform a girl like a flower girl, into a duchess in a short time.

Eliza Doolittle, the flower girl, hears the bet, and she decides to take them up on it. Eliza goes to house of Professor Higgins the next morning and offers to pay Higgins for speaking lessons, so that she can learn to "talk more genteel," and get a better job. Higgins thinks that she cannot afford to pay him, and speaks rudely at her. Pickering steps in and bets Higgins that he can't teach Eliza to speak so well that she passes as a wealthy lady at an ambassador's garden party in six months. He offers to pay for her lessons. Higgins likes the idea and tells his housekeeper Mrs. Pearce to wash Eliza and dress her in new clothes, though Eliza protests. Eliza refuses to participate in the bet, and Mrs. Pearce tells Higgins not to "walk over" Eliza. Higgins neglects Eliza's feelings, ordering her to live with him for six months and take lessons. Mrs. Pearce takes Eliza away to talk to her in private.

Meanwhile, Eliza's father, Alfred Doolittle, comes to Higgins' house who learnt of her whereabouts from the taxi driver. He asks Higgins for five pounds in return for allowing Eliza stay with him. Higgins and Pickering are shocked by Mr. Doolittle's willingness to "sell" his daughter, but Higgins finally agrees to give him money. As Mr. Doolittle leaves, he looks at Eliza, who has washed and changed into new clothes. Mrs. Pearce enters and tells Eliza that she has more clothes for her to try on. Eliza leaves eagerly, having seemingly accepted the offer to stay with Higgins. Pickering agrees to pay for her expenses while the two of them take her on as an experiment in social reform.

While Higgins is successful in transforming Eliza in terms of speech, his rough manners, impoliteness, and swearing do not teach her the associated social etiquette. Eliza betrays her lack of refinement at a parlor party not through her pronunciation but through what she says. The comic climax is reached when she uses the loutish expression “Not bloody likely,” although she pronounces it in a ladylike manner.

Higgins and Pickering seem unaware that their experiment has transformed Eliza not only in terms of her speech.

After several months of training, Eliza is taken to a party where she wins, and fools many people into believing she is a lady. But, when the experiment is over, she wonders where she will fit in society.

Since Higgins has never thought about her leaving and has become accustomed to where she fits into his life, he takes her for granted.

But, as a strong and independent woman, she leaves his house. When the play ends the viewers are still not quite sure whether he will win or she will as they meet on more even ground.

13.4.3 CRITICAL REVIEW

Even after Eliza winning the garden party Higgins still does not treat her like a lady. Higgins’s excuse is that while Pickering may treat a flower girl

like a duchess, he would also treat a duchess like a flower girl, since he believes in treating everyone equally, regardless of his or her social class. Feeling disappointed and humiliated, Eliza leaves Higgins by night, no longer willing to be treated like a servant. She believes that she has risen to a higher social class and claims that social class is not determined by one's pronunciation but by the respect with which one is treated.

In the meantime, money has been left to Eliza's father by a rich American. This unexpected wealth has transformed him from an alcoholic dustman into a middle-class man in terms of behavior and ideology, although not in terms of pronunciation. Since it is based on money and not on accent, his character transformation seems more confident than his daughter's, although both seem indecisive about their new status.

Bernard Shaw has left open the future of Eliza and Higgins's, Shaw wrote in his afterword that she will marry the petit bourgeois Freddy and open a flower and vegetable shop with him instead of continuing to endure Higgins's rudeness. She has been harassed throughout by the professor's tyranny.

In Pygmalion, Shaw links the Cinderella story of a transformation from rags to riches. Underneath the play's comedy, questions are raised about the justifiability of social distinction and the role of women in a patriarchal society. Although Shaw felt ambivalent about the feminist movement of the early twentieth century, he presents Eliza as suffering degradation and escaping from it with the help of Pickering's civility, Mrs. Higgins's understanding, and her own awakened self-reliance. Pygmalion was later made into the popular musical comedy My Fair Lady (1956).

13.4.4 THEMES

The plays of Bernard Shaw directly attacked the audience, which was an unconventional method for spreading ideas. Shaw's main technique in all of his plays usually included some attack on the middle and upper class. Shaw's religious, political, and social views greatly affected the themes in his writings. However, Shaw was a free thinker, so his social, political, and religious views were not the same in all his works. Some of Shaw's critics felt that he was just a bundle of contradictions and an influent writer. Others praised his free thinking, and his unorthodox style of writing.

Shaw says that his plays are only about two subjects: life and the interest in life. Shaw explains, "In my plays, you will not be teased and plagued with happiness, goodness and virtue, or with crime and romance, or any senseless thing of that sort" (Henderson 301). Shaw wrote about typical occurrences in life. One component of life he wrote about was racism. Shaw was an anti-racist. He believes that racism is childish and even once said that his African American actors performed better than his Caucasian actors.

LANGUAGE

Bernard Shaw laments the fact that the English do not sufficiently value the power of their language. Through the character of Higgins he reminds the audience that fluency of language is a divine gift, and the articulate words of Shakespeare and Milton and the Bible form the basis of their native tongue. The defining nature of language is illustrated when Higgins accurately pinpoints the geographic origins of various people among those sheltering from the rain. He then declares that:

"You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days."

And by teaching her better English, he could make her like a duchess. This boast serves as the catalyst for all that follows in the play as Shaw attempts to show that social placement is not innate and, hand in hand with language, may be acquired.

There is danger in the experiment to teach Eliza to speak well. As pointed out by Mrs. Higgins in Act 3, Eliza will be stuck between two worlds when she has

"the manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady's income." ‘

Shaw emphasizes the rigid hierarchy of English society through a variety of characters from different socioeconomic levels. Eliza, with her Cockney dialect, is associated with the lowest social rank. In contrast, Higgins and Pickering represent the elite. Between the two levels are Mrs. Pearce, a member of the servant class; Doolittle, representing the middle class after his inheritance; and the Eynsford Hills, standing in for the genteel poor—those whose higher living standards have been reduced by hard times.

The power of language to break the social barriers is fully comprehended in Eliza's victorious performance at the ambassador's party. She is perceived to be a duchess.

Yet victory has its price. In Act 5, she tells Higgins that she is like a child who has come to a foreign country who

"picks up the language in a few weeks, and forgets its own."

She can speak nothing but his language now, which cuts her off from her former life. Feeling abandoned by Higgins and faced with an uncertain future, she says, "Oh! if I only COULD go back to my flower basket! I should be independent of both you and father and all the world!" But language has irreversibly placed her in society's higher stratum, and she must find a new way to face her future on her own.

NOTES

TRANSFORMATION

The theme of transformation is portrayed by Shaw where a poor flower girl becomes a lovely, independent lady, both superficially and at heart. Her transformation begins with an idea embedded by Higgins when he tells Pickering in Act I that he could teach "this creature" to speak like a duchess. It takes a further step when she is cleansed up so well that even her father does not recognize her. By the time she visits Higgins's mother in Act 3, the transformation is well on its way. As Mrs. Higgins tells her son, "She's a triumph of your art and of her dressmaker's."

Nevertheless, the changes so far are only external. Like "visible Speech"—the notation system Higgins uses for visualizing the production of speech—they are merely the sight and sound of Eliza. Higgins himself sees her in superficial terms as a pupil: "a block of wood," something to be shaped, an experiment. He works to "create" Eliza, like the Greek sculptor Pygmalion created his sculpture, and several times Higgins refers to her as a "creature"—an allusion to Mary Shelley's (1797–1851) 1818 novel Frankenstein and "the creature" created by Dr. Frankenstein.

The professor does not realize that a deeper, more important transformation is taking place—something he cannot take credit for. It is the awakening of Eliza's soul. From the beginning, the qualities required lie within her, like uncultivated seeds. For example, in Act 1, while she appears rough, ill-mannered, and saucy, she displays a crude sense of dignity when she thinks Higgins is a policeman who may accuse her of soliciting for prostitution. Defensively, she asserts, "He's no right to take away my character. My character is the same to me as any lady's." A quality of courage comes to light when Eliza seeks out Higgins and lays before him her fragile dream to become a lady. She then pursues that goal with diligence. However, it is after the ambassador's party that Eliza becomes a lady in more than speech and manners. In response to Higgins's insensitive treatment, she takes a stand for her own self-worth and dignity and then leaves him. She understands that this aspect of her metamorphosis was sparked by Pickering. In Act 5, she asks the colonel, "But do you know what began my real education? ... Your calling me Miss Doolittle that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self-respect for me." She further explains, "The difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she is treated."

All three facets of Eliza's transformation—sight, sound, and soul—come together when, at last, she breaks free of Higgins, her creator. Like Pygmalion's ivory sculpture, she is brought to passionate life. No longer a "squashed cabbage" or even a duchess, she becomes an independent woman. It is important to note that Shaw is pointedly contrasting Eliza to Pygmalion's idealized statue. In Ovid's version of the story, Pygmalion and Galatea, the statue now brought to life, marry and live happily ever after. But Galatea is nothing more than a blushing bride with little agency. Shaw rejects this version to show the foolishness of a man who would fashion a human being in this simplistic way.

APPEARANCE AND IDENTITY

In Act 1 of Pygmalion, Henry Higgins is thought to be a policemen, though one bystander points out, "It's all right: he's a gentleman: look at his boots." Throughout the play, appearances identify the social status of characters. How they speak, how they dress, their money (or lack of it), and their manners and morality all serve as indicators. Yet the signs are superficial, often contradicting reality, as in the case of Henry Higgins who has all the trappings of a gentleman and few of the expected social graces. And as Eliza demonstrates most clearly, it is the reality beneath appearances that matters. While exploring the relationship between appearances and a person's identity, Shaw suggests that the outward show can be a reflection, a mask, or a means of changing identity.

Pickering offers an example of the mirror-like nature of appearances. He appears as a well-dressed gentleman of military bearing. In keeping with this upper-class facade, he is kind and well-mannered to everyone, without consideration of social standing. For example, in Act 1, his speech and conduct do not change whether he is speaking to Clara and her mother, the flower girl, or Higgins. Another example of this theme is the behavior of Eliza's father, Doolittle, as he is introduced in Act 2. His crude speech and manners, dustman's clothing, poor financial state, and questionable morality are all indicators of his station in life as a happy member of the "undeserving poor." He has no use for middle-class morals, spends his life "touching" others for money, and at this point he has never pretended to be other than what he seems.

However, appearances can be deceiving and mask the true essence of a person. In Act 1, Eliza is a dirty, dishevelled flower girl who butchers the English language while wheedling a few coins from pedestrians in exchange for flowers. Nothing about her appearance suggests the intelligence she possesses, her desire to be a lady, or her potential. Only her protestations of "I'm a good girl, I am" and distress at the idea of losing her character hint at hidden qualities that later emerge. In the reverse, her father, once he comes into money, is taken for a gentleman by his fine clothes and his adopted middle-class ways.

At the same time, appearances can be a vehicle for changing identity. This idea is demonstrated in Eliza's transformation as well as her dilemma once she becomes a lady. Under the guidance of Higgins and Pickering, she evolves in speech and dress, etiquette, and expectations. However, she discovers that she no longer fits into her former situation. That self is lost to her. Her identity—who she is and where she fits in the world—must adjust.

The fundamental nature of identity is expressed well by Higgins, who recognizes, perhaps too late, that what lies beneath the beautiful language and clothes—the essence of Eliza—is what matters to him. In Act 5, when he tells her he has become accustomed to her voice and appearance, she retorts, "You have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of

photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got no feelings to hurt." Higgins replies, "I can't turn your soul on."

FEMININITY

Victorian values strictly defined the status and functions for women and established firm boundaries for femininity among social classes. In Pygmalion, Shaw illustrates these class boundaries and roles through various characters. At the bottom tier of the hierarchy is the flower girl, Eliza, a member of the working-class poor. Mrs. Pearce, Higgins's housekeeper, represents the servant class. Doolittle's wife-to-be—once the dustman comes into money—represents the middle class that has achieved a higher standard of living through work. Mrs. and Miss Eynsford-Hills, members of the genteel poor, do not work. Occupying the top tier is Mrs. Higgins, an upper-class lady of some wealth who has raised a family and keeps a home. Shaw aims to show in Pygmalion that such boundaries, with their fixed roles and definitions of femininity, are artificial and can be breached.

Victorian society envisioned the ideal woman as inhabiting a separate sphere from a man: the home, an oasis to which the man escaped from the moral taint of the business world. As wife and mother of his children, she was calm, cheerful, efficient, and morally superior (the "angel of the house"), and certainly did not aspire to life outside the home. Marriage and motherhood were her means of securing financial security.

Shaw envisions a new ideal in Pygmalion: a free-spirited, educated, self-reliant, and career-minded woman. Higgins's mother provides the model upon which the final creation—Eliza—is based. Mrs. Higgins is intelligent, cultured, educated, and independent. Higgins himself says, "My idea of a lovable woman is something as like you as possible" (Act 3). She sympathizes with Eliza as the subject of her son's experiment and eventually becomes her champion. However, it is too late for her to more fully break the social mold. She runs her household as expected and upholds the customs of the day. The next step must be taken by a younger woman.

In Eliza, Shaw creates a fresh ideal—a woman with all the attributes of Higgins's mother but with the time, spirit, and ambition to go her own way. Like the mythic artist Pygmalion who sculpts the ideal woman, Higgins and Pickering fashion Eliza into the perfect lady—refined, self-reliant, and with all the potential this implies. Nevertheless, the question remains: Can she break through the reigning Victorian definition of femininity set for middle- and upper-class women? Or has she exchanged one set of limitations—those of a working-class flower girl—for another? She still must have a means of financial survival.

It seems that society has left her three options—to marry Higgins, Pickering, or Freddy. Yet in Act 5, Eliza herself conceives of a fourth. She, indeed, may marry Freddy, but now she has a career choice—the capability

to teach what she has learned. By exercising this choice, she can breach established boundaries and define for herself a new femininity.

13.5 SELF- ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What does the chorus claim is their purpose in the action of the play?
2. In what ways is the play "Murder in The Cathedral" pessimistic and optimistic?
3. Who is singing in the play 'Murder in The Cathedral' when it opens?
4. Who is singing in the second part of the play 'Murder in The Cathedral'?
5. What does third tempter represents?
6. What does forth tempter wants?
7. What is Becket's view about martyrdom?
8. What do tempters reveal on us?
9. How do each of the following treat Eliza: Higgins, Pickering, Mrs. Pearce.
10. What is Higgin's attitude towards women? Give evidence.
11. How is Pickering a foil for Higgins?
12. Explain Alfred Doolittle's criticism of the middle class.
13. What does Shaw satirize in Act III?
14. Who is the protagonist in Pygmalion? What conflict does this character face?
15. Why is Eliza grateful to Pickering? What do her remarks to him suggest about how she has changed?

13.6 SUGGESTED READINGS.

Course Hero. "Murder in the Cathedral Study Guide." Course Hero. 26 Apr. 2019. Web. 18 Sep. 2019.

Fredericksen, Erik. "Pygmalion Plot Summary." LitCharts. LitCharts LLC, 15 Jan 2014. Web. 5 Sep 2019.

"Pygmalion - Summary" Masterpieces of World Literature, Critical Edition Ed. Steven G. Kellman. eNotes.com, Inc. 2009George Bernard Shaw: His Life and Works, a Critical Biography - Archibald Henderson Course Hero. "Pygmalion Study Guide." *Course Hero*. 8 Sep. 2016. Web. 11 Sep. 2019

NOTES

UNIT – XIV J.M. SYNGE : RIDERS TO THE SEA

Structure

14.3.1 LIFE HISTORY OF JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

Synge was born near Dublin in 1871 and died in 1909. He received his degree from Trinity College, Dublin, then went to Germany to study music and later to Paris, where he lived for several years working at literary criticism. Here, he met a compatriot, William Butler Yeats, who persuaded Synge to live for a while in the Aran Islands and then return to Dublin and devote himself to creative work. The Aran Islands (1907) is the journal of Synge's retreat among these primitive people.

The plays of Irish peasant life on which his fame rests were written in the last six years of his life. The first two one-act plays, In the Shadow of the Glen, (1903), a comedy, and Riders to the Sea (1904), considered one of the finest tragedies ever written, were produced by the Irish National Theatre Society. This group, with Synge, Yeats and Lady Gregory as co-directors, organized in 1904 the famous Abbey Theatre. Two comedies, The Well of the Saints (1905) and The Playboy of the Western World (1907), were presented by the Abbey players. The latter play created a furore of resentment among Irish patriots stung by Synge's bitter humour.

Synge's later works included The Tinker's Wedding, published in 1908 but not produced for fear of further riots, and Deirdre of the Sorrows, a tragedy unfinished at the time of his death but presented by the Abbey players in 1910.

14.3.2 SUMMARY

Riders to the Sea begins on the Aran Islands, as Nora, a young woman, brings in a small bundle and tells her older sister, Cathleen, that they may be the clothes of their drowned brother Michael. A priest told her the body of a drowned man had been found, but they do not want their mother, Maurya to know. Michael has been missing for a week; the family has already lost the family patriarch as well as four other sons to the sea. They hide the bundle in the turf loft of the cottage. Maurya is busy planning for Michael's funeral, consumed by her grief and lamenting that she has lost all her sons to the sea. She discusses the last remaining son, Bartley, with her daughters. Bartley is planning to go to sea to sell the family horses. Nora and Cathleen think they need the money, but Maurya is hoping that the priest will stop him due to the dangerous tides.

Bartley enters the cottage looking for rope. Maurya tries to stop him, but he is determined to create a halter for the horses for his trip. Maurya tries to dissuade him by showing him the preparations for Michael's funeral, but he ignores her. He says goodbye to his sisters, but his mother refuses to give him any blessings as he leaves. This is significant as it is an Irish tradition that a son receives the blessing of his mother before he leaves. Maurya's daughters are shocked she broke this tradition. As Bartley leaves with the horses, Cathleen notices that he has taken no food and sends Maurya after him to give him food and blessings. She leaves with a stick from Michael, lamenting over how the old people never leave anything behind for the young people in the family, as is customary. When Maurya is gone, her daughters retrieve the bundle of clothes from the loft to check if they are from Michael. Nora observes her own stitching on the clothing, and confirms that they are her brother's. They now know that their brother's body has been found and the priest has already buried him.

The sisters hide the clothes again, and they assume Maurya will be in a better mood because she got the chance to bless Bartley. However, she comes back in a panic, saying she saw Michael upon a grey pony. She could not bless Bartley due to the shock. The girls try to calm her down by showing her Michael's clothes and telling her that her son got a proper Christian burial. As she grieves, villagers come into the cottage, carrying Bartley's body. The pony Maurya saw, that she thought she saw Michael upon, knocked Bartley into the sea where he drowned. Maurya gets on her knees near Bartley's corpse and sprinkles him with holy water. She says she is resigned to her fate and can finally sleep at night. After all, the sea has claimed every man in her family, and it can take nothing more from her. The preparations for Michael's funeral will now be used for Bartley's. The play ends with Maurya praying that her husband, his father, and her four sons will rest in peace. The curtain falls on her prayer.

NOTES

14.3.3. CRITICAL REVIEW

Riders to the Sea by Irish playwright John Millington Synge, performed in 1904 in Dublin, is a one-act tragedy set on the Aran Islands in Inishmaan. It focuses on the grieving Irishwoman Maurya, who has lost her husband and five of her sons to the sea. When she gets word that one of her sons' bodies may have been found, it sets into motion a chain of events that lead to further tragedy for the old widow and her surviving children. Written in the traditional Hyberno-English of the Aran Islands, it is considered a classic work of the Irish Literary Renaissance, when Irish literature aimed to encourage pride and nationalism in Ireland. It celebrates the hardiness of Irish people, and its central conflict is that of man against nature. There is no human antagonist—the primary antagonist is the impersonal, cruel sea that takes away so many family members. There is a deeply religious theme in the play as well, informed by Ireland's Roman Catholic tradition. Riders to the Sea has been adapted twice into film, most recently in 1987, and has been adapted into opera and dance performances.

14.3.4.THEMES

The Power of the Sea The power of the sea the central theme of the text. The Sea is right outside the cottage door, volatile, unpredictable, and implacable. It has taken almost all of Maurya's male family members and is poised to take the rest of them as well. It defies rationality and even God; the Holy Water is a pitiful reflection of it. Difference characters relate to the sea in different ways. For Nora and Cathleen, the sea only matters in terms of losing family members; for Maurya, it is the great enemy; for the young priest, it is of little importance; for Bartley, it is dangerous but is a way of life. The potency of the sea in this play is Synge's meditation on the power of nature and of suffering.

CATHOLICISM VS. PAGANISM

The play is steeped in traditional Irish Catholicism: there are priests, blessings, Holy Water, etc. However, traditional Catholicism rests, somewhat uneasily, side-by-side with more pagan religious elements. Maurya doesn't heed the priest's empty, naive platitudes so much as she looks to the stars and other natural phenomena for warnings and signs. She knows more about the island than he does; she is skeptical of his outsider status and he is never even seen within the boundaries of the cottage. She heeds the power of the sea much more than she heeds God. It is only at the end of the text when her battle with the sea is over that she can peacefully submerge herself back into the rituals and rites of her Catholic faith.

GENDER ROLES

The characters in the text rigidly adhere to the prescribed gender roles of their time and place. Nora is relatively voiceless, while Cathleen is the keeper of the hearth. Maurya is the quintessential Mother, caring only for her family and the extension of its lineage: she worries, chastises, and

mourns; her sons are her main focus. She is not at all comforted by the fact that her daughters remain living; they are essentially useless in terms of what they can bring to the family. As the man of the family at the opening of the play, Bartley's role is clear: to provide for his family. Cathleen articulates that "it is the life of a young man to be going on the sea" (64). He is the provider and Maurya's fears that he will die are also related to the problems they will face: "It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drownd'd with the rest. What way will I live and the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave?"

14.4 OSCAR WILDE : THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

14.4.1 LIFE HISTORY OF OSCAR WILDE

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)

The English author Oscar Wilde was part of the "art for art's sake" movement in English literature at the end of the nineteenth century. He is best known for his brilliant, witty comedies including the play The Importance of Being Earnest and his classic novel The Picture of Dorian Gray.

Oscar FingalO'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born in Dublin on 16 October 1854. His father was a successful surgeon and his mother a writer and literary hostess. Wilde was educated at Trinity College, Dublin and Magdalen College, Oxford. While at Oxford, Wilde became involved in the aesthetic movement. After he graduated, he moved to London to pursue a literary career.

His output was diverse. A first volume of his poetry was published in 1881 but as well as composing verse, he contributed to publications such as the 'Pall Mall Gazette', wrote fairy stories and published a novel 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' (1891). His greatest talent was for writing plays, and he produced a string of extremely popular comedies including 'Lady Windermere's Fan' (1892), 'An Ideal Husband (1895)' and 'The Importance of Being Earnest' (1895). 'Salomé' was performed in Paris in 1896.

Drama and tragedy marred Wilde's private life. He married Constance Lloyd in 1884 and they had two sons, but in 1891 Wilde began an affair with Lord Alfred Douglas, nicknamed 'Bosie'. In April 1895, Wilde sued Bosie's father, the Marquis of Queensberry, for libel, after the Marquis has accused him of being homosexual. Wilde lost and, after details of his private life were revealed during the trial, was arrested and tried for gross indecency. He was sentenced to two years of hard labour. While in prison he composed a long letter to Douglas, posthumously published under the title 'De Profundis' . His wife took their children to Switzerland and adopted the name 'Holland'. Wilde was released with his health irrevocably damaged and his reputation ruined. He spent the rest of his life in Europe,

publishing 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' in 1898. He died in Paris on 30 November 1900.

14.4.2 SUMMARY

At the beginning of the play a wealthy Algernon (Algy) is waiting for his aunt, Lady Bracknell and her daughter Gwendolen to visit him in his flat in London. Before they arrive, Jack Worthing, Algy's friend arrives. Jack calls himself 'Earnest' and Algy is curious about it. Jack clarifies that his real name is Jack Worthing and has a daughter named Cecily.

He further states that he is going to propose Gwendolen. He loves being called Earnest. Algy too confesses that he visits his imaginary friend Bunbury whenever he needs a break from the hectic life of the town. He, too, employs deception when it is convenient.

When Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen arrive, Algy explains that he cannot attain the reception of lady Bracknell since he has to visit his friend Bunbury. Algy distracts Lady Bracknell in another room, at the same time, Jack proposes Gwendolen. But, she says she loves to marry a man whose name is Earnest because for her it sounds so aristocratic. However, she accepts his proposal and later on wants to rechristen Earnest. But, Lady Bracknell is not happy with the proposal and interrogates Jack about his social status. When she finds him lacking same social status, she rejects the engagement. While leaving, she tells Jack to find some acceptable parents. When Gwendolen asks for his country's address, Algy secretly writes it down on his shirt cuff. He is curious about Cecily and decides to go "bunburying" in the country.

In the country of Jack, Cecily is being taught by Miss Prism. She praises Jack for being responsible, but shuns his brother, Earnest for being wicked. When Canon, the local vicar, takes Miss Prism for romance, Algy appears pretending to be Earnest, Jack's wicked brother. Algy has a plan to stay for a week to know more about Cecily, but Jack returns early in mourning clothes claiming that his brother Ernest has died in Paris. He is shocked to find Algy there posing as Ernest. Jack’s plan to send Algy back to London fails. Algy in the same day proposes Cecily. From her diary, it is clear that Cecily, too, wants to marry someone named Earnest. Algy too needs to rechristen like that of Jack.

Gwendolen arrives in the country of Jack and meets Cecily. In the course of their talk, they both mention that they are engaged to Earnest Worthing. The situation becomes tense and a battle follows. Jack and Algernon arrive, and, in an attempt to solve out the Ernest problem, they alienate both women. The two men follow, explaining that they are going to be rechristened Ernest, and the women agree to stay engaged.

Lady Bracknell gives permission to Algy to engage with Cecily after discovering the extent of Cecily's fortune, however, Jack's parentage is still a problem in getting Gwendolen. Jack tells Lady Bracknell that he will not

agree to Cecily's engagement until she is of age (35) unless he can marry Gwendolen. Dr. Chasuble announces for the christenings but Jack explains it is of no use now. The minister states that he will return to the church where Miss Prism is waiting to see him.

When Lady Bracknell hears the name Prism she immediately calls for Prism and reveals her as the governess who lost Lady Bracknell's nephew 28 years earlier on a walk with the baby carriage. She inquires about the boy. Miss Prism explains that in a moment of distraction she placed the baby in her handbag and left him in Victoria Station, confusing him with her three-volume novel, which was placed in the baby carriage. After Jack asks for details, he quickly runs to his room and comes back with the handbag. Miss Prism identifies it, and Lady Bracknell reveals that Jack is Algernon's older brother, son of Ernest John Moncrieff, who died years ago in India. Jack now truly is earnest, and Algernon/Cecily, Jack/Gwendolen, and Chasuble/Prism fall into each other's arms as Jack realizes the importance of being earnest.

14.4.3 CRITICAL REVIEW

The plot of the play is not thought-provoking yet it contains hidden meanings. Through the mode way comedy, Wilde brings to light the ills of the Victorian era and mocks it. Hence, it is a trivial comedy (having little meanings) for serious people (the people obsessed) with hypocrisy for status and fame. In Wilde's satire of English aristocracy, marriage often has little to do with love and more to do with achieving or maintaining a certain social status.

14.4.4 THEME

DOUBLE STANDARD

The play revolves around the story of two bachelors Algy and Jack. Both have a well-established life, Algy lives in London, Jack lives in the countryside as a Judge of the Peace. Being tired of their lives and hardship both create their invalids or pretends or altered egos.

Algy invents his invalid named "Bunbury" in the countryside and Jack creates his fictional brother Earnest in London. Algy has told everybody that he goes to the countryside in order to meet his friend Bunbury who is quite ill while Jack tells everybody in the countryside that he has his brother namely Earnest in the city and he goes there to meet him.

The other reason for this double standard is that Algy goes to the countryside in order to meet Cecily his beloved, (Jack's cousin) while Jack visits London in order to meet Gwendolen, Algy's cousin.

Both these ladies self-conscious, emancipated, educated and support their individuality but their narrow-mindedness can be seen when each of them

claims that "my idea has always been to love someone of the names of Earnest".

"Earnest" in a sense (a surname for high-class people) becomes the condition for love as well as for marriage. Thus this condition too becomes important for Jack and Algy for creating their other self.

INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

The worse condition of Victorian upper-class society can be seen in the opening lines only when Algernon says to his servant that "Divorces are made in heaven." This sentence depicts a lot of the marital problems of the upper-class society in the Victorian age and Wilde was no exception to it. After getting married and having children, he lost interest in his wife and began a homosexual affair with Lord Alfred Douglas in the following years. As the plot develops, both bachelors reveal that they have created their altered egos as their beloveds have put on the condition that their respective lovers will have the name as Earnest.

The marriage on the basis of status, name, and money was quite prevalent among the "serious people". They staked love, sacrifice, honesty for the sake of pseudo-status. Thus in the play, he mocks the institution of marriage which was considered to be sacred in Christianity. For him, this institution is quite hollow. The concept of Bunburyism that meant the practice of a double life also refers to the concept of homosexuality in the play.

HYPOCRISY AMONG THE VICTORIANS

Hypocrisy and absurdity is another common feature of the Victorians. Jack represents this trait of the age. He introduces himself as honourable and honest. Though his boasting nature seems to be queer, yet it was, in reality, the common practice of the people of that age.Jack is not the only conventional satire of Victorian-era but every character is a hypocrite in one way or the other. Algy introduces himself to Cecily as the brother of Jack and also keeps his real name as a secret before her until revealed.

On the other hand, both Cecily and Gwendolen are the prey of hypocrisy. Instead of finding a loving person they desire the one with Earnest by name. In one Act, Gwendolen says, "In matters of utmost importance, style, not sincerity, is the vital thing." However, they are not fully responsible for this kind of attitude but the society has also a considerable impact on them.

Lady Bracknell gives her consent for the marriage of her daughter Gwendolen with Jack when he introduces himself as Earnest. However, when she comes to know his real name, she at once rejects his proposal. Again in the end when it is proved that his real name is Earnest, she chooses him as the future husband of her daughter.

She does the same with Algy as well. Upon knowing the status and richness of Cecily she at once accepts her as the future wife of Algy saying to Cecily, "Dear child, of course, you know that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind. But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. Well, I suppose I must give my consent."

Wilde also exposes the hypocrisy of the clergy class. Dr. Chasuble, a local Vicar is in love with Mrs. Prism, the ward of Cecily. Although the clergy class cannot have affairs yet Chausible is seen love-making with Prism Moreover he delivers sermons just to satisfy the moods of the audience. Here again, the hollowness and hypocrisy of the people in terms of religion can be seen.

14.5 SELF- ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Determine The Setting of the Play Riders To The Sea by Synge
2. Assess Bartley's departure.
3. Explain the narrative language of the Play Riders To The Sea by Synge
4. Identify the context and themes
5. Who does Jack want to marry?
6. Why does Gwendolen love Jack?
7. Where are Jack's parents?
8. Why does Algy go to Jack's country house?
9. What name does Algy use in the country?
10. When do the girls discover the truth?
11. How does Oscar Wilde explore love through the characters of Gwendolen and Cecily in The Importance of Being Earnest?
12. Why does Wilde title the play "-e Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People"?
13. What is the significance of beauty and pleasure in *The Importance of Being Earnest*?
14. Comment on the forms and techniques of Riders to the sea.
15. How does Wilde use inversions in the playThe Importance of Being Earnest?

14.6 SUGGESTED READINGS.

1. Portrait of the Artist as a Guidebook. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962.
2. Siebold, Thomas. Readings on The Importance of Being Earnest. San Diego, California: Greenhaven Press, 2001.