# BRITISH POETRY

## MA English – I Semester

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## BRITISH POETRY

### Objectives

This course exposes students to different school of poets and their texts starting from Elizabethan period. It helps to get the essence of the British poetry and to develop the aesthetic and critical skills of the students. To this end, the course prepares the students to analyse the prescribed texts and gain knowledge by critically interpreting/researching the texts approaching thematically, stylistically and philosophically to enrich knowledge.

### Unit I

1. William Shakespeare (1564-1616): Sonnets 29, 30
2. John Donne (1572-1631): The Good Morrow
3. Andrew Marvell (1621-1678): To His Coy Mistress
4. John Milton (1608-1674): Lycidas
5. John Dryden (1631-1700): Mac Flecknoe
6. Alexander Pope (1688-1744): Rape of the Lock

### Unit II

1. William Blake (1757-1827): The Chimney Sweeper (Innocence); The Chimney Sweeper (Experience);
2. William Wordsworth (1770-1850): Resolution and Independence
3. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834): Kubla Khan
4. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822): Ode to the West wind.
5. John Keats (1795-1821) : Ode on a Grecian Urn

### Unit III

1. Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892): Lotus Eaters
2. Robert Browning (1812-89): My Last Duchess
3. Mathew Arnold (1822-1888): Dover Beach
4. Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889): God's Grandeur
5. William Butler Yeats(1865-1939): The Second Coming
6. T.S. Eliot (1888-1965): The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.

**Unit IV**

1. W.H. Auden (1907-1973): Musee des Beaux Arts
2. Thom Gunn (1929-) : On The Move
3. Ted Hughes(1930-2002) : Thought Fox
4. Dylan Thomas (1914-53): Fern Hill
5. Seamus Heaney(1939): Potato Digging

**Unit V**

1. Edmund Spenser (1552?-1599): Prothalamion
2. William Shakespeare (1564-1616): Sonnets 33 and 73
3. George Herbert (1593-1633): The Pulley & the Collar
4. Thomas Gray (1716-1771): Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.
5. D.G. Rossetti(1828-82): The Blessed Damozel
6. D. H.Lawrence (1885-1930): Snake
7. Wilfred Owen (1893-1918): Strange Meeting
8. Philip Larkin (1922-) : Whitsun Weddings

**References:**


1. Bush, Douglas. Oxford History of English Literature. Vol 1-VII
2. Fish, Jeris (Ed) Pelican Guide to Literature Vol I-VII

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## UNIT -I

## LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

**OUTLINE:**

- **Idea of Literature**
- **Idea of Poetry**
- **Poetical Techniques**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- Understand the concept of literature
- Know the different genres in literature
- Figure out the components of poetry.
- Figure out some of the discussed features in poems.

### 1.0 What is Literature:

Let us understand what literature is. If I ask you the question some of you may tell me that it is

A reflection of life

A slice of life

An imaginary realm

True literature is all this and also something more. Literature is also social and creative in its nature. Literature is part of a country's cultural heritage which is available to everyone. It can enhance our lives in all kinds of ways. Once we understand and find pleasure in reading creative works we find that studying literature is no longer daunting. Literature then becomes entertaining, beautiful, funny, and maybe also sorrowful at times. Literature conveys the complexity of thought, richness of emotion, and an insight into characters of humans. Therefore literature is a part of humanities as it humanizes you the reader and also allows you to know the lives of other humans. Literature is also a journey into the past or to the future. When we read classics, they stir us intellectually and emotionally, and deepen our understanding of our history, our society, and our own individual lives. The reading of these works will also make us have a sense of continuity and change that has occurred over the ages. It thus helps to enhance our understanding of the modern world.

Literature comprises of different genres—poetry, fiction, prose and drama. Since we are dealing with the literature of the British we will as we go through some of the works realize the society and culture of British at various times. You may question why British literature. Since our programme is a course in English literature we will be acquainting you with not just British but also other writings that are written in English. Moreover since some other papers will be dealing with the other genres we will in this course concentrate on British Poetry from the Elizabethan age.

**1.1 Poetry:**

We all know that poetry is different from prose. We can also differentiate poetry and prose because of the form in which it is written. We might now start with a question. Why do we study poetry? What is the use of poetry in our daily lives? It would help if you noted down before reading on what you regard as your views of taking the course. Very likely you have made one or the other of the following statements:

You are taking the poetry course in order to complete a requirement.

You love poetry.

You write poetry and this would help you to learn poetical techniques better.

We would be interested to know if any of these points you put down is different. Well, the course as we envisage it is not specially structured around these requirements but should go some way in fulfilling each of the requirements. The lessons will, for example not provide you with just readymade summaries but would try to establish the important and context of the poets and relate them to the social context. We hope that you would be able to go through the poems and understand your own realities and develop a thinking mind.

Poetry has been amorphous in nature with no clear cut definition given to it. All of us know that poetry has a pattern of varying line and length and a rhythm that distinguishes it from prose. Poems are able to convey an experience more clearly than any others. Poetry has in all languages begun with simple rhymes. Thus the children's text books begins with rhymes early such as 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' or 'Jack and Jill went up the hill'. These rhymes could be translated /paraphrased into a normal story but then the power and meaning of the poem and the richness of rhythm and melody would be lost forever. Thus the poem is a creative piece of writing endowed with ornaments such as imagery, diction, melody and figures of speech. Besides this the poem may also contain elements such as tone, speaker, situation and setting, words and word order.

## 1.2 Subject, Sense, Theme and Tone:

Most importantly, we would be happy if you could first find out what the subject of a poem is. The subject of a poem can be any human experience. It may express emotion, love, anger, sadness or happiness. It could also be philosophical in tone. The present example, 'The Whitsun Weddings' is that of a poet who was journeying on a train, and his motive was to capture his response to a view seen from a train:

As if out on the end of an event
Waving goodbye
To something that survived it. Struck, I leant
More promptly out next time, more curiously,
And saw it all again in different terms:
The fathers with broad belts under their suits
And seamy foreheads; mothers loud and fat;
An uncle shouting smut; and then the perms,

One should also remember that subjects may change depending on the age. Thus what was considered appropriate in one age may not be so for another age. The idea of fathers in suits and broad belts may no longer be true.

Now see if you could state the subject of the following lines/verses:

My love is like a red, red rose.

OR

It is a beauteous evening calm and free
The holy time is quiet as a morn.

Sometimes subjects may be gauged from the title of a poem. A good example is Keats's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' and Wordsworth's 'Daffodils'. The poet also through a good use of subject reflects the individual's relations to society, to nature and to God. Many times it may be easier for us to locate the subject of a poem but it may be still difficult to understand the sense of the poem.

The sense of the poem is generally its complete meaning. You may understand the poem by sentences and yet be unable to locate what its main idea is. When we read a narrative poem like Tennyson's 'Ulysses' it may be easy for us to follow. But on reading it again it may not sound as simplistic as there is deeper sense within the poem. It is also thought that lyrical poems are easier to understand or comprehend as they have a single

view of the subject. Once we search for the sense of a poem it is easier to know them. The theme is generally the idea or attitude suggested. Thus the poem To the Moon by Shelley may have the subject of a moon:

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth—
And ever changing like a joyless eye
That finds no object with its consistency.

But the theme is the idea of loneliness and alien-ness that one finds in leading a solitary life. One must therefore realize that the discussion of sense, subject and theme may be a series of answers but these are not easy to know unless one reads a poem carefully. The tone is the attitude a poem takes towards its subject and theme. Other features that connect a poem together are imagery, diction, syntax and prosody.

**1.3 Imagery:**

An image is the concrete representation of an idea or impression. When you say the phrase 'gurgling water' it is an image as it makes you sense the water's movement. Similarly when you say, 'Time's winged chariot hurrying near' Time represents an idea concretely and is an image in the sense of personification, a idea or object expressed as a person. Imagery is the most common way of shaping a poetic statement of giving it an unusual quality.

**1.4 Metaphor and Simile:**

Images can take complex forms based on contrast. The two prominent types of such forms are the figures of speech, metaphor and simile. Metaphor stresses the contrast with direct representation. Thus a statement such as 'Raman is a lamb' denotes the fact that Raman is as gentle as a lamb. On the other hand simile too does the same work but uses the words 'like' or 'as' for its purpose. Therefore a statement such as, Raman is like a lamb becomes a simile. You may realize by these examples that metaphor emphasizes some whole or partial identity and simile some whole or partial likeness.

**1.5 Diction:**

Diction refers to the poet's use of words, his/her vocabulary. You may know that you use different words to explain same things depending on a situation or audience. Thus, the doctor who may explain the nature of an illness to a patient may state the same issue to a fellow doctor in a different way. Similarly when you explain the occurrence of an eclipse

to a ten year old child or a eighteen year old you choose different words and examples. Similarly we may change our vocabulary when we speak and when we write. Similarly poets choose words in different ways. Sometimes the form a poem itself may lend itself to using a type of word style. Thus epic are normally written with a high or elevated style while elegy is normally mournful. The use of words in a poem could render meaning abstractly or concretely. When you use the word a knife it could abstractly refer to violence at particular or concrete level it may be the butcher's knife. Depending on the way words are used they could render a poem's meaning richly and ornately.

**1.6 Syntax:**

The way words are organized in a poem the depth of a poem increases. When Marvell begins To His Coy Mistress you can notice the effect of the words.

Had we but world enough, and time,

This coyness, lady, were no crime.

Suppose we rewrite this as:

If we had world enough and time

This coyness would not have been a crime.

You can immediately notice the richness of imagination in the first one. Also the use of ' had we' and 'but' renders meaning of different levels while the use of a conditional such as 'If' renders the whole thing more simplistically. Also the rhyming of time and crime in the first one becomes more effective than in the second one. Hence when you read the poems read them giving due emphasis of the way words are arranged in the poem.

**1.7 Prosody**:

Poetry at its lowest levels is arrangements of sound which means the meter, verse forms and other sound patterns. This is known as prosody.

**1.8 Rhythm and Meter:**

English poetry employs five basic rhythms of varying stressed (/) and unstressed (x) syllables. The meters are iambs, trochees, spondees, anapests and dactyls. Each unit of rhythm is called a "foot" of poetry.

The meters with two-syllable feet are

- IAMBIC (x /) : That **time** of **year** thou **mast** in **me** be**hold**
- TROCHAIC (/ x): **Tell** me **not** in **mourn**ful **num**bers
- SPONDAIC (/ /): **Break**, **break**, **break**/ On thy **cold gray stones**, O **Sea**!

(In these examples the stresses are indicted by the bold print)

Meters with three-syllable feet are

- ANAPESTIC (x x /): And the **sound** of a **voice** that is **still**
- DACTYLIC (/ x x): **This** is the **for**est pri**me**val, the **mur**muring **pines** and the **hem**lock (a trochee replaces the final dactyl)

Each line of a poem contains a certain number of feet of iambs, trochees, spondees, dactyls or anapests. A line of one foot is a monometer, 2 feet is a dimeter, and so on--trimeter (3), tetrameter (4), pentameter (5), hexameter (6), heptameter (7), and octameter (8). The number of syllables in a line varies therefore according to the meter.

Similar to meter is the verse form which falls into unrhymed and rhymed. Earlier English verse was unrhymed and alliterative, that is repetition of initial words or syllables within a line.

In a **s**omer **se**son, whan **s**oft was the **s**onne

I **s**hope me into **s**hroude**s** as I a **s**epe were. ( Wiliam Langland, Piers Plowman).

You can notice how the 'S' and the 'sh' gets repeated here. Later this gave rise to free verse in which line length is determibned by units of thought or phrasing or rhthymic pattern.

For some one who begins poetry this technical detail may sound frightening. It is enough if you know that words have stress at different points. Using this if you read a poem properly then the music or rhythm of the poem gets to you. Reading a poem aloud is a good thing before you start thinking about it.

## 1.9 KEY CONCEPTS DRILL:

We hope you have enjoyed this introduction and would like to now get into the British poetry. Before you go into that just recapitulate the ideas in the lesson and answer the following questions:

- What is literature?
- What are the different genres of literature?
- What is poetry?
- Identify the subject, sense, tone and theme of the following poem:

Western Wind

Western wind, when will thou blow,
The small rain down can rain?
Christ, if my love were in my arms
And I in my head again!

--Anonymous

- Read this poem and mark the images.

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

--Ezra Pound

- Explain the difference between metaphor and simile.
- Reread the section on diction, syntax and prosody and identify the same in the following poem:

Ah Sunflower

Ah Sunflower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveler's journey is done,

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves and aspire,
Where my sunflower wishes to go.

--William Blake

## LESSON 2: AGE OF SHAKESPEARE

**OUTLINE:**

- **Background to the period**
- **Shakespeare and his works**
- **Sonnet form.**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the Shakespearean age.**
- **Know the sonnet form.**
- **Comprehend the importance of Shakespeare.**

### 2.0 ELIZABETHAN AGE:

Elizabeth I became the Queen of England in 1558, when she was twenty five years old. Her 45-year reign, which ended with her death in 1603, saw England's emergence as a nation of tremendous political power and unparalleled cultural achievement. As a great part of the English renaissance is directly attributable to Elizabeth's personal character and influence and to her long reign, the period that is the last half of the sixteenth century in England is identified as the Elizabethan Period.

The Queen's tastes in fashion became the trend setter for the aristocracy and the rest of society. Due to her love of music, drama, and poetry there was a great cultural change and many of England's greatest writers found encouragement and financial patronage in this period. Under her patronage, England experienced a cultural reawakening or renaissance of thought, art, and vision which had begun in Italy a century earlier. Under the queen’s direction Oxford and Cambridge universities were restructured and reorganized as centers for learning and scholarly pursuit.

The prosperity, confidence, optimism, and vigor which characterized Elizabeth's court and reign carried over into many aspects of life. The greatest literature created during the Elizabethan Period falls into two categories: poetry and drama. Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) during the reign of Henry VIII had introduced the English to the charm of the Italian sonnets. Using this basic form, English poets began to construct their own variations of it. One such illustration is Edmund Spenser’s (1552-1599) poem, *The Faerie Queen*. William Shakespeare, too as mentioned a little later experimented with the form. In

this period there was an understanding that a literary life was a noteworthy endeavor, and poets shared their work with each other and at court, vying for the praise and patronage of the Queen and aristocracy. The Queen herself wrote both poetry and music.

The other great literary achievement of the Elizabethan Period as previously mentioned was the drama, a form which was inspired by folk traditions and religious plays of the middle ages. As the sixteenth century progressed, playwrights progressively enthused their plots into a secular plot, weaving into their dramas such diverse elements as legend and myth, classical dramatic forms, intense exploration of character, and familiar conventions freely adapted from works of their contemporaries. The rigid division of classes was now blended by the theatre. The public regardless of social class, enjoyed the spectacle of the Elizabethan theatre, and playwrights found themselves writing for highly diverse audiences which reflected the ever-changing composition of society. The public of the period could take in the same breath different expositions such as public executions, bear-baiting, street carnivals, fairs and theatre. Successful playwrights, such as Shakespeare, made certain that their dramas included all classes of society and also saw to it that every section of society was drawn into the plays. By the time of Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603 some rebellions and unrest had sprung up but she had been able to manage them successfully. However the period after her death threw England into chaos and confusion. Thus England under the able rule of Elizabeth I was a nation of achievement and promise but it had with the end of the Tudors England also saw the end of a glorious and prosperous period.

## 2.1 SHAKESPEARE: LIFE AND WORKS:

Shakesepeare's life is not only unknown but there have also been various studies to prove his existence in England. However there are records of his baptism in 1564 and his burial in 1616 but this is not enough to prove his identity. According to various studies, even the traditional date for his birth 23 April, is uncertain. What evidence there is connects him firmly to Stratford-upon-Avon, where he was born, married, and died. Very little is known of Shakespeare's early life before his marriage, in 1582 when he must have been eighteen years of age. From 1587-1592 there is hardly any evidence of where he was. He disappears from Stratford records after 1587, and reappears only in 1592 in London.

Even though his work as a dramatist is recorded through his published plays, his career as an actor is as yet un-documented. Shakespeare is mentioned occasionally, in official records, in the records of the lives of his relations and friends, and in the writings

of his fellow actors and dramatists, and that is all. His life and career have been more extensively researched than those of any other writer, but the evidence remains elusive. There is no doubt that Shakespeare was a dramatist and a poet. His own manuscripts of his works are destroyed and what is left to prove his writing career is the printed version of his plays and poems. Scholars have worked closely with these editions trying to establish what Shakespeare originally wrote.

It is now proved by scholars that me may have penned thirty-seven play and may have teamed up with other dramatists to write another four. He created his plays between 1590 and 1614 approximately and they began to be printed in cheap quarto editions in 1594. Eighteen of Shakespeare's plays had appeared in quarto by the year of his death, 1616. In 1623, a folio volume of Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies was published. This contained 36 plays and is now universally referred to as the First Folio. The quartos and the First Folio ensured that Shakespeare's plays survived when they were no longer performed. From seventeenth century, these printed editions have been used by actors and directors to enact his plays on the stage. There is much debate among scholars about how the printed texts represent Shakespeare's original plays.

**2.2 POETRY:**

Between 1592 and 1604, Shakespeare wrote four poems as well as creating a collection of sonnets. These were printed in quarto editions between 1593 and 1609. Scholarly debate about the printed editions of the poems has been on the nature of the sonnets. Questions about who was the dark friend, the absence of a true woman, the gender ambiguity have perplexed the critics. Shakespeare's earliest poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, were probably composed when the theatres were closed because of the plague. Both were written to be printed, perhaps reflecting Shakespeare's need of the patronage of the 3rd Earl of Southampton or his intention to become known as a poet. It can be assumed from studies that by 1595 he was acknowledged as a good poet.

*Venus and Adonis,* was first created in about 1592-1593 and was first printed in quarto in 1593. Venus and Adonis was dedicated to Henry Writhley, 3rd Earl of Southampton. *The Rape of Lucrece*, created in about 1593-1594 came out first time in print in a quarto in 1594. The title-page calls the poem Lucrece, although the longer title appears on the half-title. *The Rape of Lucrece* was also dedicated to the 3rd Earl of Southampton. The poem appeared in a total of eight quarto editions before 1641. Later, in 1599.*The Passionate Pilgrim* was printed. The second edition was also printed in 1599 and survives completely. Of the 20 poems in the volume, only five are by Shakespeare. They include

early versions of two of his sonnets, as well as verses from *Love's Labour's Lost. The Phoenix and Turtle*, was perhaps created in about 1601 and it was first printed in Robert Chester's Loves Martyr, which appeared in quarto in 1601. The Sonnets, were perhaps created during the 1590s and early 1600s. Shakespeare's 154 sonnets were first printed in quarto in 1609. The dedication 'to Mr W. H.' is signed by the publisher Thomas Thorpe. The identity of the dedicatee has been suggested as the 3rd Earl of Southampton, or William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, among others.

**2.3 THE SONNET:**

The word sonnet is derived from the Italian sonetto which means a song. Latin word sonus means a sound. Thus the sonnet is generally thought to be lyrical in nature. The sonnet is a lyric of fourteen lines. The basic theme of a sonnet was supposed to be love but many of the poets experimented with various themes and Shakespeare was no exception. He used the themes of friendship, honour, and duty to the existing one of love. The metrical structure of the sonnet is generally the iambic pentameter (ten syllables, alternately stressed). The Shakespearean sonnet arranges the fourteen lines in three quatrains, that is four lines each and a concluding two lines—the couplet. The rhyme scheme is *abab, cdcd, efef, gg*.

**2.4 SONNET 29 & 30:**

Sonnet 29 is a poem that discusses the nature of love. The poem discusses how when Fortune leaves you, you may be in disgrace and alienated from everyone. You may also blame fate for the curse it has cast and you may desire to be like the one who has riches and friends. Then the human becomes least contented and keeps wishing for what others have. At such times the speaker of the poet thrusts aside all these feelings and thinks of his beloved. Just thinking of his beloved he becomes like a lark that can arise at the break of day and sing hymns. Just the thought of the beloved's sweet love changes the state of the man from that of a poor man to that of a rich king.

This Sonnet shows us the poet's feeling being unlucky, and disgraced. What causes the poet's anguish one can only guess, but an examination of the circumstances surrounding his life at the time he wrote sonnet 29 could help us to understand his depression. In 1592, the London theatres closed due to a severe outbreak of the plague. The closing of the playhouses may have made it hard for Shakespeare and other actors of the day to earn a living. With plague and poverty threatening his life, it is only natural that he felt "in disgrace with fortune". Moreover, according to literary history there was a scathing attack on Shakespeare by dramatist Robert Greene, in 1592 who wrote in a

deathbed diary: "There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and, being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country." Shakespeare was deeply disturbed by this assault, feeling disgraced in "men's eyes" as well as fortune's.

Sonnet 30 is about the good will of a friend. When the poet thinks of the past he feels the lack of many things that he could not get. He also feels the loss of friends, wealth and maybe many things in life when one seeps in memories. Yet when he thinks of the friend then all losses are restored and the sorrows end as the dear friend means everything.

This sonnet is a tribute to the poet's friend -- and likely his lover -- whom many believe to be the Earl of Southampton. The poet proclaims that the young man is the poet's redeemer and this theme continues in the above sonnet. The poet's sorrowful recollections of dead friends are sparked by the lover's absence and can be quelled only by thoughts of his lover, illustrating the poet's dependence on his dear friend for spiritual and emotional support. Shakespeare's uses partial alliteration over several lines to enhance the texture and rhythm of the sonnet. One example that can be cited are the following lies:

When to | the Sess | ions of | sweet si | lent thought

I summ | on up | remem | brance of | things past...

Sonnet 30 closely mirrors the message of sonnet 29. Shakespeare cleverly heightens the expression of his overwhelming anxiety by belaboring the theme of emotional dependence. In sonnet 29 he quits his moaning after the second quatrain, in sonnet 30 three full quatrains are devoted to the narrator’s anguish, suggesting that his dependence on the patron is increasing. Meanwhile sonnet 30’s closing couplet reiterates lines 9-14 of sonnet 29 in compact form, emphasizing that the patron is a necessity for the poet’s emotional well-being.

**POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:**

- Write an essay on the Elizabethan age.
- Write a note on Shakespeare’s literary works.
- Write an essay on the sonnet and the Shakespearean sonnet.
- Discuss the major themes and ideas of Sonnet 29 and 30.

## LESSON 3: METAPHYSICAL POETRY

**OUTLINE:**

- **The Renaissance Period**
- **Country House Poetry**
- **Metaphysical Poetry**
- **Donne and his works**
- **Good Morrow**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the seventeenth century background**
- **Know the different movements of poetry during this period**
- **Figure out the characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry and cavalier Poetry.**
- **Have Knowledge about the poetry of Donne and Marvell.**

**3.0 THE EMERGENCE OF THE RENNAISANCE**:

Just as all nations go through a series of upheavals, Britain too went through changes in its political system. The period from 1570-1640 is the connecting link between the Elizabethan age and the Puritan Age. The Elizabethan jest for life and pleasure had subsided and there was a mood of despondency and disillusionment in this period. One of the cause for this change was political. After the reign of Queen Elizabeth the threat of invasion loomed large in Britain as there was no proper heir to the throne. The earlier threat of invasion by the Catholic power of Spain and other such conflicts had made the life of the people uncertain. The fear slightly reduced with James I ascending the throne in 1603. However his rein was not a pleasant one and it was also coupled with religious bigotry that arose because of his ignorance. Earlier the puritans and the Jesuits had not welcomed the Church of England but under the wise rule of Queen Elizabeth any conflict had been checked. However, with James I as the king and his ignorance of the English language and his theory of the Divine Right of Kings and his allegiance to Catholicism led to unrest and unhappiness among the people. In this period Machiavelli's The Prince created among the people more confusion as the book seemed top provide a materialistic and Satanic interpretation of the world-order. All this paved the way also for a new understanding of life. New theories and readings in astronomy and science led to widening of mental horizons. The period was begun to be noticed as the age of renaissance or age o

New Philosophy. Discoveries of Columbus, Aristotle and Ptolemy led to establishment of new ideas. The earth was no longer the centre of the universe, and it was revealed that the earth revolved around the sun. Logic, theology and rhetoric were widely read and discussed by scholars. It was at this period that we have the emergence of the metaphysical poets.

**3.1**

Did you know that in this period there was the emergence of the country house poetry? This is similar to poetry that was written long back in India when poets were under the patronage of some kings. Country house poetry is a sub-genre of Renaissance poetry. It is assumed that it was first written during the seventeenth century. This poetry was like the patronage poetry, in which poets flattered patrons in order to gain sponsorship and status.

At that point in time, many houses were built in the countryside not only to display the wealth of the nobleman but it also acted as a retreat for the courtier when overwhelmed by the court and city life. These houses also emerged as power houses - the houses of a ruling class. As such the people of the province could work at these houses and get some protection of the noble man. When you read the life of Donne keep this in mind. The locals could work at a local and national level as the seat of a landowner who was also a member of parliament. Basically, people did not live in country houses unless they either possessed power, or, by setting up in a country house, were making a bid to possess it. Some of the poets of the period wrote poems on the country houses which were satirical and ironical in tone with descriptions of pastoral beauty. One such example is Ben Jonson's poem, 'To Penshurst' which was written to celebrate the Kent estate of Sir Robert Sidney, Viscount Lisle, later earl of Leister.

**3.2 METAPHYSICAL POETRY:**

This was a term used to group together some of the seventeenth century poets. Some of these poets are Donne, Marvell and Vaughan. Though this was not a movement as such they were studied together as they shared common features of wit, inventiveness, and a love of elaborate style. The poetry of these poets explores the world by rational discussion rather than by intuition or mysticism. The name metaphysical was first used by Dryden when in 1693 he criticized Donne: 'He affects the Metaphysics... in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts.' He censured Donne's stylistic excesses, particularly his extravagant conceits (or witty comparisons) and his

tendency towards hyperbolic abstractions. This argument was strengthened by Johnson who in his ‘Lives of Poets’ noted (with reference to Cowley) that 'about the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets'. He went on to describe the far-fetched nature of their comparisons as 'a kind of *discordia concors*; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike'. Another example of the practice Johnson condemned could include the Donne’s extended comparison of love with astrology. In his important essay, 'The Metaphysical Poets' (1921), T.S. Eliot argued that their work fuses reason with passion; it shows a unification of thought and feeling which later became separated into a 'dissociation of sensibility'.” Today metaphysical poetry has gained favour and the strength sand force of the imagery has been greatly appreciated.

**3.3 JOHN DONNE’S POETRY**:

The 17th century opened with a generation of great social change which culminated in the eventual execution of King Charles I in 1649. This created an atmosphere of conflict that permeates much of the literature of the period. The writings of John Donne are ubiquitous with this conflict, reflecting in their content a view of love and women radically and cynically altered from that which preceding generations of poets had handed down. Reacting against the deliberately smooth and sweet tones of much 16th-century verse, Donne like the other metaphysical poets adopted a style that was energetic, uneven, and rigorous.

John Donne's view of love deviated greatly from the Medieval philosophy of courtly love, which had been expressed in poetry handed down from the sonnets of such poetic giants as Sidney and Petrarch. The general verse until then had focused greatly on the unrivalled importance of love in the context of the life of the poet (or his creation's voice). Until then, "love" had consisted mostly of an obsession with one woman, and an exploration of the feelings and situations that this caused in the narrator.

Donne's reversal of that introversion came in the form of an intellectual exploration of the nature of his relationships themselves. His verses often point out the selfishness inherent to new love, as in "The Good-Morrow." In this poem, Donne's focus is on the exploration of the new world, which he then twists around to imply that his entire world is formed between his mistress and himself. His poetic conceit (conception) is an explication of the emotional conceit (vanity) underlying love. A clearer example of the

universalization of love is seen in "The Sun Rising" with the lines "She is all states, and all princes I,/Nothing else is."

### 3.4 LIFE OF JOHN DONNE:

Donne was born in London the son of as prosperous ironmonger. His education was Roman Catholic From 1584-1594 he was at Oxford, Cambridge and later at the Inns of Court in London. He traveled in France Spain and Italy and his mind made some changes. He lost his interest in Roman Catholicism and moved towards Church of England.

He changed from a gallant into a courtier and an adventurer in 1601 he sought election as MP for Brackley and won. His first job was as secretary to Lord Egerton but in 1601 he himself became an MP. He eloped with Egerton's niece, Anne More and eloped with her. This brought on him the wrath of Sir George More and Lord Egerton. His dismissal as MP was sought and he then went on to study canon and civil law. In spite of influential friends he did not get a state job and with a growing family he entered into years of debts, ill health frustration and inner conflict. He slowly became devout and pious. He soon became a reputed preacher and rose in office. Oxford University conferred on him the degree Doctor of Divinity. His wife died in 1617 and in 1627 Donne was appointed Dean of St. Paul's an office of dignity honour and influence. He expressed his joy in an epigram, Jack Done, Doctor Donne, Dean Donne. At his death in 1631 he had left the English literary scene as a great poet and orator.

Donne lived from 1572 to 1631 and most of his poetry was written in the last part of sixteenth century and earlier part of seventeenth century literature. Queen Elizabeth's days were over and England was no longer in power in the European scene. Earlier Spenser and Shakespeare had made England's literary scene significantly richer but with the reigns of James I and II and Charles I the country had entered into a state of spiritless ness. The country had lost its rich literary flavour and Donne's entry became a breath of fresh air. He became a pioneer of what Dr. Johnson called as The Metaphysical School.

### 3.5 THE GOOD MORROW:

The Good Morrow is a poem that expresses the wonder as to what the speaker and his beloved did before they fall in love. He regards the former pleasures as childish and rustic and their former life as a long sleep in which they had no idea of the reality of life. He compares them to the Seven Sleepers who slept for two hundred years in their Den. The speaker feels that the other lovers that he loved and which he could get now seem to be mere visions or reflections of the beauty of the present one. Their life in the past was a

dream and a forgetful and now the night of oblivion is over and it is the morning of their love. They watch each other with their absorbing love thrusting aside their earlier jealousies and suspicions. Love now reigns supreme and they do not want to see any new signs or sights. Sailors may discover new worlds and make new maps but he is content in his love and does not wish to have any further new worlds. He feels that he and his lover are two new worlds and the two lovers ‘s worlds are fused and blended together into a single unity.

He further states that the face of the lover is reflected in the eyes of the beloved and that of the beloved in his own eyes. Their faces reflect each other and also display the plainness simplicity and honesty of their hearts. Their two faces are like hemispheres and together they make up a complete world. In a way the two hemispheres are better than the geographical hemispheres as the depression of the North Pole not the decline of the West the sharp North or the declining west are not reflected and instead you see a world of love. Their love would be immortal if they love each other equally and may never disappear forever.

### 3.6 CAVALIER POETS

The Cavalier Poets used the intellectual conceits of the metaphysical poets such as Donne and also that of the elegance of poets like Ben Jonson. The binding thread of the Cavalier poetry is the use of direct and colloquial language expressive of a highly individual personality as well as the casual and amateur style. Some of the poets in this group are Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, Richard Lovelace, Aurelian Townshed and William Cartwright. They were called as Cavalier poets as belonged to the Royalists’ group. These poets accepted the ideals of the Renaissance man, namely wit, music and poetry, but set aside religious intention. The cavalier poets steered clear of the subject of religion. They attempt no plumbing of the depths of the soul. They treat life cavalierly, indeed, and sometimes they treat poetic convention cavalierly too. For them life is far too enjoyable for much of it to be spent sweating over verses in a study. The poems must be written in the intervals of living, and are celebratory of things that are much livelier than mere philosophy or art. To them love was not sacred but was a subject of reality. According to them women were not Goddess to be wooed but were individuals to be spoken to directly. They felt that poetry should not be a matter of earnest emotion or public concern. The Cavaliers made one great contribution to the English Lyrical Tradition. By their works they depicted the fact that poetry too could celebrate the minor pleasures and sadnesses of

life. Poetry could also be ordinary and reveal the sense of ordinary day-to-day humanity, busy about its affairs.

### 3.7 LIFE OF MARVELL:

In 1621 Andrew Marvell was born in Yorkshire, to the Rev. Andrew Marvell, and his wife Anne. Marvell was educated at the Hull Grammar School, and at Trinity College, Cambridge. In Cambridge Marvell had two poems published. In 1638 Marvell took his B.A. degree and a few days after receiving his scholarship, Marvell's mother died. He remained at Cambridge till his father's death in 1640.

From 1642-46, he travelled abroad in France, Holland, Spain, and Italy from. In 1650, Marvell became the tutor of twelve-year-old Mary Fairfax daughter of Sir Thomas Fairfax, retired Lord General of the parliamentary forces. During this time Marvell a large number of his non-satiric English poems. The stay with the Fairfax family provided material for Marvell's most profound poem, "Upon Appleton House," a poem crucial to his growth both as a man and as a poet. In this poem he scrutinizes the competing claims of public service and the search for personal vision.

In September, 1657, Marvell was appointed assistant to John Milton, Latin Secretary for the Commonwealth. In 1659, Marvell was elected M. P. for his hometown of Hull, and he continued to represent it until his death. During the last two decades of life, Marvell was engaged in political activities, taking part in embassies to Holland and Russia and writing political pamphlets and satires. Marvell's Miscellaneous Poems were printed posthumously in 1681. Marvell died buried in the church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields. As a critic says, “The life and work of Andrew Marvell are both marked by extraordinary variety and range. Gifted with a most subtle and introspective imagination, he turned his talents in mid-career from incomparable lyric explorations of the inner life to panegyric and satiric poems on the men and issues involved in one of England's most crucial political epochs. The century which followed Marvell's death remembered him almost exclusively as a politician and pamphleteer. Succeeding periods, on the other hand, have all but lost the public figure in the haunting recesses of his lyric poems."

### 3.8 TO HIS COY MISTRESS:

Marvell in the poem, ‘To His Coy Mistress’ discusses the theme of love. he wishes his love to be– tranquil and drawn out. He opens the poem with the lines, "Had we but world

enough, and time / This coyness, lady, were no crime" Marvell makes reference to the events of the past and future on a grand scale. He refers that if they had time while he would be walking on the tide of Humber his lady love would be walking besides Ganges. He then alludes to religious scripture giving the impression of vast ages passing, spanning most of time itself.

...I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews. (7-10)

This allusion is one of the several techniques Marvell uses to turn the focus away from impending death to an ideal world without it.

In lines 11-12 he states "My vegetable love should grow / Vaster than empires, and more slow." The first line makes the narrator's love a slow-growing vegetable, but the later part implies that the love would engulf empires but at the same time it would not race against time. He then goes on to praising the physical form—'Thine eyes' 'Thy forehead'-- of his love displaying a sense of sensuality in the lines.

The second part of the poem is about the way time runs. He states that time's winged chariot' is racing and the future is filled with vast spaces of eternity. He further mentions that the physical beauty that he had praised a few lines earlier would no longer be there and the grave would become a fine and private place. Since time is flying and days are rolling it is best to make up the moment and hence he states, Now let us sport while we may'. By seeking instant pleasure and making the best use of time one may be able to make the sun run.

All of these images occur in the first half of the poem. Marvell's ploy here is to lull the reader into a passiveness and the languid pace that he desires to see in love, so that his eventual theme will be all the more startling when it is considered. After so much repetition on the theme, it becomes easy to say "death is coming, so we should love" without any particular impact behind the thought. Now, by contrasting the alternative to love caught in time, Marvell demonifies time to be a tyrant, slowly killing us all. He then states that an escape from and method of fighting against time is to love with a passion and defy his aging effect

Using the methods described above, he makes the ideal scene of timelessness more concrete, so that when it is swept away the alternative seems all the more frightening and imperative. In this way he recreates a feature of real life– death is imperative, but trivialities can often make it seem distant. Invariably, however, it will greet us all.

**3.9 COMPREHENSION:**

Read Donne's 'Good Morrow' carefully and answer the following:

- Who is the speaker in the poem?
- Can you state it is the male persona or female persona?
- How do they see each another?
- What can the sea discoverers find out?
- What should the two lovers possess?
- How can the line 'My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears' be explained?
- Why are their two faces called as hemispheres by the poet.
- Why cannot the two lovers die?

Read Marvell's 'To His Coy Mistress' carefully and answer the following:

- To whom is the poem addressed?
- What does the word 'coy' mean?
- What is the tone of the poem?
- What would the two lovers do if they had enough time?
- What is the reference to in this line, Love you ten years before the Flood'.
- Why does he call his love as vegetable love?
- What are the things he would praise in his mistress?
- What does he hear at the his back?
- When time reaches them what would they find?
- Give some of the images associated with death that the poet uses in the poem?
- What is the way to make one's own sun according to the poet?

**Possible Questions:**

- Explain the Renaissance period.
- Write a note on the metaphysical poetry.
- Briefly examine the features of Cavalier poetry.
- Explain how love is addressed in Donne's Good Moirrow and Marvell's To His Coy Mistress?
- What is Country House Poetry?

## LESSON 4: AGE OF MILTON

**OUTLINE:**

- **Milton and his works**
- **Pastoral Poetry**
- **Lycidas**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the age of Milton**
- **Know Milton's works**
- **Figure out the characteristics of Pastoral elegy.**

### 4.0 LIFE OF MILTON:

Milton was born in 1608 to John Milton a scrivener whose work combined that of attorney and law stationer. Milton's love of music and literature was derived from his father. He studied at St.Paul's Schol and at the age of sixteen moved to Christ College, Cambridge. Even while at college he had begun to write poerty. Due to his own belefs and scruples with regard to religion he did not enter Church even though his parents had intended him top.

On obtaining his MA degree spent the next few years with his father studying and preparing for his vocation as a poet. This was the time when his *Il Penseroso* and *L'Allegro* as well as his pastoral masque *Comus* came out. In 1637 after his mother's death he set off on a continental tour and returned in 1639 when England was on the brink of a civil war. He married Mary Powell, the daughter of a Royalist family. The austerity of the puritan household was too much for her and she left home, refusing to return. Milton in anger wrote a tract on Divorce in which he stated that incompatible temperaments should be valid ground for a divorce. His wife was later reconciled and came back. She died in 1653. In 1649 when Charles I was executed he was appointed as the Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth and in this position he wrote a number of tracts. In 1652 he lost his eye sight but continued in his job assisted by the poet, Andrew Marvell.

In 1660 he lost his position as Charles II was restored to the throne. His life was endangered and he went into retirement. In the last years of his life he wrote his three great works – *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*. Besides the epics Milton also wrote other forms of poetry, namely the sonnets, pastoral elegies and tracts and pamphlets. Milton wrote 24 sonnets during the period 1630-1658. He followed the Petrarchan rather than the Shakespearean form. He also used a great many innovations in his sonnets. One such innovation is his tendency to avoid end-stopped lines, a technique borrowed from another Italian poet, Giovanni Della Casa. This technique is similar to the Metaphysical poets' desire to emulate the cadences of natural speech because it focuses attention on sentences rather than lines of verse Eg: "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont" His sonnets are not religious and they do not emphasize love also. His sonnets on the other hand are interest in the political and religious controversies that dominate his attention during and after the period of Puritan Rule. Some like "When I Consider How My Light is spent" is about his personal experience of going blind while "Methought I Saw My Late Espousèd Saint" records Milton's grief at the death of one of his wives from complications of childbirth. Milton also wrote a number of pamphlets and tracts.

**4.1 PASTORAL POETRY:**

Many young Renaissance humanists with poetic aspirations attempted to write pastoral poetry. The pastoral was thought to be the humblest type of poetry as mentioned by Sidney, in his Defense of Poesy, it was considered an appropriate first step in one's poetic endeavors. Spenser and Milton, both of whom aspired to be poets for their times, wrote pastoral poetry early in their careers. Spenser's 'The Shepherdes Calendar' and Milton's 'Lycidas' were written at the beginning of their careers while their epics, Spenser's *Fairie Queen* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* were written much later.

**4.2 LYCIDAS:**

This poem is written for a dead friend who dies when his ship sank. The poem first appeared in 1638 in a collection of elegies. This collection commemorated the death of Edward King, a college mate of Milton's at Cambridge who drowned when his ship sank off the coast of Wales in August, 1637. The structure of *Lycidas* remains somewhat ambiguous. There are 12 sections and each of the three major sections begins with an invocation, it then explores the form and concludes with the poet's own emotional. Milton's epigram labels *Lycidas* a "monody": a lyrical lament for one voice. But the poem has several voices or personae, which includes the "uncouth swain", Camus and the "Pilot

of the Galilean lake". Finally, a second narrator appears for only the last eight lines of the poem. This concept of story-telling ties *Lycidas* closer to the genre of pastoral elegy. *Lycidas* is a pastoral elegy, a genre initiated by Theocritus, also put to famous use by Virgil and Spenser.

## LESSON 5: AUGUSTAN AGE

**OUTLINE:**

- **Eighteenth century Background**
- **Poetry of Dryden**
- **Poetry of Pope**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

**After reading this lesson you should be able to**

- **Understand the Eighteenth century Background**
- **Know the poetical works of Dryden**
- **Figure out the components of satirical poetry.**
- **Know the poetical works of Pope**
- **Figure out the salient features of a mock heroic.**

### 5.0 EIGHTEENTH CENTURY POETRY:

Eighteenth-century poetry has been both criticized and praised. Many critics feel that the style of the poetry is lacking in content and feel that it is often superficial. According to *Eighteenth Century Prose and Poetry* the attitude of the time which was that of hard realities shaped the literature into often “moralizing” and “didactic works”. The poetry of this age is not only intellectual but also has an eye ofor style and form. The dominant style of the eighteenth century was Neoclassicism. Order, balance and harmony characterize this style. This change led to a greater emphasis on the mechanics of poetry. At its best the neo-classic idea “sought to mediate between nature and art, imagination and reason, delight and instruction” The types of poetry that Neoclassicism gave way to in the eighteenth century include: mock heroic, ode, elegy, epistle, verse tale, ballad, epigram, prologue etc.

Eighteenth-century poetry also gave way to a trend of grandiose and abstract themes. The individual became secondary. The poetry at the time became more concerned with the general in order to elevate the ideas it was trying to convey. The audience of the poetry of the time was often that of the aristocracy and upper middle class. But one must

remember that the poets at the time were educated men; therefore, when they wrote they wrote for those who would understand their message. Only a select few were really able to relate to the aesthetic beauty that many of the poets were often speaking of.

Despite all the criticism eighteenth-century poetry receives no one can discount the brilliance of poets such as Alexander Pope, and Jonathan Swift.

**5.1 JOHN DRYDEN:**

Dryden was born in 1631 to Rev. Erasmus Dryden, a rector in Northamptonshire. After schooling at West minister School he went on to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1650. Cromwell's death in 1653 thrust him into the limelight and his heroic stanzas of the time were well-received. Charles II was restored to the throne and with the restoration the stage was opened. Dryden devoted the period from 1653-1681 writing comedies, tragedies and tragic comedies. More than the plays his prefaces to the plays earned him popularity. In 1664 he got married but his marital life was not a happy one. Dryden's first great poem was Anus Mirabilis that was published in 1667 the same year that Milton's paradise Lost also appeared. Later in 1669 he published his Essay on Dramatic poesy and in 1666 he became the poet laureate and also the hisotoriographer. The public acclaim to his works led him to quarrel with others and he took his revenge on the Duke of Buckingham in his satire, Absalom and Achitophel. Shadwell, a poet of the Whig party denounced Dryden in The Medal of John Bayes and in retaliation Dryden penned Mac Fleknoe. His religious faith in the church of England made him write Reigio-Laici, a defence but in 1686 he announced his conversion to the Church of Rome. He explained his stance 'The Hind and the Panther'. In 1688 the accession of William and Mary to the throne led to Dryden's political. He continued to occupy himself with literary interests and brought out in 1697 the translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* and poems such as 'Alexander's Feast' and 'Ode on St. Cecil's Day'. He died in 1770 admired by one and all as a judicious poet, playwright and critic.

**5.2 WORKS OF DRYDEN:**

Besides Mac Flecknow, Dryden wrote other works. His "Annus Mirabilis" pays homage to London for surviving the plague and the Great Fire (in 1666) while "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy" tried to establish a new poetic tradition. It was written two years after the Restoration and the reopening of the theaters, beckoning the English minds to a fresh sense of poetics which would take the best of the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets. This would then be infused with a sense of neoclassical balance, clarity, and profundity. He critiques of the Metaphysicals, by pointing out the exotic images with which Donne and Herbert

populated their similes and metaphors. The other sort of poets he condemns are the Dull, who affect classical balance to a fault, making the counting of syllables their primary occupation rather than the expression of noble sentiment. His definition of "wit" emphasizes using common words rather than new coinages or words borrowed from other languages. His "Shakespeare vs. Jonson" comparison contrasts the former's appeal to Nature as a model for his characters with the latter's use of classical models. Famous is Dryden's praise of Shakespeare for having "the largest and most comprehensive soul," which enabled WS to sympathize with and represent anything in Nature, but it is a Nature he found when he "looked inwards" Shakespeare's comedy is faulted for its "clenches" (puns), but he is generally praised as the best of his generation in their one judgment. Jonson is praised as one who was best when a satirist, and whose classical knowledge was wholely digested in his art.

Dryden's "Apology for Heroic Poetry and Heroic License" defends the heights of expression demanded by the epic form, and mentions Milton specifically as a descendent of Homer and Virgil.He also acclaims Nature, as the poet's first and foremost source for imitation, though imitation of other great poets may help to form the poet's style. Continuing his attempt to define "wit," Dryden says it "is a propriety of thoughts and words; or, in other terms, thought and words elegantly adapted to the subject" (i.e., high words for high subjects, and low words for low ones). His essay, "A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" calls for more subtlety and art from satirists, who are accused of mere name-calling and abuse. The function of well-written satire is defended as inoffensive to the witty and insensible to the fools, since the wisdom of the former compels them to admit their follies and the stupidity of the latter usually prevents them from realizing they're the topic of the satire.

"The Preface to Fables Ancient and Modern" contains one of the most extended praises of Chaucer in early literature, after Spenser's invocation of Faerie Queene, Canto II. Chaucer is held up as the English Homer or Virgil, a founder of the national literature, though his rhyming is not commended (also see Sidney). He was the first reader of Chaucer who took into account the possibility of historical changes in poetic technique, and in that sense is the ancestor of all Chaucerian scholars. Dryden also praises Chaucer as he did Shakespeare for his "wonderful comprehensive nature" He also suggests that the tales were suited to their tellers and revealed dramatically their inner lives. His final contribution to Chaucer scholarship is his observation that readers of the whole of

*Canterbury Tales* tend to fall into a bemused meditation on the richness of the human condition.

**5.3 MAC FLECKNOE:**

MacFlecknoe is a mock-heroic satire written after King Charles II had come to power. The poem is satirical and criticizes an individual not for his character but for his aspirations. At a larger level the poem is more universal questioning the way society works. MacFlecknoe is a direct attack on Thomas Shadwell, another prominent poet at that time.

Written in 1682, it is the outcome of a series of disagreements between Thomas Shadwell and Dryden. Shadwell fancied himself heir to Ben Jonson, and the variety of comedy which the latter had commonly written. Shadwell's poetry was certainly not of the same standard as Jonson's, and it is possible that Dryden wearied of Shadwell's argument that Dryden undervalued Jonson. Shadwell and Dryden were separated not only by literary grounds but also by political ones as Shadwell was a Whig. The poem illustrates Shadwell as the heir to a kingdom of poetic dullness, represented by his association with Richard Flecknoe, an earlier poet Dryden disliked, but Dryden does not use belittling techniques to satirize him. Instead he elevates Shadwell to a position of greatness, and the obvious disparity between the Shadwell in the poem and the one in reality serves to make his point. The multiplicity of allusions to 17th literary works with which the poem is riddled, demonstrate Dryden's complex critical thought, and the fact that he satirizes his own work as well shows his knowledge of and respect towards the mock-heroic style in which the poem is written.

**5.4 POPE:**

Alexander Pope was born in London into a Roman Catholic family in 1688. As you already know from the background, England was undergoing a Protestant consolidation. As a result Pope was largely excluded from the university system and from political life. Moreover he also suffered certain social and economic disadvantages because of his religion. He was self-taught to a great extent, and was an assiduous scholar from a very early age. He learned several languages on his own, and his early verses were often imitations of poets he admired. His obvious talent found encouragement from his father, a linen-draper, as well as from literary-minded friends. At the age of twelve, Pope contracted a form of tuberculosis that settled in his spine, leaving him stunted and misshapen and causing him great pain for much of his life. He never married, though he formed a number of lifelong friendships in London's literary circles, most notably with Jonathan Swift.

Pope wrote during what is often called the Augustan Age of English literature. This was the period when England had just recovered from the Civil Wars and the Glorious Revolution, and the regained sense of political stability led to a resurgence of support for the arts. For this reason, many compared the period to the reign of Augustus in Rome, under whom both Virgil and Horace had found support for their work. The English writers tended to value poetry that was learned and allusive, setting less value on originality than the Romantics would in the next century. The prevailing taste of the day was neoclassical and the literary works were engaged in moral and political issues utilizing the tool of satire.

**5.6 WORKS OF POPE:**

**‘**The Rape of the Lock’ is one of the most famous examples of the mock-epic. The poem was published in 1712, when Pope was only 23 years old. It helped to establish Pope’s reputation as a poet and remains his most frequently studied work. The inspiration for the poem was an actual incident among Pope's acquaintances in which Robert, Lord Petre, cut off a lock of Arabella Fermor's hair, and the young people's families fell into strife as a result. John Caryll, another member of this same circle of prominent Roman Catholics, asked Pope to write a light poem that would put the episode into a humorous perspective and reconcile the two families. The poem was originally published in a shorter version, which Pope later revised. In this later version he added the "machinery," the retinue of supernaturals who influence the action as well as the moral of the tale. After the publication of ‘The Rape of the Lock’, Pope spent many years translating the works of Homer. During the next decade he produced very few new poems of his own but refined his taste in literature. It also meant that there was a change in his moral, social, and political perceptions. When he later once again began to write poetry, Pope struck a more serious tone than the one he gave to ‘The Rape of the Lock’. Thus his later poems are more severe in their moral judgments and more acid in their satire. Pope's ‘Essay on Man’ is a philosophical poem on metaphysics, ethics, and human nature. The *Dunciad* is a work in which he exposes the awful state of writers and pseudo-intellectuals of his day.

**5.7 THE RAPE OF THE LOCK:**

Belinda, based on the historical Arabella Fermor arises to prepare for the day's social activities after sleeping late. Her guardian sylph, Ariel, warned her in a dream that some disaster will befall her, and promises to protect her to the best of his abilities. Belinda takes little notice of this oracle, however. After an elaborate ritual of dressing and primping, she travels on the Thames River to Hampton Court Palace, an ancient royal residence outside

of London, where a group of wealthy young socialites are gathering for a party. Among them is the Baron, who has already made up his mind to steal a lock of Belinda's hair. He has risen early to perform and elaborate set of prayers and sacrifices to promote success in this enterprise. When the partygoers arrive at the palace, they enjoy a tense game of cards, which Pope describes in mock-heroic terms as a battle. This is followed by a round of coffee. Then the Baron takes up a pair of scissors and manages, on the third try, to cut off the coveted lock of Belinda's hair. Belinda is furious. Umbriel, a mischievous gnome, journeys down to the Cave of Spleen to procure a sack of sighs and a flask of tears which he then bestows on the heroine to fan the flames of her ire. Clarissa, who had aided the Baron in his crime, now urges Belinda to give up her anger in favor of good humor and good sense, moral qualities which will outlast her vanities. But Clarissa's moralizing falls on deaf ears, and Belinda initiates a scuffle between the ladies and the gentlemen, in which she attempts to recover the severed curl. The lock is lost in the confusion of this mock battle, however; the poet consoles the bereft Belinda with the suggestion that it has been taken up into the heavens and immortalized as a constellation.

**5.8 ANALYSIS:**

**‘**The Rape of the Lock’ is a humorous indictment of the vanities and idleness of 18th-century high society. Basing his poem on a real incident among families of his acquaintance, Pope intended his verses to cool hot tempers and to encourage his friends to laugh at their own folly.

The poem is perhaps the best example in the English language of the genre of mock-epic. The epic had long been considered one of the most serious of literary forms; it had been applied, in the classical period, to the lofty subject matter of love and war, and, later, by Milton, to the intricacies of the Christian faith. The strategy of Pope's mock-epic is not to mock the form itself, but to mock his society in its very failure to rise to epic standards, exposing its pettiness by casting it against the grandeur of the traditional epic subjects and the bravery and fortitude of epic heroes: Pope's mock-heroic treatment in ‘The Rape of the Lock’ underscores the ridiculousness of a society in which values have lost all proportion, and the trivial is handled with the gravity and solemnity that ought to be accorded to truly important issues. The society in the poem is unable to discern things that matter and things that do not. The poem mocks reveals the unworthiness of men by adopting the heroic form. Thus the mock-epic resembles the epic in that its central concerns are serious and often moral, but the fact that the approach must now be satirical rather than earnest is symptomatic of how far the culture has fallen.

Pope's use of this genre is intricate and exhaustive. ‘The Rape of the Lock’ is a poem in which every element of the contemporary scene conjures up some image from epic tradition or the classical world view, and the pieces are wrought together with a cleverness and expertise that makes the poem surprising and delightful. Pope's transformations are numerous, striking, and loaded with moral implications. The great battles of the epic become in the poem, spells of betting and enticing fights. The heroic nature of the Greek and Roman gods is transformed into a relatively indistinct state of affairs. Cosmetics, clothing, and jewelry are the replacements for armour and weapons while the rituals of religious sacrifice are located in the dressing room. The verse form of ‘The Rape of the Lock’ is the heroic couplet

**COMPREHENSION:**

Read Dryden’s ‘Macflecknoe’ carefully and answer the following:

- Who is the hero in MacFlecknoe?
- Why does Dryden write this satire?
- What portrait does Dryden draw of Shadwell?
- What is the verse form in the poem?

Read Pope’s ‘The Rape of the Lock’ carefully and answer the following:

- Discuss two mock-heroic elements of the poem.
- What are some of the images that recur through the poem, and what significance do they have?
- What function does the poem's supernatural machinery serve?
- Is Pope being ironic when he treats Belinda's beauty as something almost divine?
- To what degree can the poem be read as a sexual allegory?
- What are the distinctive formal features of Pope's poetry?
- How is the heroic couplet suited to Pope's subject matter or to satire more generally?

**POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:**

- Write an essay on the eighteenth century background.
- What do you understand by the title Augustan? Why was this age called as the Augustan?
- Write an essay on Dryden and his works.
- Write an essay on Dryden and his works.
- Carefully analyze the poem as a satire.
- How does Pope use comic relief and satire in his poem, ‘The Rape of the Lock’

## UNIT -II

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION--ROMANTICISM

**OUTLINE:**

- **Background: Period from 1770s to 1790s**
- **Age of Sensibility.**
- **Central issues of romanticism**
- **Romanticism**
- **Complexity of Romanticism.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the concept of romanticism**
- **Know the political and social contexts.**
- **Comprehend the major features of the romantic period**
- **Period from 1770s to 1790s**

**2.1.0 FRENCH REVOLUTION:**

- Have you heard of the French revolution? Do you have an idea of what were the key words off the French revolution? Well, the French revolution was a rebellion against power structures and the key words of this revolution were liberty, equality and fraternity. As in all societies where struggles took place here too the idea was to set up a classless society. This revolution had a major influence all over Europe. Let us very briefly see its effects on Britain in this lesson.
- With the revolution there was a great deal of thought given to the government policies and political discourse in the country.
- Government was anxious about British radicals and took a dim view of personal liberties.
- Did you know that the English government suspended the writ of habeas corpus, and also developed a vast surveillance and espionage system? I am sure you have similar things happening in our country too at different times. Moreover, the press was censored and unions were outlawed.
- As you may be aware governments could silence the general public but not writers. The authors of 1790s began to explore the issue of political rights.

- Those of you who have read novels such as *Wuthering Heights*, or J*ane Eyre* may wonder at this claim but if you carefully think over this point you will understand that the authors of this period felt that the internal life of the individual should thus be read in part as an indication of the real danger faced by authors interested in human rights and as a wishful escape from the troubles of the day.
- You should also remember from the earlier lessons that decisions in the country were made by aristocrats or landed gentry. A simple thing like voting rights too was not given to the general public. Did you know that Middle class men did not get the vote until 1832 and nearly universal male suffrage was not granted until 1867? Women, of course, did not get even a limited franchise until 1917.
- You must also be aware that such revolutions always create fear. Precisely the same situation occurred in Britain. The events in France, thus, held real resonance for the British upper classes because their country, too, was still structured along the same feudal lines. The British Government responded to the French and the American Revolutions by attempting to increase power and control over the country.
- As already mentioned in Britain too some things happened. The early 1790's witnessed a massive mobilization, both in London and all over England, of London Corresponding Society (LCS) members calling for Parliamentary and economic reform.
- Their opponents of this moment were unprepared to see the large numbers that entered politics. There was clearly a wide range of men and of occupations affected by the sharp rise in prices and decline in real wages in the second half of 1792 and who turned to the LCS for redress and organisation.

### 2.1.1 AGE OF SENSIBILITY:

- Did you know that this period was also known as the Age of Sensibility? The reason is that sensibility became an object of intense interest in the late eighteenth century as the issues on which it focuses -- the social relationships among individuals -- become more fluid: the discourse of sensibility begins to take center stage in English literature as the stability of the class structure it theorizes could no longer be taken for granted.

- In the face of stringent governmental censorship, the authors of the 1790's explored social relations and class structure in narratives that seemed to disclaim political intent.
- The debates of the 1790's were characterized by a politicizing of issues raised within the school of sensibility to the extent that one's stand on matters such as the conduct of the private affections, charity, education, sympathy, genius, honour, and even the use of the reason, became political statements, aligned with conservative or radical ideologies.
- Those of us who dismiss sentimentality as devoid of intellectual complexity, thus, wrongly overlook its function. On the other hand it developed as a means of political commentary and not as an escape from it.
- The English Romantic poets traditionally studied are the "Big Six": Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats. These authors claim repeatedly that they are doing something radically new to save poetry from the outworn traditions of the eighteenth century. In reality, they owe a great deal to the age of sensibility. We should understand the degree to which they make claims of originality to reflect the anxiety with which they viewed their positions as poets.

We'll be reading five of these in detail in the next few lessons.

**2.1.2 CENTRAL ISSUES IN ROMANTIC POETRY:**

- What were the central concerns of the Romantic Poetry?
- Focus on the human imagination
- Focus on the transformative power of imagination
- Stress on the relationship between the individual mind and the natural world.
- Questions the issue of meaning and perception.
- Explore questions of relationship and whether they were symbiotic/ parasitic?
- Tend to define the human psyche by opposition to the contingencies of time and politics. Claims that the imagination and the world of feeling offer access to a realm of meaning that transcend history.
- Demonstrate a strong interest in Nature and the natural world.
- To some extent these poets were also called as Nature poets. This derives in part from a desire to arrest a way of life that was rapidly disappearing. The pastoral is fundamentally an elegiac mode: it attempts to memorialize and thereby preserve something in danger of being lost. Read a few poems of Wordsworth and find out

what structure they have. You will notice that the typical structure of a Romantic poem is it raises an issue, interrogates it, and offers some sort of answer: most of these poems consist of crisis and resolution.

- The crisis may take the form of staged intellectual confusion, emotional difficulty like grief, personal tragedy like loss, writer's block, or a failure of the imagination to respond to challenges of some sort. The resolution typically takes the form of a renewed faith in the power of the imagination and/or poetry to counter the crisis at hand.

### 2.1.3 ROMANTICISM

- In the past few lessons of Unit 1 we have been spending a great deal of time on what we call the Renaissance, that period, that is from roughly the end of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth which, generally speaking, we have characterized as a period of widespread rational reform movement aimed at putting our understanding of nature, society, politics, justice, and human morality under the authoritative banner of reason.
- In discussing the poets of that period we realized that the reaction came up because of a strong reaction against religious bigotry. Now for the first time, this perspective was replaced with the human will.
- We have also recognized that an important element in the Enlightenment was the growth of science as a means of taking control over nature and shaping human life and human society in ways which might address some of the prevalent evils--poverty, sickness, famine, civil injustice. Both Bacon and Descartes, for example, explicitly summoned us to the scientific endeavour for the relief from human suffering.
- What we will in the next few lessons do is to look at some of the poetry of this period and view the reaction which culminated in the latter years of the eighteenth century and the first third of the nineteenth in what one can call as Romanticism, the Romantic Movement, or the Romantic Revolution.
- At this point I want to stress that without the Renaissance period, the romantic period could not have evolved. As all of you may be aware we are all still very much products of the Renaissance because we still subscribe to democracy which means that government should be by consent of the governed (without that, government is not justified, not legitimate), that government should have a respect

for individual rights, minority rights, a certain measure of equality and some international moral obligations. Don't we all expect our governments to be just and lawful. Well the renaissance period did give rise to the thinking of all these structures.

- We support religious tolerance and a separation of institutions of religion and state. Moreover, we give obedience not to particular people but to official positions; we do not recognize any subservience to hereditary rank.
- We rely upon science, the scientific method, and scientific research to inform us about the world, to identify problems, and above all, to deal with them.
- Of course there was opposition to the notions of democracy. One of this is Swift's declamations. In addition to such opposition from traditional Christian thinkers, however, there was a growing opposition to many of the cherished notions of the rational reformers. This opposition was what gave rise to Romanticism or the Romantic Movement.

### 2.1.4 COMPLEXITY OF ROMANTICISM:

- One should also remember that no term in the history of ideas is as debatable as the term, Romanticism. There are literally hundreds of conflicting definitions about what that label means and there are endless disputes about its causes and its effects.
- Did you know that in 1824 two French scholars, Depuis and Cononet, set out to define the term Romanticism, and they abandoned the project as impossibly complicated.
- It is believed that the term has more than 10, 000 meanings and many scholars feel that it is better to abandon the term and use some thing that is less ambiguous and less complicated.
- Complicating this is the fact that the Romantic Movement had very different histories in different countries, and thus something like German Romanticism is in many essential aspects quite different from French Romanticism, which is again, in some respects, distinct from English Romanticism and American Romanticism.
- The other problem with this term is that its meaning changes depending upon what field of study one is in. Thus in music it may mean a different concept and in philosophy something else.
- Did you know that the writers whom we call romantic today such as Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats rejected the label and thought it to be offensive. The famous

poet Goethe remarks, "Romanticism is disease,"and "Classicism is health." It posited the notion that order was something not discovered in nature but created by the human mind.

- For the Romantic the concept of a given universal order was meaningless. In itself the world had no order to discover. Order was something imposed on the world. And such an imposition of order was a creative act. It was a product of the creative powers of the mind transforming the given chaos of the world into an emotionally coherent vision. It was, above all, an imaginative act.
- The act of creatively interpreting the world as the only source of meaning is a radically individual act, carried out by the power of the individual imagination. It is our personal task to create an order in the world. To adopt anyone else's is to fail to fulfill one's imaginative potential, to be spiritually dead. One was only human to the extent that one could liberate one's imagination to create a structure of meaning for oneself.
- Romanticism therefore values the particular insight, the visionary glimpse into imaginative union with the universe, the emotional certainty and joy that arises from a feeling of intimate association in a envisioned patterned order
- Formal education of the sort Wollstonecraft or Rousseau recommended was thought to be detrimental by these poets. To generalize, mentioned Blake, is to be an idiot. He did not want to place a grain of sand in its appropriate position in the rock cycle but to see a divine face in every grain.
- The most important power of the human mind is not reason but imagination
- And the imagination requires a new kind of freedom to contemplate, to wander, to experiment with one's life in a manner which matches one's own poetic conceptions of oneself, a freedom enjoyed by children and young people. Such imaginative freedom is ultimately more important that the rational freedom central to the Renaissance.
- Words like extraordinary, fond, imaginative, enthusiastic, which throughout mainstream eighteenth century thought were thought to be uncomplimentary become valuable commendations in the Romantic vocabulary.
- Being true to a conception of oneself becomes more important than the traditionally social virtues.

- Given the Romantic ethos, originality becomes an important positive value in art and in life. Experimentation with new experiences, new forms of expression, newly invented systems of thought becomes the mark of the true genius.
- Romanticism also redefines the notion of heroic conduct. Romantic heroes were not those ideal figures Chaucer or Swift or Rousseau neither celebrated for their public virtues nor was they sensible rational independent figures. They were passionately individualistic, like Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* imposing their imaginative visions on the world no matter what the cost to themselves, their friends, or their fellow citizens. Other such characters are Prometheus, in Shelley's poem and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. These characters are the figures of violent self affirmation and often resistance, who insisted on imposing their own vision upon the world, who saw life as a series of encounters with forces to be overcome, to be organized by the heroic act of imaginative will, valuable not because it served to promote some rational program of reform (on the contrary their efforts are frequently very destructive of others) but simply because it was a product of their imaginative wills.
- Clearly the Romantic ethos, as briefly sketched out above, had a dramatic effect on artists changing their vision of their role and the styles most appropriate to carrying it out. Given the central importance of the creative imagination as the only true source of order in the world, the poet, rather than the philosopher or the theologian, becomes the chief interpreter of reality, while human beings are only fully human to the extent that they themselves are poets, can take imaginative charge of their own lives in a continuous act of self creation in a world that, without such personal interpretation, is without meaning. Poets, Shelley affirmed, are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.
- Thus, one characteristic form for Romantic art, especially poetry, is a celebration of imaginative liberation by the abandonment of reason, social restrictions, any limitations of tradition, a release of the energetic, joyful, creative individual into a world of infinite potential.
- But the singular problem of the Romantics namely, is what happens to their encounters with the real world/reality? A number of interesting and moving Romantic art focuses upon a characteristic tension that between, on the one hand, the poetic spirit in the individual seeking self creating joy and affirmation as the

only source of meaning in life and, on the other hand, a world which does not immediately answer to his or her conceptions of it, a world which resists the creative powers of the mind. It's true that Romanticism is often associated with social rebellion, but there's an important difference between Romantic rebellion and the sort of social rebellion that Marx is writing about.

- Can you imagine that as an artist or human being in the romantic era, you have to be original, then where do you find the inspiration for continuous self creation? Wordsworth, as we have seen, held in his best poems that the best cure for the diseases of the imagination was a more energetic commitment to imaginative recollection. But even for Wordsworth a time came when his imaginative energies were not able to do what they had done for him in "Tintern Abbey" or the "Immortality Ode."
- If you do look at, the history of Romantic poets you will notice that the period offers depressing but unequivocal illustrations that the Romantic ethic can be a cruel faith, reducing those who once celebrated it to despair, drug addiction, alcoholism, and suicide. Faced with the common reality of the loss of youthful imaginative powers, the Romantic artist has few options: he can, like Wordsworth and Coleridge take refuge in conventional church and state, or, like Blake, he can continue to develop an increasingly complex and idiosyncratic visionary expression.
- The final concluding idea that I would like you to grasp is that it is not very easy to define romanticism and that romanticism has come out of various problematic experienced in the preceding lessons. It is therefore good to view Romantic poetry with a open heart and critique them rather than accepting them at face value as poems that are lyrical and wonderful.

**COMPREHENSION**:

What were the effects of French revolution in England?

What were the major issues of Romanticism?

Why was Romanticism a significant movement?

In what way was the preceding issue of Renaissance important for this period?

How would you like to define Romanticism?

**LESSON 2: WILLIAM BLAKE (1757 – 1827)**

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life of William Blake**
- **Blake's Works.**
- **Images and Symbols**
- **The Chimney Sweeper.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the life and works of William Blake.**
- **Know the political and social contexts through his poetry.**
- **Comprehend the use of images and symbols in poetry.**

**2.2.0 LIFE OF BLAKE:**

- Blake is known to most of us by his two poems, 'Lamb' and 'Tyger'. Even though Blake is placed among the romantic writers he was not part of the actual Romantic writers but was a precursor to the Romantic period. He is discussed as being part of this era due to the similarities he had with other poets much later.
- Blake was born to a hosier in London in 1757. Recognizing his artistic talents his father sent to study at a drawing school when he was ten years old. William when he was fourteen was apprenticed to the engraver James Basire, under whose direction he further developed his skills.
- As a young man Blake worked as an engraver, illustrator, and drawing teacher, and met such artists as Henry Fuseli and John Flaxman, as well as Sir Joshua Reynolds.
- Though Blake wrote poems during this time they were not very mature. his first printed collection, a crude work called *Poetical Sketches,* appeared in 1783. In 1789, *Songs of Innocence* was published followed by *Songs of Experience* in 1793

and a combined edition the next year bearing the title *Songs of Innocence and Experience showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul.*

- Blake was a politically aware poet. During the years leading up to the French Revolution, he displayed a great deal of political radicalism. He began a seven-book poem about the Revolution, in fact, but at present only the first book survives. He was against any type of institutionalism and disapproved of, religion, and of the tradition of marriage in its conventional legal and social form. His radical thoughts were greatly influenced by the Swedish philosopher Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). A reading of Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is illustrative of this influence. In the 1790s and after, he changed his poetic tones. His earlier poetry which had been mainly lyrical now became prophetic in tone. He wrote a series of long prophetic books, including *Milton* and *Jerusalem.* These books promulgate a revolutionary new social, intellectual, and ethical order. The works are also threaded together by an intricate mythology and symbolism of Blake's own creation.
- Being an etcher himself, Blake published his own works by an original process in which the poems were etched by hand, along with illustrations and decorative images, onto copper plates. These plates were inked to make prints, and the prints were then colored in with paint. This expensive and labor-intensive production method resulted in a quite limited circulation of Blake's poetry during his life. Moreover it has also created problems for literary critics and art historians who have been forced as a result of his picturesque publications to view the two, namely sketches and poetry as one unit of creative production.
- When the exhibition of his works met with financial failure in 1809, Blake sank into depression and withdrew into obscurity; he remained alienated for the rest of his life. Most of his peer group saw him as an eccentric and even Wordsworth dismissed him as a madman. Blake in a way does not belong to any poetic circle or age as he was a poet of the transition period.

**ACTIVITY:**

Do you know any other great poets who were painters too? Also look up on the Blake archive or in a book Blake's illustrations of his poems.

### 2.2.1 BLAKE'S WORKS:

- Blake had engraved *The Songs of Innocence* in 1789 and *The Songs of Experience* in the period 1793-4 but he published it as a combined book in 1794 under the title, *The Songs of Innocence and Experience*. As he was working on this book he was also writing *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *The Book of Thel* and *The Visions of the Daughters of Albion*. Since he did a great deal of re-organisation with his poems *The Songs of Innocence and Experience*, is thematically arranged to show the two sides of the mind—the good and bad, or the pure and the impure.

**THINKING ACTIVITY:**

- How would you like to view the phrase Two Contrary States.
- What do you understand by the word Contrary?
- Innocence symbolized with childhood, idealism, and youthful joy and experience symbolized with disillusionment, disappointment and violent energy are the major themes in these poems. It is difficult to view Blake's conceptualization but for Blake it may have at a juncture, the conflicting as well as the complimentary state of minds. This is made clear by Blake's own lines, from The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: "Without Contraries there is no Progression..." In terms of the Songs of Innocence and experience we may see both 'Innocence' and 'Experience' as but two dialectically arranged aspects of not just the human psyche, but within and behind all Creation itself.
- Behind this rather vague and abstract view don't forget that Blake had a archetypal vision of human life. Thus for him, - 'Innocence' and 'Experience' are not abstract qualities or concepts, but active forces, persons, even gods, which manifest themselves in all human, natural and supernatural life. In his *Book of Thel*, he states that Thel is an allegorical and archetypal expression of an 'Innocence' which has not yet encountered the world of 'Experience'. In Blake's dictionary, Thel, or Innocence, may be a metaphorical goddess, an abstract state or quality, a state of mind, a perspective on life and creation, The glory of Blake's vision is that he is able to relate aspects of human psychological, spiritual and physical experience, to the more philosophical realms of the conceptual, the archetypal and the spiritual. The best examples for this are the two poems, 'Tyger' and 'Lamb'
- Read the following two sets of lines from Blake's 'tyger' and say what is wrong with these lines.

- Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
  In the forests of the night,
- And what shoulder, & what art.
  Could twist the sinews of thy heart
- Have you noticed the spelling of Tyger. Do you also notice the symbol & for the word, 'and'. Well. As already mentioned Blake was a rebel and also an eccentric man and he made his own rules even though Dr. Johnson's Dictionary of English Language had been published in 1755. Also as already stated he did not print his works and engraved them on an illustrated background. He also used quaint punctuations in his poetry. Maybe this tells you a little more about Blake the man and the poet.
- His poems are very lucid and simple and yet there is richness of experience in them as you will see when you read the Chimney sweeper. Blake too like the other Romantics uses a number of images from nature. Many of the poems also draw on religious imagery.

**2.2.2 Images and Symbols**:

- By now you may be wondering what are images? We mentioned imagery to you already in Unit 1, Lesson 1. You can once again go through it. Now just imagine that you have are walking on the beach and can feel the waves hitting against the shore. You may describe this in different ways, for example,
- The Roaring sea
- The ebb and flow of water.
- The Unfurling of the water.
- All these which invoke the senses are images. Images could be auditory (hear), olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), visual (sight), and gustatory (taste). Try and write your own images before you read the examples.
- Examples:
- The cascading water gurgled deep down. (auditory)
- The look on his face made my skin tingle. (tactile)
- The stench was overpowering. (olfactory)
- I enjoyed the sweetish salty taste of the fruit. (gustatory).
- Her eyes were searing me. (visual)

- The use of images led to the imagist movement between 1908 and 1917. The imagists used not only clear presented images but also compressed a number of ideas in these poems. Go back to lesson 1, unit I and re-read Ezra Pound's poem.
- On the other hand symbols combine literal meaning with an abstract concept. Thus flag maybe a literal representation of a country but could also stand for loyalty, patriotism, etc. Literary symbols are of two types: those that carry complex associations of meaning no matter what their contexts, and those that derive their suggestive meaning from their functions in specific literary works.
- Blake's poetry is infused with symbols. Thus his use of the animals, lamb and tiger are symbolic. Similarly his poem, 'The Sick Rose' exemplifies the concept of symbolism. Symbolism has derived from the concept of allegory.
- Symbolism too emerged as a literary movement when poetic expression of personal emotion figured strongly in the movement, typically by means of a private set of symbols uniquely identifiable with the individual. The principal aim of the Symbolists was to express in words the highly complex feelings that grew out of everyday contact with the world. In a broader sense, the term "symbolism" refers to the use of one object to represent another.
  Early members of the Symbolist movement included the French authors Charles Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud; William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, and T. S. Eliot.

**2.2.3 THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER:**

*Paraphrase of the Chimney Sweeper (Songs of Innocence), 1789*

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me before I could cry. So I am now forced to sweep the chimneys and the soot.
There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd llke a lamb's back was shaved: so I told him,
"Hush. Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."
And then he was quiet & that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned or Jack.
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

Later there came by an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run, and wash and shine.
Then naked & white, leaving all their bags behind
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father & never want joy.
At this Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark.
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

This poem is about innocence and goodness. It relates that the boy was sold as a baby and had learned to accept the life that was given to him. The narrator of the poem comforts, Tom Dacre, who is younger than him. The lamb, a symbol for purity and innocence, is used to describe him. The narrator unselfishly takes the position of a parental figure for Tom and comforts him in this situation. Tom's white hair stands for the symbol of purity. In the dream the children are allowed to wash themselves of their soot, their sins. Being children, they are already innocent and pure, but they are enabled to become more so in the dreamland. Believing in the concept of freedom Tom decides to do his work. The last line, "So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm." shows the innocence of Tom. The poet portrays children’s belief in goodness and virtue.

**2.2.4** *Paraphrase of the Chimney Sweeper (Songs of Experience), 1794*

A little black thing among the snow:
was crying and when asked
Where are thy father & mother! It said that
They are both gone up to the church to pray.
It further stated that because I was happy upon the heath,
And smiled among the winters snow:
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of sadness
And because I am happy, & dance & sing,
They think they have done me no injury:

Hence they have gone to praise God & his Priest & King
Who make up a heaven of our misery.

In this poem the narrator is left alone to play around while the parents have gone to pray to God. It reveals that experience leads to understanding and comprehension and hence, the expatiation of sin is through religion.

The two poems are poems that critique not only human nature but also England of that period where young boys were used to clean the fireplaces and the chimneys. The poems are portrayals of child labour and human nature.

**COMPREHENSION:**

Identify the speakers in the two poems.
Identify the symbols in the two poems.
How many boys are there in the first poem (Innocence)?
Why does Tom Dacre cry in the poem (Innocence)
Who comes in the dream and consoles the children. (Innocence)
How would you see the ending of the poem (Innocence)?
In experience where have the parents gone?
Why have they left the small boy (experience)?
What are your comments about the ending of the poem (experience)?
Compare and contrast the two poems and write a critical appreciation.

## LESSON 3: WORDSWORTH & COLERIDGE

**OUTLINE:**

- **Introduction to Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*.**
- **The Beginnings of the *Lyrical Ballads*:**
- **Wordsworth's Life and Poetry.**
- **Coleridge's Life and Poetry.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the concept of romantic poetry as propagated in Lyrical Ballads**
- **Comprehend the significance of Wordsworth**
- **Grasp the main ideas of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's poetry**
- **Figure out the idea of supernatural images.**

## 2.3.0 LIFE AND WORKS OF WORDSWORTH:

- I am sure that you have all read a number of lyrics of Wordsworth in school and college. As you may be aware Wordsworth has been considered one of the foremost poets in the romantic era and you may also have heard of him as a Nature Poet. Let us closely examine his life and the main ideas that he had when he wrote his poems to find out why he is so important.
- William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth, Cumberland, England on April 7th, 1770. His parents, John and Ann, died during his boyhood. Wordsworth grew up in the country side, and spent a great deal of his time playing outdoors, in what he later recollects in his poetry as ‘pure communion’ with nature.
- For a time in the early 1790s William lived in France, which was at that time undergoing the Revolution. As already mentioned n the earlier lessons many of the poets were sympathetic to the revolutionaries and Wordsworth was no exception. Even though Wordsworth's philosophical sympathies lay with the revolutionaries, his loyalties lay with England, whose monarchy he was not prepared to see overthrown.
- During his stay in France, Wordsworth had a long affair with Annette Vallon, with whom he had a daughter, Caroline. However due to the revolution he returned to England and could not go back to meet Annette. Much later he undertook a journey to France to meet Caroline, which inspired him to write the sonnet "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free."
- A legacy left to him in 1795, freed him from financial worries. Then Wordsworth moved with his sister Dorothy to Racedown, and then to Grasmere, where Wordsworth could be closer to his friend and fellow poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Together, Wordsworth and Coleridge began work on a book called *Lyrical Ballads* that was first published in 1798 and reissued with Wordsworth's historic preface in 1802.
- The publication of *Lyrical Ballads* represents a landmark moment for English poetry; it was unlike anything that had come before, and paved the way for everything that has come after. The success of *Lyrical Ballads* and his subsequent poem *The Prelude*, a massive autobiography in verse form, Wordsworth moved to the stately house at Rydal Mount where he lived, with Dorothy, his wife Mary, and his children, until his death in 1850. The last years of Wordsworth's life were spent

as the Poet Laureate of England, and until his death he was widely considered the most important author in England.

- Wordsworth's monumental poetic legacy rests on a large number of important poems, varying in length and weight from the short, simple lyrics of the 1790s to the vast expanses of The Prelude. Wordsworth in most of his poems was consistent to the tenets he set out for himself in the 1802 preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.
- Wordsworth argued in *Lyrical Ballads* that poetry should be written in the natural language of common speech, rather than in the lofty and elaborate dictions that were then considered "poetic." He argued that poetry should be open to the emotions contained in memory. He stated that the first principle of poetry should be pleasure, that the chief duty of poetry is to provide pleasure through a rhythmic and beautiful expression of feeling, because human sympathy, is based on "the naked and native dignity of man."
- Wordsworth's style remains simple, lucid and clear. Many of Wordsworth's poems deal with the subjects of childhood and the memory of childhood in the mind of the adult in particular, childhood's lost connection with nature, which can be preserved only in memory. Wordsworth's images and metaphors mix natural scenery, religious symbolism and childhood memories along with pastoral descriptions such as cottages, hedgerows, orchards, and waterfalls.
- Wordsworth's poems initiated the Romantic era by emphasizing feeling, instinct, and pleasure above formality and mannerism. More than any poet before him, Wordsworth gave expression to inchoate human emotion.

### 2.3.1 THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LYRICAL BALLADS:

- The chaos and bloodshed in Paris had moved Wordsworth immensely. At the same time he was also troubled by the rationalism propagated by thinkers like William Godwin. In the mid-1790s, Wordsworth's increasing sense of distress forced him to formulate his own knowledge of the world and of the human mind. The theory he produced, and the poetics he invented to embody it, were the basis of his poetry and also set the tone of anew idea of poetics in English literature.
- According to the theory that poetry resulted from the "spontaneous overflow" of emotions, as Wordsworth wrote in the preface, Wordsworth and Coleridge made it their task to write in the simple language of common people, telling concrete stories of their lives. According to this theory, poetry originated in "emotion

recollected in a state of tranquility"; the poet then surrendered to the emotion, so that the tranquility dissolved, and the emotion remained in the poem. This explicit emphasis on feeling, simplicity, and the pleasure of beauty over rhetoric, ornament, and formality changed the course of English poetry, replacing the elaborate classical forms of Pope and Dryden with a new Romantic sensibility. Wordsworth's most important legacy, besides his lovely, timeless poems, is his launching of the Romantic era, opening the gates for later writers such as John Keats, Shelley and Byron in England, and Emerson and Thoreau in America.

- Did you know that even before psychology had been propagated Wordsworth had come up with his own theory of psychology. Wordsworth believed that, upon being born, human beings move from a perfect, idealized realm into the imperfect, un-ideal earth. As children, some memory of the former purity and glory in which they lived remains, best perceived in the solemn and joyous relationship of the child to the beauties of nature. But as children grow older, the memory fades, and the magic of nature dies. Still, the memory of childhood can offer an important solace, which brings with it almost a kind of re-access to the lost purities of the past. And the maturing mind develops the capability to understand nature in human terms, and to see in it metaphors for human life, which compensate for the loss of the direct connection.
- Let us now attempt to read a few salient features of the preface that Wordsworth wrote to the Lyrical Ballads.
- He stated that the poems in that collection were to be considered as experiments. He further stated that they were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society was adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. He was of the view that the poems should depict the natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents.
- Another idea proposed by Wordsworth was his idea of poetry and the poet. He defines his 'sublime notion' of Poetry as the 'breath and finer spirit of all knowledge' and of the Poet as, “the rock of defense of human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed, the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is

spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and sense of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow whosesoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge--it is as immortal as the heart of man".

- The most important idea that was found in the preface was the fact that poems should be written from emotions recollected in tranquility.
- Maybe if you are already aware of these ideas then it may be easier for you to understand how these ideas were important for the future of English Poetry.
- For the first time in English literature the poetry concentrated on the experiences of "marginal figures" who had not previously received much attention from poets, namely old people, young children, mad people, and various forms of social outcasts such as abandoned women, convicts, etc.
- Secondly the poems gave importance to different verse narratives such as the ballad, the folk tale, village gossip and domestic incident.
- The use of the word 'natural' was an inspiration from the issue of the French Revolution.
- Finally the use of nature as a mode of education itself was the greatest innovation of Wordsworth. Thus nature became not only a tool for moral and educative purposes but nature was also the benefactor, the soother and in the case of Coleridge also the supernatural element.
- As Stephen Gill states in his *William Wordsworth: A Life*

  Much has been written about the style of these lyrical ballads and about the ways in which Wordsworth diverged, radically and originally, both from the magazine poetry of the day, which he rightly deplored, and from the mainstream eighteenth-century poets to whom he owed so much. What needs to be stressed, however, is that Wordsworth's literary experimentation was serving political ends. Addressing himself to the poetry-reading public--that is, to the legislating, voting, rate-paying, opinion-forming middle class--Wordsworth wanted to defamiliarize poetry and the subject matter of poetry, to remove 'the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude' which dulls the eye and hardens the heart. And what the reader's awakened sensibility was asked to comprehend was the pathos, tragedy, or dignity inherent in the burbling of an idiot boy, in the gratitude of an enfeebled old man, or even in the

shuffling gait of an old Cumberland beggar. Later in life Coleridge analyzed Wordsworth thus: “having by the conjoint operation of his own experiences, feelings, and reason himself convinced himself of Truths, which the generality of persons have either taken for granted from their infancy, or at least adopted in early life, he has attached all their own depth and weight to doctrines and words, which come almost as Truisms or Common-place to others” (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

**RECAP:**

- Wordsworth draws on eighteenth-century issues of primitivism, pleasure, and the relation of poetry to prose.
- For fundamental human concerns, the 'great and simple affections of our nature', and for a permanently valid language, men must turn not to the polite world of refined manners and educated speech but to the world of ordinary and common men.
- The poem's primary task was 'producing immediate pleasure'.
- The poet was the rock of defense of human nature and an upholder and preserver, of the human society.

**Conclusion:**

- As mentioned earlier Wordsworth's personality and poetry were deeply influenced by his love of nature, especially by the sights and scenes of the Lake Country, in which he spent most of his mature life.
- He was a profoundly earnest and sincere thinker, who revealed a deep sense of seriousness tempered with tenderness and a love of simplicity.
- Wordsworth's earlier work shows the poetic beauty of commonplace things and people as in ‘Margaret’, ‘Peter Bell’, ‘Michael’, and ‘The Idiot Boy’.
- His use of the language of ordinary speech was heavily criticized, but it helped future English poetry to remove the artificial conventions of earlier poetry.
- Among his other well-known poems are ‘Lucy’ (“She dwelt among the untrodden ways”), ‘The Solitary Reaper’, ‘Resolution and Independence’ ‘Daffodils’, ‘The Rainbow’, and the sonnet ‘The World Is Too Much with Us’.
- Although Wordsworth was venerated in the 19th cent., by the early twentieth century his reputation had declined. He was criticized for the unevenness of his

poetry, for his emotional outbursts, and for his transformation from an open-minded liberal to a cramped conservative.

- In recent years, however, Wordsworth has again been recognized as a great English poet—a profound, original thinker who created a new poetic tradition.

### 2.3.2 RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE:

- First read Wordsworth's poem. This poem did you know also was called as The Leech Gatherer. Now first ponder over these points and then read the paraphrase given below.
- What do you understand by the term Resolution? What examples can you give to depict resolution?
- What do you understand by independence? What is the freedom between liberation, freedom and independence? Pick up a dictionary and look up each of these concepts.
- Do you think being independent is easy?
- After thinking on these concepts read the poem once again and then read the commentary and paraphrase given here.

### 2.3.3 COMMENTARY:

- A man walks through the countryside after a night of rain. The creatures around him are lively and refreshed. At first, he shares their joy, but his mood soon turns as he reflects that care and pain are the inevitable balance to the care-free life he has lead so far.
- He comes upon an old man staring into a muddy pond. The man seems weighed down with care; he is so still he seems dead. He greets the man and asks what he is doing. The old man is a leech-gatherer, leeches being needed by eighteenth-century doctors. He wanders the moors, sleeping outside, and thus makes a steady living. The wanderer resolves not to give in to misery, but to think instead of the courage and firm mind of the leech gatherer.
- Wordsworth had a firm belief in the wisdom of what he called "the common man" (even if the common man needed his thoughts and feelings expressed by an elevated poet like himself). The leech gatherer has wisdom and fortitude that can elevate the wiser poet. The poet's art and aim is not to instruct, but to reflect the

beauty of the world. This was a revolution in poetry as poetry in earlier times had a pedantic function.

- A similar change occurred in Romantic medicine. Doctors were expected to listen to their patients' complaints, taking a history much like the wanderer of this poem takes the history of the leech gatherer to gain his enlightenment. Like the wandering poet, the physician is a being with a higher level of language and knowledge.
- The leech gatherer also reveals the economics that underlie medicinal practices. Someone has to gather the leeches. Notice that Wordsworth finds the gatherer's oppression ennobling. Finally, the poet's sense that doom must follow happiness reflects a common Romantic belief that opposition/balance is a guiding principle. Suffering and joy go hand in hand.

**2.3.5 PARAPHRASE:**

- THERE was a roaring in the wind all night and it had rained heavily flooding everything. But now the sun was rising calm and bright; while the birds were singing in the distant woods; Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove brooded and the Jay made answer as the Magpie chattered and all the air was filled with the pleasant noise of waters.
- All things that loved the sun were out of doors; the sky rejoiced in the morning's birth; the grass was bright with rain-drops; on the moors the hare was running races in her mirth; and with her feet she raised a mist that runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.
- At that time, I was a traveller upon the moor, and I saw the hare that raced about with joy. Moreover, I heard the woods and distant waters roar as happy as a boy. The pleasant season did my heart employ while my old remembrances went from me wholly; And all the ways of men, stood before me as vain and melancholy.
- But, as sometimes it happens from the height of joy in minds that can no further go, When we are in great delight In our dejection do we sink as low; To me that morning it happened so; And fears and fancies thick upon me came of dim sadness--and blind thoughts, I knew not, and which I could not name.
- I heard the sky-lark singing and I thought of the playful hare: Even as these blissful creatures do I fare; Far from the world of care I walk, but there may come another day to me solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

- I have lived my whole life in pleasant thought, As if life's business were a summer mood; And as if all needful things would come unsought to genial faith, and genial good; But how can He expect that others should Build for him, sow for him, and at his call Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?
- I thought of Chatterton, the sleepless Soul that perished in his pride; by our own spirits are we sanctified: We Poets in our youth begin in gladness; But thereof come in the end cheerlessness and madness.
- Now, whether it was by peculiar grace, a eading from above, or something else, Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place, When I with these untoward thoughts had striven, Beside a pool that was bare to the eye of heaven I saw a Man standing before me unawares The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.
- As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie couched on the bald top of an eminence; Masking us wonder from where it came By what means it could thither come, and whence; Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf of rock or sand lied down, there to sun itself;
- Such seemed this Man, neither alive nor dead, nor asleep. His body was bent double, feet and head coming together in life's pilgrimage; As if a terrible constraint of pain, or rage or sickness was felt by him long ago. A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.
- Himself he held upon a long grey staff of shaven wood: And, still as I drew near with gentle pace, edge of that moorish flood -- Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood.
- At length, himself moving, he stirred the pond with his staff, and fixedly did look. Upon the muddy water, into which he looked, as if he had been reading a book: And now I took a stranger's privilege; and, drawing to his side, to him did say, ‘This morning, doesn’t it give us promise of a glorious day.’
- At this the gentle answer did the old Man make, in courteous speech which forth he slowly drew: And him with further words I then spoke, ‘What occupation do you there pursue? This is a lonesome place for one like you’. Before he replied, a flash of mild surprise came into his vivid eyes.
- His words came weakly, from a feeble chest, but each in solemn order followed each. Appropriate word and measured phrase, which was above the reach of

ordinary men. He gave a stately speech such as Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

- He told, that to these waters he had come to gather leeches, being old and poor being a job that was hazardous and tiresome he had many hardships to endure from pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor; Staying here and there with God's good help, And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.
- The old Man still stood talking by my side; but now his voice to me was like a stream that was hardly heard; nor word from word could I divide; and the whole body of the Man did seem Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
- My former thoughts returned of the fear that killed; made me think of mighty Poets in their misery dead. At that a little confused I questioned, "How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"
- He with a smile did then his words repeat; And told me that to gather leeches, far and wide He had traveled different places such as the old man states that the waters of the pools where they abide have dwindled because of slow decay; And ‘Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may’.
- While he was talking thus, the lonely place, The old Man's shape, and speech--all troubled me: In my mind's eye I seemed to see him walk up and down About the weary moors continually, Wandering about alone and silently. I these thoughts within myself pursued.
- Finally he ended, and I could have laughed myself to scorn to find in that decrepit Man so firm a mind. ‘God’, said I, ‘be my help and stay secure; I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor’.

**1807**

**COMPREHENSION:**

Who is the speaker in the poem?

What are the images of nature that the poet describes?

Who is the poet who dies?

Why is the death significant?

What does the poet feel at this point?

On his walk whom does the poet see?

What is the leech gatherer doing?

Why is his job important?

What are the three images that Wordsworth brings up at this point?

What lesson does Wordsworth get from the old man?

### 2.3.6 LIFE AND WORKS OF COLERIDGE: (1772-1834)

- Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in Ottery St Mary, Devonshire. He was the youngest son of the vicar of Ottery St Mary.
- On his father's death Coleridge was sent to Christ's Hospital School in London. He later studied at Jesus College. While in Cambridge Coleridge met the radical poet and the future poet laureate Robert Southey.
- He then moved with Southey to Bristol to establish a community, but their ideas did not materialise.
- In 1795 he married Sara Fricker, who was the sister of Southey's fiancée.
- In 1796 Coleridge's collection Poems *On Various Subjects* was published, followed in 1797 with *Poems*. In the same year he started the short-lived liberal political periodical *The Watchman*.
- Also a close friendship with Dorothy and William Wordsworth, resulted in a fruitful creative relationship. It resulted in the publication of the Lyrical Ballads, which opened with Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and ended with Wordsworth's ‘Tintern Abbey’. These poems set a new style by using everyday language and fresh ways of looking at nature.
- An annuity of 150 pounds by the brothers Josiah and Thomas Wedgewood enabled Coleridge to pursue his literary career.
- Embittered with political developments in France, Coleridge visited Germany in 1798-99 along with Dorothy and William Wordsworth. He then became influenced by the works of Immanuel Kant. He studied philosophy at Göttingen University and mastered the German language.
- At the end of 1799 Coleridge fell in love with Sara Hutchinson, the sister of Wordsworth's future wife, to whom he devoted his work ‘Dejection: An Ode’ (1802).
- During these years Coleridge also began to compile his *Notebooks*, recording the daily meditations of his life.
- In 1809-10 he along with Sara Hutchinson wrote and edited the literary and political magazine *The Friend*.

- From 1808 to 1818 he gave several lectures, chiefly in London, and began to be considered the greatest of Shakespearean critics.
- In 1810 Coleridge's friendship with Wordsworth came to a crisis, and the two poets never fully returned to the relationship they had earlier. Coleridge had become addicted to opium, which he had begun to take to relieve his suffering from neuralgic and rheumatic pains,. During the following years he lived in London, on the verge of suicide. He found a permanent shelter in High gate in the household of Dr. James Gillman, and enjoyed an almost legendary reputation among the younger Romantics.
- In 1816 the unfinished poems "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan" were published, and next year appeared "Sibylline Leaves". According to Coleridge "Kubla Khan" was inspired by a dream vision.
- His most important production during this period was the *Biographia Literaria* (1817).
- From 1817 Coleridge devoted himself to theological works. Coleridge was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1824. He died in Highgate, near London on July 25, 1834.

**2.3.7 KUBLA KHAN:**

- Read Kubla Khan on your own and write down your impressions about it. Did you find it a fascinating and exasperating poem. Everyone who reads it is charmed by its magic, and almost everyone thinks s/he knows what it is about.
- It is probably true that no poem of comparable length in English or any other language has been the subject of so much critical commentary. Its fifty-four lines have spawned thousands of pages of discussion and analysis.
- Perhaps the strangest fact connected with this strange poem is the dearth of early references to it. Coleridge mentions Kubla Khan on only three occasions: (1) in the endnote of the Crewe Manuscript (1810?) he gives a brief account of the poem's origin; (2) in the long Preface added to the poem in 1816 he provides a much fuller story of the composition of Kubla Khan, but the account in the 1816 Preface differs significantly from that in the Crewe endnote; and (3) in September 1830 he told Henry Nelson Coleridge that "I wrote Kubla Khan in Brimstone Farm between Porlock and Ilfracombe -- near Culbone".

- After a number of studies, most Coleridge scholars have come to accept the fall of 1797 as the probable date of composition. Of Kubla Khan.
- Coleridge, himself has given an explanation of how Kubla Khan came to be written. The poet, in ill health, had retired to a lonely farmhouse; as the result of a "slight indisposition", he had taken an "anodyne" and fallen asleep while reading about Kubla Khan's palace in Purchas's Pilgrimage. Continuing "for about three hours in a profound sleep", his dreaming mind (triggered by what he had been reading in Purchas) was swept up into a poetic vision of some 300 lines -- a vision so powerful and immediate that "all the images rose up before him as things". Upon awaking he eagerly set about transcribing his dream-vision, when, unfortunately, he was "called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him [71] above an hour". Returning to his room, he discovered to his great dismay that, "though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter!" Nevertheless, "from the still surviving recollections in his mind", he has often proposed to finish for himself "what had been originally, as it were, given to him". And he closed the account with a motto from Theocritus: "Tomorrow I'll sing a sweeter song."
- Coleridge's use of opium has long been a topic of fascination, and the grouping of Coleridge, opium and Kubla Khan led to further discussions about the contemporary view of opium in the late eighteenth century; the extent of Coleridge's use and reliance on opiates in the late 1790s; myths and medical evidence about the relationship between opium and the poetic imagination; and Kubla Khan as an "opium dream".
- Let us briefly try to see what is Kubla Khan about? The poem is about a e Tartar prince Kubla Khan, who causes a pleasure-dome and elaborate gardens to be constructed in Xanadu. His glorious creation, as the ancestral voices from the deep caverns warn, is a precariously balanced reconciliation of the natural and the artificial. The dream of Xanadu itself is an inspired vision which expresses dramatically the very nature of vision: the fountain that throws up its waters from an underground ocean and so gives birth to the sacred river that meanders five

miles through Kubla's gardens. Here one must recognize that Coleridge attempt to recollect a dream and construct had two serious difficulties: first, language is an inadequate medium that permits only an approximation of the visions it is used to record, and, second, the visions themselves, by the time the poet comes to set them down, have faded into the light of common day and must be reconstructed from memory.

- Coleridge confronts these problems directly in lines 37-54 (the section beginning with the Abyssinian maid), where he enters the poem as lyric poet.
- Now the vision of Kubla's Xanadu is replaced by that of a damsel singing of Mount Abora -- an experience more auditory than visual and therefore less susceptible of description by mere words.
- Coleridge laments, he could revive within him the damsel's lost symphony and song, if only he could recapture the whole of the original vision instead of just a portion of it, then he would build "in air" (i.e. find verbal music to express) the vision he had experienced -- and he would do so in such a way that witnesses would declare him to be divinely inspired and form a circle of worship around him.
- According to some accounts, Xanadu is Paradise Regained and Kubla symbolises the creative artist who gives concrete expression to the ideal forms of truth and beauty
- According to other accounts, however, Kubla is a self-indulgent materialist, a daemonic figure, who imposes his tyrannical will upon the natural world and so produces a false paradise of contrived artifice
- The images of the Abyssinian maid and the inspired poet in the closing section of the poem also present serious difficulties in interpretation.
- In fact, the use of every image in the poem, such as the sacred river Alph, the substance and shadow of Kubla's pleasure-dome, the ancestral voices and so on have proved a source of enigma to scholars.
- Despite the popularity of the view that Kubla Khan is a poem about poetry, then, there is no consensus about just what is being said about the poetic process.
- Another approach to Kubla Khan, which overlaps significantly with readings of it as a symbolic statement about poetry, centres on the use of Coleridge's own poetic theory, namely, pleasure, genius, the reconciliation of opposites, and fancy / imagination in an effort to illuminate the poem.

- The intellectual symbiosis of Coleridge and Wordsworth, especially in the period 1797-1804, has scarcely any parallel in literary history. As poets and poetic theorists, both men flourished together, each making reflective contributions to the other's development, each fostering poetic growth.
- In their differences as in their similarities they left indelible imprints upon one another. The Ancient Mariner, begun as a joint composition, marks a crucial stage in the growth of their literary relationship and in their separate but mutually assisting search for an individual poetic theme and voice.
- At one time it was fashionable either to denigrate Wordsworth's contribution to The Ancient Mariner or, conversely, to argue that Coleridge's ballad is, in essence, merely a restatement of the Wordsworthian philosophy of Nature.
- In the spring of 1798, however, a dramatic change took place. Apparently as the result of long and serious aesthetic discussions, the two poets became aware of some basic differences in their approaches to poetic style and the subjects most appropriate for contemporary poetry.
- The consequence of this discovery took the form of an agreement to write two different kinds of poems while remaining faithful to two cardinal principles of poetry -- namely, "a faithful adherence to the truth of nature" and "the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination" (*Biographia Literaria,* ii 5).
- It was Coleridge's task to produce poems in which "the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural" and in which a human interest was transferred from "our inward nature" in such a way as "to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (*Biographia Literaria,* ii 5-6).
- In other words, Coleridge was to employ the supernatural as an expressive medium, or symbol, for "romantic" emotional states (fear, guilt, remorse, etc.) and to imitate these states with such psychological fidelity and dramatic force that the reader, would momentarily recognise truths of his own inner being in the fictional incidents or characters represented.
- With this object in view he rewrote The Ancient Mariner in February-March 1798, transforming a Gothic horror-ballad into a direct emotional evocation of a guilty man's spiritual voyage of self-discovery through the unseen moral universe that lies

within and above us all. In addition, he began work on The Ballad of the Dark Ladié and on Christabel, in which, he said later, he would "have more nearly realized [his] ideal" than he had in The Ancient Mariner (*Biographia Literaria,* ii 6).

- While Coleridge was thus engaged in making the strange more familiar, Wordsworth set about composing poems of a different sort: his aim, according to Coleridge, was to produce poems that would "excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural" by stripping from everyday objects and situations the film of custom and familiarity that obscure from us "the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us" (*Biographia Literaria,* ii 6).
- To accomplish this end, Wordsworth wrote the series of poems, mostly new compositions but occasionally revisions of existing drafts, which ultimately made up his portion of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).
- Although the majority of the lyrics and ballad-like narrative poems composed by Wordsworth in March-May 1798 were written simply in fulfilment of his agreement to give "the charm of novelty to things of every day" (*Biographia Literaria,* ii 6), there are a certain number of poems from this period in which he moves beyond this

**COMPREHENSION:**

- What symbolism do you see in the poem that might refer to the act of creating?
- Consider the power of the Khan and his "decree," and what his decree is designed to achieve; and consider the last stanza
- What does the river Alph suggest?
- Comparing the imagery of the first division of the poem to that of the second, what contrasts do you see, and what do they suggest, for instance, about the relationship between creating and nature?
- What is the significance of "ancestral voices prophesying war"?
- In the third section of the poem, who, or what, again symbolically, is the "damsel"?
- In terms of the poem's structure, what might be the implications of her appearing at this point?
- Consider the shift in point of view that takes placein the third section of the poem.

## LESSON 4: SHELLEY & KEATS

**OUTLINE:**

- **Shelley's Life and Poetry.**
- **Ode to the West Wind.**
- **Keats's Life and Poetry.**
- **Ode on a Grecian Urn.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the important issues that were propagated in the poetry of Shelley and Keats.**
- **Have a perception about Shelley's Ode**
- **Grasp the significance of art and aesthetics as shaped by Keats's poetry.**

### 2.4.0 PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY: LIFE AND WORKS: (1792-1822)

- I suppose you have all heard of Shelley and his famous odes. What may however surprise you is that Shelley himself was quite wealthy but he was always at the centre of controversy due to his radical thoughts and actions. When you go through his life I think you will understand this more clearly.
- Shelley was born into a wealthy aristocratic family in Sussex. He rejected the conservative principles of his family to lead the life of a radical and a rebel. He was educated first at Eton, where, he had to encounter a lot of bullies and this led him to hatred of tyrants and a sympathy for the oppressed.
- Later, at Oxford, Shelley collaborated with a friend, Thomas Hogg, to publish a pamphlet that dealt with the Enlightenment issue of the proof of God's existence.

The pamphlet, was titled, *The Necessity of Atheism* and took up the position that God's being is not provable on empirical grounds. He was expelled from the university when he refused to withdraw the pamphlet and his family was furious at him.

- Despite his disbelief in the institution of marriage Shelley got married to Harriet Westbrook, the daughter of the proprietor of a local coffee house. This alienated his father. The young couple moved form place to place, Shelley involving himself in various radical causes. They had several children, but the marriage was a dismal failure.
- Shelley then in 1814 met and fell in love with Mary Godwin, the daughter of the radical philosopher William Godwin, and of the feminist critic, Mary Wollstonecraft. Leaving Harriet, Shelley left for Europe with Mary and then he then wrote to invite Harriet to join his household in France. Two years later, Harriet drowned herself and then Shelley married Mary, with whom he had returned to London. In London they were ostracized by friends and relatives and then they moved to Italy in 1818.
- Shelley, who was not very healthy, hoped that the Italian climate would improve his but on the other hand his wife, Mary Shelley suffered a nervous breakdown. While in Italy his two children died within a year of their move.
- Nevertheless, the Italian period was Shelley's most productive. Between 1819 an 1821 he wrote his most famous lyrics as well as *Prometheus Unbound*. This was also when he wrote the essay 'A Defense of Poetry'. Shelley wrote the elegy Adonais. When he learnt of the death of the young poet John Keats.
- In his final days he settled in Pisa and died while on a boat when it was caught in a storm on July 8, 1822.

**2.4.1 WHAT IS AN ODE:**

- This bit of information is for those of you who do not know what an ode is. The ode is a lyric poem of some length, dealing with a lofty theme in a dignified manner. It was originally meant for singing. The English odes were initiated by the Pindaric Ode which had developed from the are ancient Greek poet Pindar. Later, Abraham Cowley, an English poet of the 17th century changed the structure slightly and it began to be called as Cowley ode. Another form of the ode is the Horatian ode, named after the ancient Roman poet Horace.

- Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is of the Horatian type, i.e., with stanzas of uniform length and arrangement. He also used the "terza rima," an Italian measure first used by Dante in his well-known poem *La Divina Commedia*.

**2.4.2 ODE TO THE WEST WIND:**

Have you read this poem earlier? If not read it once again before you read what is written here. You may also do well to look up what the west wind is.

**COMMENTARY:**

- This was written in 1819 and the poem uses once again a romantic theme—nature. This ode explores a central romantic metaphor: the wind as the poet's inspiration. Shelley uses a three-line unit, a tercet, rhyming a b a; followed by the next one. **Remember that tercet is three line unit**. After four tercets of interlocking rhyme, aba bcb cdc ded, the stanza ends in a couplet using the "e" rhyme. Thus each stanza has fourteen lines.
- In the first stanza the poet addresses the wind where in he refers to the wind as the "breath of Autumn" that blows dead leaves and dormant seeds into cold winter beds and then as the breath of spring that will revive the earth with colors and sweet odors. He calls the wind Destroyer because it brings the death of plants and Preserver because it scatters sees for rebirth in the spring.
- In the second stanza he develops the images of the sky. The clouds are broken up and scattered like leaves by the wind. Shelley compares them with the hair of a maenad. **In case you do not know the Maenad is a female attendant to Dionysus, the ancient Greek god of vegetation**. The clouds are blown about by winds of a coming storm. At night the dark dome of the sky is like the sepulcher of the "dying year."
- In the next stanza he takes the reader back to summer, a sweet and sleepy time. Focusing on the ocean the poet points out that water plants, also respond to the change of seasons; when the winds of autumn make waves on the surface, plants below lose their foliage.
- The descriptions in the first three stanzas are hen brought up in the fourth stanza where the poet supposes that if he were a leaf, cloud, or ocean wave he would be moved by the power of the west wind. He recollects how he ran freely in the wind as a boy. But now he feels no such freedom or power. He needs power and begs to

be lifted by the wind of inspiration. He cries out in despair, "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed."

- In the final stanza, the metaphor of wind as power and inspiration is shifted. The poet introduces the Aeolian lyre or wind harp. The poet asks to be made an instrument upon which the wind can play "mighty harmonies." He wants the wind like power to scatter and spread his ideas across the earth. The final couplet suggests that hope is rising from the previous despair. It asks the rhetorical question "If Winter comes, can spring be far behind?" The idea that the poet moots is that if the natural cycle of life is from death to rebirth, then there is hope for the rebirth of the poet's ideas.
- If you have read the poem carefully you will have noticed that the poem has used the classical elements of air (wind), earth, water (ocean), and fire (sparks).

**Major idea:**

- In this poem Shelley incorporates his own art into his meditation on beauty and the natural world. Shelley invokes the wind magically, describing its power and its role as both "destroyer and preserver," and asks the wind to shake him out of his inertia "as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!" In the last section, the poet does a remarkable task of shaping the wind into a metaphor for his own art, the expressive capacity that drives "dead thoughts" like "withered leaves" over the universe, to "quicken a new birth". He theorises --that it is like quickening the onset of spring. In the poem, the spring season is a metaphor for a "spring" of human consciousness, imagination, liberty, or morality. These are the different tools which Shelley hoped would transform human beings. Shelley asks the wind to be his spirit, and in the same breath he makes it his metaphorical spirit, his poetic faculty. This spirit, he hopes will play him like a musical instrument, the way the wind strums the leaves of the trees.
- Notice the shift in the romantic mood. In Wordsworth and Coleridge nature was a source of truth and authentic experience, but in the case of poets like Shelley and Keats nature is viewed as a source of beauty and aesthetic experience. In this poem, as a critic mentions, “Shelley explicitly links nature with art by finding powerful natural metaphors with which to express his ideas about the power, import, quality, and ultimate effect of aesthetic expression”.

- What are the major thematic concerns of Shelley's poetry? Well they are the same themes that defined Romanticism.
- Beauty.
- Freedom.
- Human passions.
- Nature.
- Creativity.
- Imagination.
- In what way then is Shelley different you may think. He is different because he sketches a philosophical relationship to his subject matter.
- Shelley is a very optimistic poet who believed in the possibility of realizing an ideal of human happiness as based on beauty.
- Shelley's intense feelings about beauty and expression are present also in poems such as 'To a Skylark'.
- Another work in which you may find the same aesthetic philosophy is his important essay, *A Defense of Poetry,* in which he argues that poetry brings about moral good. Poetry, according to Shelley, exercises and expands the imagination, and the imagination is the source of sympathy, compassion, and love, which rest on the ability to project oneself into the position of another person.
- He writes,

  A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others. The pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void forever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb. (*Defense*)
- Shelley was believed in the humanizing effect of poetry. He thought that poetry makes people and society better*;* his poetry is suffused with this kind of inspired moral optimism, which he hoped would affect his readers sensuously, and spiritually.

**POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:**

- How does Shelley's treatment of nature differ from that of the earlier Romantic poets? What connections does he make between nature and art, and how does he illustrate those connections?
- How and why does Shelley believe poetry to be an instrument of moral good? What impact does this belief have on his poems, if any?
- Shelley's poem includes a climactic moment, an instant when the poet's feelings overwhelm him and overwhelm his poem. What are some of these moments? How do they relate to the poems as wholes?

**2.4.3 KEATS: LIFE AND WORKS: (1795-1821)**

- Most of you may have once again heard the name of Keats and all of you at one time or the other may have heard maxims such as 'Beauty is truth, truth is beauty' or 'A thing of beauty is joy forever'.
- John Keats lived for a very short period of time and yet in that period he wrote some of the most beautiful and enduring poems in the English language.
- His greatest achievements in poetry are the six lyric odes, written between March and September 1819. At that time Keats was only twenty-four years old.
- Keats's poetic achievement did not progress to great heights due to his death in February 1821. This was just a year after finishing the ode 'To Autumn'.
- Keats was born in 1795 to a lower-middle-class family in London. He lost both his parents when he was still young. His mother fell prey to tuberculosis, the disease that later led to the death of Keats too.
- At the age of fifteen, Keats entered into a medical apprenticeship, and then attended a medical school. But by the time he turned twenty, he abandoned his medical training to devote himself wholly to poetry.
- He published his first book of poems in 1817 which were attacked mercilessly by critics of an influential magazine. His second book, the succeeding year attracted

little notice. At around the same time in 1818, Keats's brother Tom died of tuberculosis and Keats moved in with a friend in Hampstead.

- There he fell in love with a young girl named Fanny Brawne. During this time, Keats began to experience the extraordinary creative inspiration that enabled him to write, at a frantic rate, all his best poems in the time before he died.

- Gradually his health declined sharply. He also began to have financial difficulties. He set off for Italy in the summer of 1820, hoping the warmer climate might restore his health but this was not to be.
- His death brought an untimely end to one of the most extraordinary poetic careers of the nineteenth century. During his lifetime, Keats did not achieve widespread recognition for his work. This criticism made him request bitterly for the line: ‘Here lies one whose name was writ on water’ to be etched on his tombstone. He was however sustained by a deep inner confidence in his own ability and a little before his death, he remarked that he believed he would be among "the English poets" when he had died.

**2.4.4 ODES:**

- Keats's great odes are quintessentially Romantic depicting the usual romantic concerns, namely the beauty of nature, the relation between imagination and creativity, the response of the passions to beauty and suffering, and the transience of human life in time. The lavish sensualness of the odes, their idealistic concern for beauty and truth, and their expressive agony in the face of death are Romantic preoccupations that were uniquely Keats's.
- Taken together, the odes do not tell any story nor do they have a unifying "plot" or recurring characters. There is no indication that Keats intended them to stand together as a single work of art and yet the extraordinary number of suggestive interpretations between them is impossible to ignore.
- The odes explore and develop the theme of beauty and art, use similar approaches and images, and, exhibit an unmistakable psychological development. This does not mean that the poems have no depth individually. In fact each of the odes is rich in language, images as well as thoughts.
- There has been a great deal of critical debate over how to treat the voices that speak the poems and the poems have formed the basis of a number of arguments.

- Sometimes there may be no harm in treating the odes as a sequence of utterances statedin the same voice. The psychological progress from "Ode on Indolence" to "To Autumn" is intimately personal.

**2.4.5 ODE ON A GRECIAN URN:**

Before you read this section, please read the poem carefully. Also look up the word Grecian and Urn. Do you know what the Grecian Urn is now?

From URL: http://www.fotosearch.com/ART175/gop011/

This is an urn. Also look up why urns were used and what was the importance of these in the past. Do we use Urns today in our country?

**Summary**

- In the first stanza, of the ode the speaker addresses an ancient Grecian urn standing before it. He is pensive and thoughtful when he sees the pictures that are depicted on the urn. He feels that they are frozen in time. He calls the urn as the 'still unravish'd bride of quietness', the 'foster-child of silence and slow time'. He also describes the urn as a "historian" and wonders the relation of the figures on the side of the urn and asks what legend they depict and from where they come. He then views a picture that seems to depict a group of men pursuing a group of women and wonders what their story could be remarking, 'What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape? / What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?'
- The speaker looks at another picture on the urn In the second stanza. Here he notices a young man playing a pipe, lying with his lover beneath a glade of trees. The speaker feels that the piper's "unheard" melodies are sweeter than mortal melodies because they are unaffected by time. He makes the statement that though the youth can never kiss his lover because he is frozen in time, he should not grieve, because her beauty will never fade.

- In stanza three, he looks at the trees surrounding the lovers and feels happy because they will remain evergreen. In other words as they are frozen in time they will not shed their leaves. He is happy for the piper because his songs will be "for ever new," and happy that the love of the boy and the girl will last forever, unlike mortal love, which lapses into "breathing human passion" and eventually vanishes, leaving behind only a "burning forehead, and a parching tongue."
- The speaker, in the fourth stanza, examines another picture on the urn, this time of a group of villagers leading a heifer to be sacrificed. He wonders where they are going ("To what green altar, O mysterious priest...") and from where they have come. He tries to build up in his mind their little town, empty of all its citizens, and states that town's streets will "for evermore" be silent, because the picture is already captured on the urn.
- In the fifth and final stanza, the speaker again addresses the urn itself, saying that just like perpetuity; it teases us out of thought. He thinks that when his generation is long dead, the urn will remain, telling future generations its statement: 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'.
- Each of the five stanzas in "Grecian Urn" is ten lines long, metered in a relatively precise iambic pentameter, and divided into a two part rhyme scheme, the last three lines of which are variable. The first seven lines of each stanza follow an *ababcde* rhyme scheme, but the second occurrences of the *cde* sounds do not follow the same order. In stanza one and five, if lines seven through ten are rhymed *dce*; in stanza two it is *ced* while in stanzas three and four the rhyme is *cde*. The two part rhyme scheme creates the sense of a two-part thematic structure. The first four lines of each stanza more or less define the subject of the stanza, while the last six approximately explicate or develop it.

**Major Theme:**

- The major theme of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is to display the timelessness of art. The Grecian urn, passed down through countless centuries to the time of the speaker's viewing, exists outside of time in the human sense. In other words it does not grow old nor does it die. For the speaker this is paradoxical because then he sees the human figures carved into the side of the urn and these human figurines are free from time, but they are at the same time frozen too as they are unable to get out of the urn.

- The final two lines, in which the speaker imagines the urn speaking its message to mankind--"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," have proved among the most difficult to interpret in the Keats canon. After the urn utters the enigmatic phrase "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," no one can say for sure who "speaks" the conclusion, "that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." It could be the speaker addressing the urn, and it could be the urn addressing mankind. You may ponder over this and come up with your own ideas of truth and beauty.

**COMPREHENSION:**

- Why can the illustrated urn "express / A Flowery tale" more effectively than poetry?
- Why can the speaker not determine whether the figures painted on the urn are mortals ("men"), immortals ("gods"), or both?
- Why does the poet state that the "maidens" depicted on this side of the vase are "loath"?
- From the key words that the poet uses to characterize the scene in the last three lines, of the first stanza explain what is depicted.
- How can the melodies here be real and yet be unheard?
- What "goal" does the lover nearly achieve? Why, although he does not achieve his goal, is he nevertheless fortunate?
- What does Keats imply about music, love, and the power of the imagination in the second stanza?
- Why do the "ditties" have no "tone"?
- Why do the words "happy" and "forever" occur so many times in stanza three?
- Although the artist who painted the vase's figures modelled them upon reality, how are they now very different from their real counterparts?
- Why will the boughs never say goodbye to spring season.
- How does the series of rhetorical questions in stanza four reflect those the speaker makes in the first one?
- What do the  procession, the priest, and the sacrificial heifer depict.
- Why can the poet not determine which of the three places mentioned is the locale of the "little town"?
- What is a pastoral, and how are the scenes depicted on the urn specifically "pastoral"?

- The urn teases the viewer "out of thought" and into what states beyond reason and logic?
- Explain why Keats addresses the urn as "fair attitude."
- What does Keats mean by "this generation"?
- **Negative Capabilty:**

  Did you know that Keats was an advocate of an artistic ability called as ‘negative capability’? Now what is negative capability? Simplistically it is a critical term that implies that the artist possesses the ability to lose himself in the contemplation of and self-identification with his subject. Just see how does this last stanza of the poem exemplify "negative capability"?

  The word Negative Capability was used by Keats in one of his letters. This is what he wrote:

  I mean Negative Capability, that is, *when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason*-Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge. This pursued through volumes would perhaps take us no further than this that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, *or rather obliterates all consideration*. (Letters)

**UNIT -III**

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION—VICTORIANISM (1837-1901)

**OUTLINE:**

- **Background: Period from 1714 to 1836**
- **Victorian Age**
- **Central issues of Victorianism.**
- **Important developments**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the concept of Victorianism.**
- **Know the political and social contexts.**
- **Comprehend the major features of the Victorian period.**

**3.1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

- Those of you who have done history in school and college will have definitely come across the name of Queen Victoria. As you may deduce correctly the Victorian period in England was named after Queen Victoria**.**

- Before one looks at the Victorian period one must understand a little about the Georgian period too, namely the period from 1714 to 1836. This period pre-ceded the Victorian period.

- Once again as you may have guessed this period in history was called as Georgian because of the rule of George 1-1V.

- This period can be distinguished into three sections based on some of the dominant trends. The sections are the neoclassical period from 1714-1750, the sentimental period from 1750-1780 and the romantic period from 1780-1820.

- These distinctions are just for historical categorizations and one must remember that as far as literature is concerned we generally term the age as a period of romanticism.
- Let us at this point a little about the last phases of the Georgian rule.

- The last of the Georgian Era was the rule of George III (1760 -1820) which was followed by the Regency in England.
- In case you do not know the meaning of the word regency, it arises from the word regent which means a person or group selected to look after the affairs of a kingdom when the king is ill, disabled or absent. Since Gorge III was repeatedly ill, his son William was declared as the Prince Regent (1810-1820).The corrupt Prince Regent, who eventually reigned as George IV, conveyed his lack of purpose and morality to the intellectual and aristocratic classes.
- Though the rule of the Georges was not of great value yet this was a period when some changes occurred that helped to establish the Victorian period. During this time, Britain won its won their long war against the French, and quashed Napoleon's "Hundred Days," but a chain of economic crises rocked England. This was the time when the Luddite protests and the beginnings of the Industrial revolution took place.

**Luddite movement:**

- Luddite movement began when the development and growth of mechanical weaving frames began to threaten the cottage industries in England. Workers calling themselves Luddites, (a name that was inspired by their imaginary leader, Thomas Ludd) began the "Luddite" movement where in they smashed weaving frames in an attempt to obtain through force changes in government regulations.
- This set the tone for the slow growth of industries which was later on denoted by the terminology, Industrial Revolution. The industrial revolution created a new class consciousness and under its influence there was a large scale movement from the rural too the urban centers.
- Later the reign of George's brother, William IV (1830-37), was followed by that of Queen Victoria (1837-1901).
- Queen Victoria’s rule oversaw England at the height of its overseas power. The British Empire was established in her reign, and it reached its greatest zenith under her.
- Like Elizabethan England, Victorian England too was a highly successful era. You may remember that in our discussion of the Romantic period we realized that classical thought and culture had died down. In many ways the Victorian period too was an extension of the early renaissance and the romantic era. General public had

seen the downfall of the church and the educated classes supported scientific rationalism.

- Science and technology grew to great heights. Victorians experienced a great age of doubt. They reviewed religious faith and due to the advent of new discoveries in science questioned religion and its hold on the masses.
- In literature and the other arts, the Victorians attempted to combine Romantic emphases upon self, emotion, and imagination with neoclassical ones upon the public role of art and a corollary responsibility of the artist.
- This was a period when many new thoughts and ideas came up. Here the seeds of psychology, evolution, feminism, Marxism, etc came up. This was the period that witnessed many 'isms' such as Social Darwinism, Realism, Utilitarianism, Agnosticism, and Socialism. It was an age of oppositions—faith and doubt, reason and emotion. Thus it was a time of paradox and power. The greatest aspect of this age by the individual was the sense of social responsibility.
- As already stressed to you, the eighteenth century had focused attention on rationalism, toleration, a cosmopolitan worldview, and a respect for science. The Victorian period too continued to uphold scientific thinking, even as new scientific evidence came to call into question human rationalism and the orderliness of the universe.
- Did you know that this was the period of great thinkers such as Freud, Max Weber, Darwin, John Stuart Mill. I am sure that you would all know about Freud and his work in psychology. Freud's changed the way the mind was understood to work and it destabilized the faith in human rationality. We will discuss some of these at the end of this lesson.
- On the other hand, political theorists such as Max Weber questioned the rational assumption which liberalism was based on, and emphasized the role of collective groups acting due to forces which were beyond their control, rather than the role of rational individuals as a major driving force in history.
- Now that we have read so much about Victorian period let us briefly look at the culture.
- Victorians emphasized on refinement, propriety, restraint, and sexual prudishness. This cultural phenomenon may have occurred due to Queen Victoria's life style. Queen Victoria, was widowed relatively early and never remarried, and her

behavior, dress, and demeanor set the tone for England culturally for much of the century.

- The expression "Victorian" today is actually what most people mean when they say "Puritanical". On the other hand, the Puritans of the 17th and 18th century were down right simple people who did not display the Victorian notion of Puritanism.
- Although Victorian culture elevated women, it was as ideals of the domestic sphere. Victorians had a strong moral code and they opposed the debauchery which they saw as traditional aristocratic behavior.
- The Victorian age was an age of the middle classes. The Victorian movement highlighted the glorification of civilization. In other words, the period supported the White, Western ways, which was also the agenda of the imperialist movement. Thus the Victorians themselves firmly believed that they the very essence of civilization, and believed their rational and restrained culture had a good deal to teach the rest of the world.

**RECAP:**

- Why the period was called Victorian?
- What were the rulers during the Georgian era.
- Who was the ruler before Queen Victoria.
- What was the year that Queen Victoria ascended the throne.
- How old was Queen Victoria when she came to the throne.
- What was the Luddite movement?

### 3.1.1 THE GROWTH OF THE MIDDLE CLASS:

- As already mentioned to you the time before Queen Victoria ascended the throne, it had been a time of violence and instability. But by the time Victoria came to the throne, some stability had returned to England. The problems of the people had been alleviated by the implementation of the Reform Act and the moderate governments of Lamb and Peel also helped to bring stability.
- Traditionally when one views the Victorian period one sees a long era of staunch conservatism and Imperial sentiment, marked by a series of reforms after the turn of the century. In reality, this was not true.
- On the other hand the Victorian period was liberal, and progressive. Sexually and morally, it was an age of the middle-classes.

- The middle class that had fought for rights in the 1820's became wealthy and complacent with business. The middle class mentality grew due to middle class sons of middle class fathers who later formed their own rigid social structures. Acutely conscious of their lack of aristocratic breeding, they were far more restrained and repressive than the Georgian aristocracy. Their aim mainly was materialistic and business became a religion of sorts. Those who had climbed the ladders believed in God's benevolence or Darwin's theory of survival, namely the reward for the shrewd and aggressive. It was thus believed that the poor suffered because they were unworthy or unmotivated. Illustrations of these can be seen in the novels of Charles Dickens.
- The Victorian period saw the real birth of the middle class as a force in politics and social structure. A rising mercantile class had been prominent in Europe from the $13^{th}$ – $18^{th}$ century, but. The age of the "common man" had set in the $19^{th}$ century.
- For the first time the middle class was not merely large, but a vast majority, sweeping every structure away in its path. Morally and religiously conservative, it was unquestionably liberal in comparison to anything that had ever been seen before.
- This section brought with it into the English atmosphere a vast new prosperity, in the form of goods, services, and materials. Overseas, Britain began the transition from a mercantile colonial empire to an organized system of administration that would be the creation of a British Empire for the next hundred or more years.
- The period from the 1860's to the 1880s was overall quite liberal. This was the classic period upheld by dandyish Conservatives such as Disraeli, and also that of the commoner Liberal such as Gladstone. Despite a Conservative Government from 1874-1880, the overall tone of the seventies was liberal, in terms of art, literature, and politics.

### 3.1.2 THE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES:

- The zenith of 19th century liberalism was the government of 1880-1885, that sought modern reforms such as graduated income tax, free education, improved housing for the poor, local government reform, and land for agricultural workers.
- The Liberals also sought the removal of the Church as an "official" facade of the state - a debate that was mostly educational. Also education at underwent great

reforms. The Liberals favoured the shift the funding from parochial schools to "private" schools - those not affiliated with the Church of England.

- However the Liberal era did not last because of a series of defeats abroad. In 1881 the British were defeated by Kruger in the First Boer War. In 1884 General Gordon was killed by religious fanatics supporting the Mahdi in the Sudan. This led to a rise once again of the Conservative Party. The liberal-socialist government of Gladstone collapsed and an interim Conservative government was formed under the leadership of Lord Salisbury.
- In the following election, the Conservatives cooperated with Chamberlain's "Liberal Unionists" and formed a coalition government afterwards. The result was a moderate Conservative government that would dominate England until 1906.
- The outbreak of the (second) Boer War was the last major political event in the 19th century. The War dragged on until 1902, with a British victory largely due to crushing numeric superiority.

### 3.1.3 ART AND LITERATURE:

- During the mid and late Georgian period, poets, artists and painters began to hearken back to a period before Georgian rationalism. Generally Catholic sentiments prevailed and ideas of feudalism, religious awe, and emotion were in vogue.
- These were as already noted down in the first part of this lesson these were the Romantics, a literary school that found its final release in the works of Byron, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley. The romantics generally believed in the uniqueness of individual expression as it is constituted by life experience, an important dimension of which is frequently national character Romanticism as a movement prevailed from the late 18th century to the mid 19th century.
- You may be astonished to know that a thread of Romanticism pervaded the Victorian period too. This was the Pre-Raphaelite movement in the mid 19th century which focused on similar ideals of Romanticism. You will learn more about this group a little later in one of the units. Dante Gabriel Rossetti is a representative of this movement.

- The 1870s saw also the birth of symbolism in France, a poetic movement which was naturalistic and in a way an opposition to the Victorian industrialism. This will form the base of the modern era later on.
- Literature in the late Victorian period saw a revival of romantic supernatural literature, including Bram Stoker's Dracula. On the continent the Impressionists had broken down the conformity of Victorian painting, and artists such as Cezanne and Seraut typified this new school, which flourished from about 1880, but would be termed "postimpressionist" only in 1910.

### 3.1.4 IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS:

**Women's status:**

- All this while we spoke so much about a woman as a queen. Let us in this section take a brief look at the position of women during this period. The transformation of Britain into an industrial nation had its effects on the status of women.
- New kinds of work and new kinds of urban living prompted a change in the ways in which gender roles of the male and female were perceived. In particular, the notion of separate spheres - woman in the private sphere of the home and hearth, man in the public sphere of business, politics and sociability - came to influence the choices and experiences of all women, at home, at work, in the streets.
- Queen Victoria came to represent femininity which was centred on the family, motherhood and respectability. Victoria accompanied by her beloved husband Albert and surrounded by her many children became an icon of late 19th century middle-class femininity and domesticity.
- Victoria came to be seen as the very model of marital stability and domestic virtue. When Albert died in 1861 she retreated to her home and family in preference to public political engagements.
- As you may have noticed in novels of Jane Austen domesticity was trumpeted as a female domain Thus the literature and domestic novels, as well as the advertisement columns of magazines and newspapers of the period favoured domesticity.
- The increasing physical separation of the home and the workplace for many amongst the professional and commercial classes meant that these women lost

touch with production and came to fashion an identity solely within the domestic sphere. It was through their duties within the home that women were offered a moral duty, towards their families, especially their husbands, and towards society as a whole.

- The Victorian woman was a busy, able and upright figure who drew strength from her moral superiority and whose virtue was manifested in the service of others.
- Thus the notion of separate spheres was a way of living and working based on beliefs about the importance of the family, the constancy of marriage and woman's innate moral goodness.
- As you have already learnt for the new generations of industrial middle classes in Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901), social identity was created around sets of values which marked them out as separate and different from the aristocracy above them and the working classes below them. Broadly speaking, middle-class identity was built on a platform of moral respectability and domesticity.
- In this atmosphere, women played a significant role within these ideas. The ideal of femininity was encapsulated in the idea of 'woman's mission', as mother, wife and daughter. Women were seen as moral and spiritual guardians.
- In other words, the moral health of the nation and its empire depended on the moral purity of its women.
- The pure woman was closely associated with the shelter of the private sphere, of the home. Her moral and sexual purity guaranteed the home as a haven and a source of social stability and, in turn, feminine purity itself was ensured through the protection of the domestic sanctuary.
- Within this interlocking set of beliefs, the classification of deviant forms of female behaviour was as critical as the definition and promotion of female respectability. The image of the prostitute thus became a symbol of the danger and disorder of the city streets. In case you remember this was the very image in India during 1850-1930s.
- According to middle-class values, the family was a 'natural' and stable unit.
- Women were excluded from membership in scientific organizations and most occupations.
- Freud's theories portrayed women as inferior beings who unconsciously envied men and were inevitably destined to lead unhappy lives. Virtually all early

sociologists took a conservative view of marriage and the family, divorce, and child raising.

- Due to Victorian standards of conduct women were not allowed to study the human body or sexual matters.
- Therefore, the early feminists demanded a rethinking of the gender roles. They concentrated on achieving more power through better education for women and full political rights. They urged equal treatment for women under the law and the right to vote.

Other themes that came up during this period were nationalism, Marxism and Darwinism.

**Nationalism:**

- Nationalism was growing stronger over the course of the 19th century. Racial theories and revived anti-Semitism were part of a late 19th century aggressive strain of nationalist, emotional patriotism which took hold in much of Europe and Britain.
- From the 1870s onward, aggressive, racist, nationalism was a mass movement in many European countries, and helped promote the imperialist scramble of the late 19th century and the jingoism that helped get Europe into World War One.

**Marxism:**

- Karl Marx (1818-1883) was born in the Rhineland to Jewish middle-class parents. Educated at the University of Berlin, he became deeply involved in radical politics. The German authorities drove him into exile, first to Paris, then Brussels, and finally to London. In 1844, Marx met Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), another middle-class German, whose father owned a textile factory in Manchester, England. They began collaborating, and in 1845, Engels' The Condition of the Working Class appeared; it was a devastating critique of industrial life.
- In 1847, the two were asked to write a pamphlet for a communist organization, and this work became known as the Communist Manifesto (1848). The work was approximately only fifty pages but became the most influential political document in modern European history. It contended that human history must be looked at as a whole in order to be understood rationally.

The basic tenets of Marxism were:

- There are basic stages through which civilization is moving.

- Mankind's struggle to satisfy their physical and material needs is at the heart of all history.
- The methods used to do this, agricultural, or industrial determine the society's structure, values, and ideas.
- These values become a superstructure; they hide the real, material basis of all societies. Superstructures include religions, cultural codes like chivalry, and philosophical beliefs like liberalism or nationalism.
- The basic conflict in all history is between those who own the means of production, and those who labor for them.
- This conflict between the two groups -- factory owners vs. workers -- is the cause that promotes all social change in history.
- By the 19th century, the struggle had become between the bourgeoisie, or middle class, and the proletariat, or workers.
- The triumph of capitalism had sharpened the struggle, since the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of the owners would increase the size of the un-propertied proletariat.
- As business structures came to be dominated by larger and larger entities, the smaller middle-class units would be squeezed out. Workers would suffer more and more from ever-larger and more competitive firms until they finally revolted and seized the means of production themselves.
- For a time the workers would organize society through a dictatorship of the proletariat, but this government would ultimately be able to fade away into a property-less and classless society.
- Marxist thought caught fire in the 1840s, and played a strong role in many of the 1848 revolts. Marxist thought permeated the various socialist movements for the next 75 years, and played a crucial role in several significant national revolutions.

**Scientific Thought:**

- If I ask you who the centre/creator of the universe is, you may say God or some force or power. Well in a similar way the scientists in early19th century believed in theologian science and thought of the Creator as the important person in designing the universe.
- In second half of 19th century, however, the scientific mentality really came to dominate the intellectual debates of the day, as new scientific theories came to

challenge the accepted worldview and pose a significant threat to Christian theology.

- By the late 19th century, scientific reasoning had been elevated by scientific methods seen as the most rational means of proof, and many of the intellectual currents of the day began to use scientific jargon and explanations.
- Now evidence from the sciences that contradicted biblical teachings was increasing in several fields:
- Geologists were coming to recognize the earth was far older than biblical dating.
- Historical research raised skepticism about the historical accuracy of biblical accounts. Sociologists and anthropologists were coming to explain the need for religion and religious beliefs in terms of human psychology.
- Educational reforms made the secular governments of several European nations including England took control of the educational system from the church.

**Charles Darwin:**

- The most important of these changes was the publication of The Origin of the Species, by Charles Darwin in 1859.
- The research published explained the evolution of races by the means of natural selection — only those members of a species who were best adapted to their environment would survive to breed. This over a long period of time produced the variety of species and variety within species.
- Darwin carried this work further in 1871, with The Descent of Man. Darwin didn't invent the concept of evolution; what he did was provide empirical evidence for it through his studies of fossils, and give a practical explanation of how it might have operated.
- Darwin's work changed the way man perceived himself in relation to the universe. His theory of natural selection was completely mechanistic and totally amoral; it did not require the existence of God to explain human existence or the development of the world. It replaced the view of the universe as a fixed and orderly system with an image of the universe as a realm of flux and change. Darwinism bitterly offended many religious groups, who saw it as an attack on the special place of man in the universe.

**Sigmund Freud:**

- Another significant step was the psychological research of Sigmund Freud. Freud emphasized the importance of sexuality in the human mind, and argued that civilization depended on the conscious suppression of sexual desires, which reappeared in other fashions.
- He also argued for the importance of the unconscious mind, and especially unconscious desires and angers, in shaping conscious thought, which undercut belief in human rationality.
- Freud's stress on sex, especially the sexuality of infants, struck many as immoral, and his focus on the role of the unconscious in shaping human behavior seemed to undercut the idea of free will and the ideal of rational mankind.

**Spread of Missionaries:**

- In contrast to the declining power of the major religions among the European and American intellectual elites, Christian religious power was growing in other parts of the world through the missionary movement, which peaked during the 19th century.
- Several thousand missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic, were preaching in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific throughout the century. They were often the first Western people to make contact with Africans and Asians. Missionary movement had lasting repercussions — they helped brought Western thought as well as religion to much of the non-Western world, and created large, lasting enclaves of Christianity in various non-Western nations.

**3.1.5 CONCLUSION**:

- Historians and other scholars now regard the Victorian era as a time of many contradictions. A plethora of social movements concerned with improving public morals co-existed with a class system that permitted harsh living conditions for many.
- The apparent contradiction between the widespread cultivation of an outward appearance of dignity and restraint and the prevalence of social phenomena that included prostitution, child labour, and an imperialist colonising economy were two sides of the same coin: the various social reform movements and high principles arose from attempts to improve the harsh conditions.Thus throughout the

Victoran Era, movements for justice, freedom and other strong moral values opposed greed, exploitation and cynicism.

**COMPREHENSION:**

- Write short notes on:

  - The Luddite Movement.
  - Women's Status.
  - Marxism.
  - Freud's Impact.
  - Darwinism.

- Write an essay on Queen Victorias's regime.
- Write an essay on the middle class mentality during the Victorian period.
- Sketch an outline of the Victorian period.

## LESSON 2: ALFRED LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892) & ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life and Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson.**
- **Life and Works of Robert Browning.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the themes of Tennyson's poetry.**
- **Understand the themes of Browning's poetry.**
- **Comprehend the features of the poems, 'Lotos eaters' and 'My Last Duchess'.**

### 3.2.0 LIFE AND WORKS OF TENNYSON (1809-1892):

Have you heard the line, 'Tis better to have loved and lost/Than never to have loved at all'. Well in case you did not know this is a line written by one of the most famous Victorian poets namely Tennyson. The line is from his poem 'In Memoriam'. Tennyson is known by many other famous lines from poems such as 'Ulysses', and 'Charge of the Light Brigade'.

Well, in this section I will take you through a short journey into Tennyson's past and introduce you to some works before entering into an analysis of Tennyson's poem 'Lotus Eaters'.

- Alfred Tennyson was born 5 August1 1809. He was the third surviving child of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson and Elizabeth Fytche Tennyson.
- The father, Rev. George Clayton Tennyson was forced to be a clergyman because his own father had disinherited him after a disagreement. To his disconsolation he also had to support his family consisting of eleven little Tennysons.
- Alfred himself started writing poetry at age eight and had written most of a blank verse play by age fourteen. The year he entered Cambridge, 1827, his first published poetry appeared in Poems by Two Brothers.
- At Cambridge, he made such friends as Edward Fitzgerald, Thackeray, and Arthur Henry Hallam.
- In 1829 Alfred won a poetry prize and in 1830 his 'Poems' won some critical praise.
- At this time he met Emily Sellwood through his friend, Arthur Hallam whom he began to love. Hallam himself became engaged to Alfred's sister Emily.
- It was therefore quite a shock when his closest friend, Arthur Hallam died on 15 September 1833. That same year, Alfred Tennyson's brother Edward was admitted to a mental asylum, where he stayed until his death in 1890.
- This was when he began the poem, 'In Memoriam' which completed only in 1850.
- In 1839, Alfred and Emily were officially engaged but by 1840, they were also officially unengaged because Emily's father had put a stop to the match, as Alfred was too poor to marry.
- However the real reason could be the very unhappy marriage between Charles, Alfred's older brother, and Louisa Sellwood, Emily's sister. Charles was an opium addict, and his wife, Louisa had worked herself into a nervous wreck trying to help him.
- So Alfred and Emily suffered the pangs of separation, and he spent his time traveling and studying, and he eventually became proficient in several languages, including Persian and Hebrew.

- By 1842, Alfred found himself well and truly famous with the publication of his Poems.
- He did not write for two years believing his health was failing and when he began writing again, Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote a long poem satirizing the romantic poets as well as Alfred.
- Alfred kept writing anyway, finishing the long blank verse poem ‘The Princess’ in 1847, a poem which also contained some lyric poems as songs. In 1849, with the reconcilement of brother Charles with his wife, Alfred and Emily married in great secrecy.
- By then, Wordsworth had died and the Court was looking for a new Poet Laureate. Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria had read ‘In Memoriam’, and so Alfred Tennyson became the Poet Laureate.
- In 1852, Hallam Tennyson was born, followed by Lionel Tennyson in 1854. Alfred loved his children dearly.
- Alfred published four of the Idylls of the King, his epic on the story of King Arthur and Camelot, in 1859. When Prince Albert died in 1861, the official poem on his death was made part of the later Idylls and the whole work was dedicated to the Prince.
- The Queen had been continually offering Alfred a baronetcy, which he kept turning down and it was only in 1884 that he actually became Lord Tennyson.
- Between 1874 and 1879, Alfred wrote several plays at the urging of a friend who owned a theatre but they were not very popular.
- Gradually his eyesight began to deteriorate and his wife and son had to take roles of being his secretary.
- With the death of his brother Charles in 1879 and that of Edward Fitzgerald in 1883, and Alfred began to feel lonely and old. The worst of these losses was the death of his son, Lionel who died of fever while at sea.
- Alfred's poem "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" was written around that time, and is a scathing, Dickensian satire of Victorian England and the horrible conditions of the poor.
- In November 1889, Tennyson’s grandson, Lionel was born, followed by Alfred, Jr. in April 1891.

- Alfred himself had been ill for some months, but was still working hard to prepare one last volume of poems for publication. It was published two weeks after his death, on 6 October 1892. He died peacefully, apparently of gout, with his wife and son by his side.
- He'd outlived most of the great writers of his time, but there were some literary luminaries at the funeral like Thomas Hardy and Arthur Conan Doyle. At Alfred's request, his poem "Crossing the Bar," an epitaph of sorts, is always printed last in any collection of his works.

**3.2.1 SUMMARY:**

I suppose you all have heard of the flower Lotus. Did you know that it is the national flower of our country? This poem however has nothing to do with the flower as such but this poem is based on a Greek myth.

- Iliad which is a Greek myth describes the Trojan War and Odyssey the second book is a tale about the journeys undertaken by one of the war heroes, Odysseus. In case you do not know the word Odyssey means a long and arduous journey.
- Odysseus during his travels meets many different people and has many adventures. In one of his journeys he meets the people of the land of the Lotus eaters.
- Odysseus and his mariners eat the Lotos fruit and flowers offered by the people of this island and feel very languid and weary.

Using this mythical base Tennyson has written this poem. Tennyson has used Odysseus in another poem titled, Ulysses.

Before you read the next section go through the poem on your own and then read the summary to understand it better.

- In the poem, Odysseus tells his mariners to have courage, assuring them that they will soon reach the shore of their home.
- That afternoon, they reach a land "in which it seemed always afternoon" because of the languid and peaceful atmosphere. The mariners sight this "land of streams" with its gleaming river flowing to the sea, its three snow-capped mountaintops, and its shadowy pine growing in the vale.
- The mariners are greeted by the "mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters," who come bearing the flower and fruit of the lotos, which they offer to Odysseus and his mariners.

- Some of the mariners take the offering and feel as if they have fallen into a deep sleep; they sit down upon the yellow sand of the island and can hardly perceive their fellow mariners speaking to them, hearing only the music of their heartbeat in their ears.
- Although they had all dreamt of their homes in Ithaca, the lotos makes them weary of wandering, preferring to linger here. One who has eaten of the lotos fruit proclaims that he will "return no more," and all of the mariners begin to sing about this resolution to remain in the land of the Lotos-eaters.
- The rest of the poem consists of the eight numbered stanzas of the mariners' choric song, expressing their resolution to stay forever.
- In the first stanza, the mariners praise the sweet and soporific music of the land of the Lotos-eaters, comparing this music to petals, dew, granite, and tired eyelids.
- In the second stanza, they question why man is the only creature in nature who must toil. They argue that everything else in nature is able to rest and stay still, whereas man is the only one tossed from one sorrow to another. Although man's inner spirit tells him that tranquility and calmness offer the only joy, and yet he is fated to toil and wander his whole life.
- In the third stanza, the mariners declare that everything in nature is allotted a lifespan in which to bloom and fade. As examples of other living things that die, they cite the "folded leaf, which eventually turns yellow and drifts to the earth, as well as the "full-juiced apple," which ultimately falls to the ground, and the flower, which ripens and fades.
- The fourth stanza question the purpose of a life of labor, since nothing is cumulative and depict that the accomplishments of humans is useless. The mariners question "what...will last," proclaiming that everything in life is fleeting and therefore futile. The mariners also express their desire for "long rest or death," either of which will free them from a life of endless labor.
- A repetition of the first stanza's positive appeal to luxurious self-indulgence is the beginning of the fifth stanza. The mariners declare how sweet it is to live a life of continuous dreaming. They paint a picture of what it might be like to do nothing all day except sleep, dream, eat lotos, and watch the waves on the beach. Such an existence would enable them peacefully to remember all those individuals they

once knew who are now either buried – ‘heaped over with a mound of grass’-- or cremated -- two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass’.

- In the sixth stanza, the mariners reason that their families have probably forgotten them anyway, and their homes may have fallen apart. They feel that therefore they might as well stay in the land of the Lotos-eaters and "let what is broken so remain." Although they have fond memories of their wives and sons, they strongly feel that after ten years of fighting in Troy, their sons must have inherited their property and their return would only cause unnecessary confusion and disturbances in their lives. Their hearts are worn out from fighting wars and navigating the seas by means of the constellations, and thus they prefer the relaxing death-like existence of the Land of the Lotos to the confusion that a return home would create.
- As in the first and fifth, the mariners bask in the pleasant sights and sounds of the island in the seventh stanza. They imagine how sweet it would be to lie on beds of flowers while watching the river flow and listening to the echoes in the caves.
- Finally, the poem closes with the mariners' vow to spend the rest of their lives relaxing and reclining in the hollow Lotos land They compare the life of recklessness, which they will enjoy in Lotos land, to the carefree existence of the Gods, who hardly cares about the famines, plagues, earthquakes, and other natural disasters that plague human beings on earth. These Gods simply smile upon men, who till the earth and harvest crops until they either suffer in hell or dwell in the "Elysian valleys" of heaven. Since they have concluded that "slumber is more sweet than toil," the mariners resolve to stop wandering the seas and to settle instead in the land of the Lotos-eaters.
- The poem is divided into two parts: the first is a descriptive narrative, and the second is a song of eight numbered stanzas of varying length. The first part of the poem is written in nine-line Spenserian stanzas, so called because they were employed by Spenser in The Faerie Queene.
- In case you have no idea the the rhyme scheme of the Spenserian stanza is a closely interlinked ababbcbcc, with the first eight lines in iambic pentameter and the final line an Alexandrine. In this poem the choric song follows a far looser structure both in the length of the line and the rhyme scheme.

### 3.2.2 CRITICAL THINKING:

- Many scholars and critics have pointed out that this poem is based on the story of Odysseus's mariners described in scroll IX of Homer's Odyssey. In Odyssey Homer wrote about a storm that blows the great hero's mariners off course as they attempt to journey back from Troy to their homes in Ithaca. They come to a land where people do nothing but eat lotos. The Greek spelling for Lotus is Lotos, hence the usage in the poem. Later, Odysseus must drag his men away so that they can a life of peacefulness, rest, and even death.
- Scholars have also pointed out that the poem draws not only on Homer's Odyssey, but also on the biblical Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis. In the Bible, a "life of toil" is Adam's punishment for eating the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Later, Adam is condemned to labour by the sweat of his brow. Yet in this poem, fruit (the lotos) provides a release from the life of labor, suggesting an inversion of the biblical story.
- Tennyson provides a tempting and seductive vision of a life free from toil. The lush descriptive passages of the poem are accompanied by persuasive rhetoric. Each and every stanza of the choric song presents a different argument to justify the mariners' resolution to remain in the Lotos Land.
- In the second stanza of the poem the mariners express the irony of the fact that man, who though is at the height of the evolution chart, is the only creature made to toil and labor all the days of his life. This stanza may also be read as a pointed inversion and overturning of Coleridge's "Work without Hope," in which the speaker laments that "all nature seems at work" while he alone remains unoccupied.
- Although the taste of the lotos and the vision of life it offers is seductive, the poem suggests that the mariners may be deceiving themselves in succumbing to the hypnotic power of the flower. The poem points out how abandoning external reality and living instead in a world of appearances, where everything "seems" to be but nothing actually is is only alife of delusion. If you notice carefully the word "seems" recurs throughout the poem, and can be found in four of the stanzas, suggesting that the Lotos Land may be just illusionary.

- In addition, in the final stanza of the choric song, the poem describes the Lotos Land as a "hollow" land with "hollow" caves, indicating that the vision of the sailors is somehow empty and insubstantial.
- The reader, too, is left with ambivalent feelings about the mariners' argument for lethargy and indolence. Although the thought of life without toil is certainly tempting, it is also disturbing.
- Odysseus will ultimately drag his men away from the Lotos Land disapprovingly; moreover, his injunction to have "courage" overshadows the whole poem with a sense of moral obligation. The sailors' case for weariness is further undermined morally by their complaint that it is unpleasant "to war with evil" (line 94).
- By choosing the Lotos Land, the mariners are abandoning the sources of substantive meaning in life and the potential for heroic accomplishment. Thus in this poem Tennyson forces us to consider the indefinite appeal of a life without work.
- Even though we all share the longing for a carefree and relaxed existence, but the question would be can we forever lead such a life. Surely most of us may be unhappy without any challenges to overcome, without the fire of aspiration and the struggle to make the world a better place.

**3.2.3 COMPREHENSION:**

- What purpose is served by the poem's division into two parts? What are the poem's meters, and how do these reinforce its meaning?
- Who were the "Lotus-Eaters," and how does our knowledge of the story of the Odyssey affect how we judge them? Are we expected to respect the "lotus-eaters"? To understand them?
- What are some features of the poem's language? Metaphors? Imagined landscape? In what ways is the poem heavily onomatopoeic?
- Does the poem seem to express ambivalence or hesitation about the prospect of continuing the voyage? What effect is created by ending the poem with the Lotus-Eaters' resolve to wander no more?
- Why do the Lotus-Eaters wish to resemble the gods? What aspects of divinity do they project onto these deities? How might a Victorian reader have been expected to react to this notion of "godhead," and how would this have affected his or her view of the Lotus-Eaters' choice?

- Can you describe the poem's sequence? What is significant about the opening and close of each section?
- How do you think the Victorian reader was expected to respond to the mariners' complaint in the Choric Song, VI: "Is there confusion in the little isle? Let what is broken so remain. . . 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
- How may this poem be contrasted with "Ulysses"? Are there also common themes?

**3.2.4 LIFE AND WORKS OF BROWNING (1812-1889):**

One cannot bypass the Victorians without making friends with Robert Browning. Well, in this section I will take you through another journey this time into the life of Browning before entering into an analysis of Browning's poem 'My Last Duchess'.

- Robert Browning was born 7 May 1812. He was the first child and only son of Robert Browning and Sarah Wiedemann Browning. The family was nonconformist in religious belief. In case you do not know nonconformists were Protestants of the highest order who had absolutely no belief in the Church of England.
- Robert was an impulsive, fearless little boy who was also rather a prodigy, writing poems and reading Homer at a very young age. As a child he learned many languages and voraciously read his father's history books.
- He also liked to read books that were considered rather shocking and not quite suitable for children.
- When Robert was sixteen years he began attending the newly-formed London University, established for Nonconformists like Robert who were barred from Oxford and Cambridge. Robert attended the university for only a year, but due to his reading he was really quite an educated man.
- By the time he was twenty years old he was convinced that he would be a great poet. His family had enough money to support him in these poetical endeavours.
- His first published work, Pauline, was not very good, while his second work Paracelsus, was well-received.
- He then wrote several stage plays (between 1836 and 1843) which were also well-received, though quite forgotten today.

In March of 1840 Robert published Sordello, a Poem in Six Books but three years earlier, a woman named Mrs. Busk had published her own poem on Sordello and therefore there was some controversy with regard to the same.

- Between 1841 and 1846, he published four books, mainly collections of his shorter poems that would become among his most famous works.
  It was around this time that Robert began to correspond with Elizabeth Barrett who had written a poem in appreciation of one of his poems. Even in this very first letter, he told her that he loved her, and then he managed to meet her in 1845 and marry her in the same year. The couple then went to Florence and was enchanted by it, finally settling in the famous Casa Guidi.
  In 1849, Robert Wiedemann Barrett Browning was born, and a month later Robert's mother Sarah died not knowing she had a grandson. Robert was devastated by this loss and it was Elizabeth and her poems that finally helped him to recover.
- In 1855, Robert's collection of short poems, Men and Women, was published, that received good reviews. Elizabeth's death on 28 June 1861 was not a great shock to him, as her health had been slowly diminishing her. Robert now dedicated himself to his poetry and to his son. By this time Robert Browning was a truly a famous poet. He received two honorary degrees and was much admired, but many also thought him to be arrogant and ill-tempered.
- Browning wrote a great deal right up to the end of his life, though he was tormented by colds and bronchitis. His last book, Asolando, was published the day of his death, 12 December 1889.
- Robert could not be buried beside Elizabeth because that cemetery had been closed and he was buried at Westminster Abbey.

**MY LAST DUCHESS**:

**3.2.5 BACKGROUND:**

- 'My Last Duchess' first appeared among the sixteen poems in Dramatic Lyrics (November 1842) with the title 'Italy'. It followed the three 'Cavalier Tunes' (Marching Along' 'Give a Rouse'," and 'Boots and Saddle', lyrics evoking the Royalist cause in the English Civil War, 1642-49), and appeared immediately before "Count Gismond — Aix in Provence".
- Dramatic Lyrics, was the third of the Bells and Pomegranates pamphlets whose printing costs were underwritten by Browning's father. The sixteen poems it contains were written between 1834 (when Browning was twenty-two) and 1842.

- Browning changed the title to "My Last Duchess" in 1849 when it was included in Dramatic Romances and Lyrics, a volume for which Browning received the advice of his publisher, Edward Moxon.
- The other poems in the original (1842) volume are as follows: "Incident of the French Camp," "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," "In a Gondola," "Artemis Prologizes," "Waring," "Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli," "Cristina," "Johannes Agricola in Meditation," "Porphyria's Lover," "Through the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr," and "The Pied Piper of Hamlin; A Child's Story."
- This poem was written in 1842. The setting of 'My Last Duchess', is the palace of the Duke of Ferrara on a day in October 1564.
- In case you do not know Ferrara is in northern Italy, between Bologna and Padua, on a branch of the Po River. Maybe you could open an atlas and locate it.
- The city was ruled by the House of Este from 1208 to 1598. The Este family constructed an imposing castle in Ferrara beginning in 1385 and, over the years, made Ferrara an important center of arts and learning. Two of the family members, Beatrice and Isabella, supported the work of such painters as Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael.
- Browning uses this base for the poem. He models the Duke of Ferrara after Alfonso II, the fifth and last duke who ruled Ferrara from 1559 to 1597 but in three marriages fathered no heir to succeed him.
- The deceased duchess in the poem was his first wife, Lucrezia de' Medici, a daughter of Cosimo de' Medici (1519-1574), Duke of Florence from 1537 to 1574 and Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1569 to 1574. Lucrezia died in 1561 at age 17. In 1598, Ferrara became part of the Papal States.

### 3.2.6 CHARACTERS IN THE POEM:

- Speaker (or Narrator): The speaker is the Duke of Ferrara. The poem reveals the duke as a proud, domineering, and selfish man and a lover of the arts. He regarded his late wife as a mere object who existed only to please him and do his bidding. He likes the portrait of her because, being lifeless it reveals only her beauty. Not only that he now has complete control of the portrait as a pretty art object that he can show to visitors.

- Duchess: She is the deceased wife of the duke. The duke says the duchess enjoyed the company of other men and implies that she was unfaithful. The duchess died under suspicious circumstances on April 21, 1561, just two years after he married her.
- Emissary of the Count of Tyrol: The emissary has no speaking role; he simply listens as the Duke of Ferrara tells him about the late Duchess of Ferrara and the fresco of her on the wall.
- Historically, the emissary is identified with Nikolaus Madruz, of Innsbruck, Austria.
- Count of Tyrol: The duke future father in law. The duke mentions him in connection with a dowry the count is expected to provide.
- Daughter of the Count of Tyrol: The duke's bride-to-be is the daughter of the count but appears to be modeled historically on the count's niece, Barbara.
- Frà Pandolph: The duke mentions him as the artist who painted the fresco.
- An additional information that you could know is that the term Frà was a title of Italian friars of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Claus of Innsbruck: The duke mentions him as the artist who created "Neptune Taming a Sea-Horse."
- The Portrait of the Duchess: The portrait of the late Duchess of Ferrara is a fresco, a type of work painted in watercolors directly on a plaster wall.
- The portrait symbolizes the duke's domineering nature and the objectification of the duchess.

### 3.2.7 METER AND RHYME:

- ‘My Last Duchess’ is in iambic pentameter and the Rhyme is referred to as Heroic Couplet.
- Notice how the lines end and you will find out that Line 1 rhymes with Line 2, Line 3 with 4, Line 5 with 6, and so on. Pairs of rhyming lines are generally called couplets. But, when the lines are written in iambic pentameter, they are called heroic couplets.

### 3.2.8 SUMMARY AND COMMENTARY:

Now read the poem on your own and then read the explication here to understand the poem clearly.

- The theme of the poem is about the arrogant, and selfish mindset of a proud Renaissance duke. In this respect, the more important portrait in the poem is the one the duke sketches of himself with his words
- Upstairs at his palace in October of 1564, the Duke of Ferrara shows a portrait of his late wife, who died in 1561, to a representative of the Count of Tyrol, an Austrian nobleman. The duke plans to marry the count's daughter after he negotiates for a handsome dowry from the count.
- During the discussion of the portrait, the duke also discusses his relationship with the late countess, revealing himself–consciously or unconsciously –as a possessive husband who regarded his beautiful wife as a mere object, a possession whose sole mission was to please him.
- His comments are sometimes straightforward and frank and sometimes subtle and ambiguous. Several remarks hint that he may have murdered his wife, just a teenager at the time of her death two years after she married him.
- Browning, however uses oblique and roundabout language and does not allow the duke to make an open confession.
- The duke tells the Austrian emissary that he admires the portrait of the duchess but was exasperated with his wife while she was alive, for she devoted as much attention to trivialities–and other men–as she did to him.
- He even implies that she had affairs. In response to these affairs, he says, "I gave commands; / "Then all [of her] smiles stopped together."
- The poem does not provide enough information to determine whether the duke is lying about his wife or exaggerating her faults. Whatever the case, research into her life has resulted in speculation that she was poisoned.
- The fact that the duke regarded his wife as a mere object, a possession, is clearin Lines 2 and 3, where as he and the emissary are looking at the painting, he says, "I call that piece a wonder, now." The word piece explicitly refers to the portrait but implicitly could refer to the duchess when she was alive. The use of the word 'Now' is a telling word in his statement. It reveals that the duchess is a wonder in

the portrait, because of the charming pose she strikes, but implies that she was far less than a wonder when she was alive.

- The duke prizes the painting because the duchess is under his full control as an image on the wall. She cannot play the coquette; she cannot protest or disobey his commands; she cannot do anything except smile out at the duke and to anyone else the duke allows to view the portrait.
- While the duke and the emissary turn to go downstairs, the duke points out another art object–a bronze art object showing Neptune taming a sea horse.
- 'My Last Duchess' is a poem in the form of a dramatic monologue.
- Do you know what a dramatic monologue is?
- Well, a dramatic monologue presents a moment in which the main character of the poem discusses a topic and, in so doing, also reveals his personal feelings to a listener. Only the main character, called the speaker, talks–hence the term monologue, meaning single (mono) speaker who presents spoken or written discourse (logue). During his speech, the speaker makes comments that reveal information about his personality and psyche. The main focus of a dramatic monologue is this personal information, not the topic which the speaker happens to be discussing.

**3.2.8 COMPREHENSION:**

- Write a character sketch of the duke.
- The speaker is the arrogant, art-collecting Duke of Ferrara. How does Browning force us to place our sympathies with so objectionable a persona?
- How does Browning use the Duke to reveal the location and the general circumstances within the poem?
- The time is the Italian Renaissance, as Browning establishes by references to art and the dowry which the Duke is negotiating with the Count of Tyrol, as well as by the Duke's "thousand-year-old name." Why is this "name" so important to this Renaissance Duke?
- The Duke eliminated his last duchess because he thought that she undervalued him and treated him much as she treated other men. Which trivial incidents in particular seem to have produced this response in the Duke?
- As the poem opens, the Duke has been making dowry arrangements with the envoy of the Count of Tyrol, whose daughter he intends to marry; "the company" awaiting

the Duke and envoy below are the Count's party. Why does the Duke apparently try to forestall the envoy's rushing down the stairs at the end of the poem?

- The Duke reveals himself to be an emotionally cold, calculating, materialistic, haughty, aristocratic connoisseur; on the positive side, he is a patron of such artists as Fra Pandolf and Claus of Innsbruck (both fictional). What does he value in art? What does he see as his role in the creation of great art?
- The statue of Neptune taming a seahorse may be regarded as a symbol of brutal male domination of the beautiful and natural. How might we regard this statue as representing the Duke?
- The envoy, apparently alarmed by what he has heard, tries to break away from the Duke, but is restrained by him. What, if anything, does Browning reveal about the envoy?
- In view of the probable fate of the former duchess, why may we describe the Duke's taking the Count's envoy into his confidence situationally ironic? How does Browning render the Duke's doing so probable rather than improbable?
- The Duke has been described as both "disdainful" and "proud." Other terms that might be applied to his character are "hubristic" and "megalomaniacal." Explain with reference to the poem how each of these adjectives is appropriate.
- Examine the historical base of the poem.
- Explain how the Duke's attitudes towards art and artists as revealed in the poem reveal his essential materialism, aristocratic hauteur, and insecurity.
- Speculate as to why Browning chosen to use the form of a monologue and has thereby eliminated the possibility of providing a narrator to comment on the action and the characters.
- Based on the clues that Browning provides in the poem, explain both what happened before the opening of the poem and what will happen just after the poem closes.
- What truth(s) about human nature does the poem communicate?
- Much of the great imaginative literature of the nineteenth century in some way involves a dream of a golden age, a glorious past or a utopian future. In what ways may we take "My Last Duchess" as Browning's response to the golden age of the Renaissance in Italy?

- The title of the poem was originally simply 'Italy' Suggest why Browning so named it and speculate as to why he changed the name.

**LESSON 3: MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888) & G.M. HOPKINS (1844-1889)**

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life and Works of Mathew Arnold.**
- **Life and Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the themes of Arnold's poetry.**
- **Understand the themes of Hopkins's poetry.**
- **Comprehend the features of the poems, 'Dover Beach' and 'God's Grandeur'.**

**3.3.0 LIFE AND WORK OF ARNOLD:**

You may I am sure read the essay or heard references to the essay 'Culture and Anarchy' or to 'The Study of Poetry'. Maybe you have also heard famous poem names such as Scholar Gypsy, Thyrsis, and Dover Beach. These were written by Matthew Arnold, a very learned scholar of the Victorian age. We will in this section get to understand his life and his works and then examine a little closely his poem Dover Beach.

- Arnold, poet and critic, was born at Laleham on the Thames, the eldest son of Thomas Arnold, historian and great headmaster of Rugby, and of Mary Arnold.
- He was educated at Winchester; Rugby, where he won a prize for a poem on "Alaric at Rome"; and Oxford, to which he went as a Scholar of Balliol College in 1841. Even here he won the Newdigate Prize for poetry.
- In 1845 after a short interlude of teaching at Rugby, he was elected Fellow of Oriel, which was considered as a great distinction at Oxford.
- The record of his private life at this period is not well known. It is known that his allegiance to France was sealed by a youthful enthusiasm for the acting of Rache rather than any nationalist tendency.
- This feeling of his admiration for France, finds fuller expression in 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time' and 'The Literary Influence of Academies', which were published as the first two of the Essays in Criticism (1865) in which collection the influence of French ideas, especially of the critic Sainte-Beuve, is conspicuous, both in matter and in form.

- The Essays are bound together by a scheme of social rather than of purely literary criticism, as is apparent from the Preface, written in a vein of delicious irony and culminating unexpectedly in the well-known poetically phrased tribute to Oxford.
- In 1847 he became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who in 1851 secured him an inspectorship of schools, which almost to the end of his life was to absorb the greater part of his time and energies, and may have been partly responsible for the smallness of his poetical output. This job enabled him to marry Frances Lucy Wightman, daughter of Sir William Wightman, a Judge of the Queen's Bench.
- His literary career had begun in 1849 with the publication of The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems.
- Arnold's work as a critic begins with the Preface to the Poems which he issued in 1853 under his own name, including extracts from the earlier volumes. In this he also published the two poems-- 'Sohrab and Rustum' and 'The Scholar-Gipsy'. He however left out 'Empedocles'.
- His emphasis on the importance of subject in poetry, on "clearness of arrangement, rigor of development, simplicity of style" formed the main style of his writings. He was still primarily a poet, however, and in 1855 appeared Poems, Second Series.

- Criticism began to take first place with his appointment in 1857 to the professorship of poetry at Oxford, which he held for two successive terms of five years.
- In 1858 he brought out his tragedy of Merope, and in 1861 his lectures On Translating Homer were published, to be followed in 1862 by Last Words on Translating Homer. Both these volumes were admirable in style and full of striking judgments and suggestive remarks, but many of the assumptions were subjective and lacked appropriate conclusions.
- Arnold's unconvincing advocacy of English hexameters and his creation of a kind of literary absolute in the grand style and, on the other, his keen feeling of the need for a disinterested and intelligent criticism in England set a new tone for literary criticism.
- After the publication in 1867 of New Poems, which included 'Thyrsis' and 'Rugby Chapel', elegies on Clough and on Dr. Arnold, he published in 1868 the Essay on the Study of Celtic Literature, a stimulating work.

- Arnold then began to change the tenor of his writings. He moved from literature to social and theological writings.
- In 1878 Last Essays on Church and Religion and in 1879 the next year was published Mixed Essays.
- In 1883 Gladstone, The British minister conferred on Arnold a pension of £250 a year, enabling him to retire from the post in the exercise of which he had not only traveled the length and breadth of England, but made several trips abroad to report on continental education.
- These reports were published in book form, and together with his ordinary reports as a school inspector had an important effect on English education.
- On his retirement he set out on a lecture tour in the United States. The three lectures on 'Numbers', 'Literature and Science', and 'Emerson', which he delivered to American audiences in 1883-84, were afterwards published as Discourses in America.
- He crossed the Atlantic again in 1886 to visit his daughter who had married an American. Later once again in 1888 he went to Liverpool to meet his daughter who was visiting from America, and there, while running to catch a tramcar, suddenly died.
- Matthew Arnold "was indeed the most delightful of companions," writes G. W. E. Russell in Portraits of the Seventies; "a man of the world entirely free from worldliness and a man of letters without the faintest trace of pedantry."
- He is described in many biographical sketches as a familiar figure at the Athenaeum Club, a frequent diner-out and guest at great country houses, a man fond of fishing and shooting, a lively conversationalist, avoracious reader who read constantly, widely, and deeply.
- In his writings, he often had ambiguous tones that perplexed and sometimes annoyed his contemporaries by the apparent contradiction between his urbane, even frivolous manner in controversy, and the high seriousness of his critical views and the melancholy, almost plaintive note of much of his poetry.
- In his poetry he derived not only the subject matter of his narrative poems from various traditional or literary sources

- His poetry endures because of its directness, and the literal fidelity of his beautifully circumstantial description of nature, of scenes, and places, imbued with a kind of majestic sadness which takes the place of music.

**DOVER BEACH:**

**3.3.1 PARAPHRASE:**

- The sea is calm to-night.
  And the tide is full, while the moon lies fair
  Upon the straits of the French coast
- The light gleams and is gone; but the cliffs of England stand,
  Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
- Come to the window, as the night-air is sweet!
  Only, from the long line of spray
  Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land, you can
  Listen to the waves.
- You hear the grating roar
  Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
  At their return, up the high strand,
  The waves begin, and cease, and then again begin,
  With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
  The eternal note of sadness in.
- Long ago Sophocles had
  Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
  Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
  Of human misery.
- We find also in the sound a thought,
  Hearing it by this distant northern sea.
- The Sea of Faith
  Was once, encircled round earth's shore
  and lay like the folds of a bright girdle.
  But now I can only hear
  the sea’s melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
- Retreating, to the edge of the night-wind

down the vast edges close to the
naked shingles of the world.

- Now love, let us be true
  To one another! for the world, which seems
  To lie before us like a land of dreams,
  So different, so beautiful, so new,
  Has got neither joy, nor love, nor light,
  Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
- We are here as on a darkling plain.
- Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
  Where ignorant armies clash by night.

### 3.3.2 SUMMARY AND COMMENTARY:

- Matthew Arnold's poem, ‘Dover Beach’ (1851) centers on the image of the moonlit waters of the English Channel. This image transcends the immediate physical setting to reflect broader themes of human struggle and private grief.
- In the mind of the poem's speaker, the ebb and flow of the tides come to symbolize much more than simply the natural pull of the moon and the sea.
- The rhythm of the tides reflects the oscillation of the speaker's emotions, that move from peace and tranquility to passion and joy and finally to the overarching sentiments of melancholy and despair.
- The structure of the poem itself mirrors this ebb and flow of emotional currents, and the symbolic imagery in the poem is introduced climactically to culminate in the theme that, all things bright and beautiful in this world have an underlying dark current of destruction, violence, chaos, and sorrow.
- Dover Beach was probably written in June 1851 following a visit to Dover en route to Europe with his new wife, Lucy Wightman but it was not published until 1867.
- It is a poem of maturity reflecting the poet’s feelings about the world.
- The poem highlights the realization that love enhances loneliness, a sense of loss, and is a self-imposed prison. When he states these lines ‘How vain a thing is human love’;‘The heart can bind itself alone And faith may oft be unreturn'd Self-swayed our feelings ebb and swell’.

- Arnold through the poem displays that only in a commitment to revere and develop the perfected qualities in Man can Man hope to escape the inherent insecurity of life and the transience of 'natural' feeling.
- Dover Beach is apoem about the past. When Arnold looks out a window onto Dover beach, he hears the "grating roar" caused by the waves of the English Channel as they strike the shoreline at the base of the great chalk cliffs; and he thinks of the "mournful roar" of which Sophocles wrote in Antigone.
- Arnold also remembers the chaotic night-battle at Epipolae when Athenian warriors, unable to see, killed friend and enemy alike. Time past for Arnold forewarns humanity of its sad destiny. This is the meaning implied in the last line of the poem.
- Arnold seems to escape from memories ‘human misery’, ‘alarm and flight’, by reflecting on present tenderness, namely a calm sea, sweet night-air, and his beloved by his side. Time reveals the fragility of human happiness
- ‘Dover Beach’ became the most well-known poems in English because of its central idea of the quest for meaning in life.
- Arnold makes explicit the formula by which everyone finds meaningfulness in an experience. The sights and sounds of the first few lines recall that the ebbing tide is to nature what the loss of faith is to humanity, inescapably natural and sad.
- Arnold uses his words carefully in the poem. When he says that the world does not give us "love," he means, in part, that the world lacks imagination and so can know very little about time past, which is crystallized in ancient literature like a leaf in amber, knowledge of which is an essential precondition for love.
- Both the world and the armies that "clash by night" are ignorant.
- Arnold describes in the poem the fact that knowledge, shaped by the well-educated imagination, leads to understanding, understanding to empathy, and empathy to "true love."
- As explained by scholars, ‘Dover Beach’ advances by three extended comparisons. Arnold first associates the "grating roar" that accompanies the waves, retreating and returning, casting pebbles on the beach shingles, with what Sophocles thinks of: ‘the turbid ebb and flow / Of human misery’. If humanity is the sea, the waves collapsing ashore resemble the wretched whose cries "bring / The eternal note of sadness in’.

- Next, Arnold and his companion, the "we" overlooking a "northern sea" far from Sophocles' southern "Ægean," devise a different metaphor, one more attune with their lives. If the sea is humanity's religious faith, then the "earth's shore" is the irreligious world, ever expanding as the sea's tide, having turned, retreats. Arnold embeds yet another metaphor within this comparison. The sea resembles the world's bright belt, once in folds (spread out in waves) and furled (that is, coiled up and bound).
- Last, Arnold manages a deft transition to a quite different analogy. The Sea of Faith, which ‘Lay like a belt around the earth's land, becomes "the world which seems / To lie before us like a land of dreams’. Religious faith becomes a dream. Arnold brings together the two opposites, sea and land joined at their touching edges, in the phrase "naked shingles of the world." So fused, they become a single "darkling plain." The "roar," which in the first two metaphors stands for the sound of the crashing waves, or of the withdrawing tide, becomes "confused alarms of struggle and flight, / Where ignorant armies clash by night."
- The most important idea which Arnold tries to put across in Dover Beach is faith and how this has changed amongst people. A continued metaphor is used to contrast the Sea with faith, the imagery of tides coming in and going represent the lack of commitment which people have. More and more doubts would have been brought about amongst people through things such as Science and Darwinism in the period which the poem was written.

  ‘The Sea of Faith

**3.3.3 COMPREHENSION:**

- What seems to be the poem's subject? What are some features of its language and style? How does it differ from some of the poems we've read earlier?
- What is the poem’s sequence of thought?
- What are some implications of the opening metaphor of the sea by the French coast and cliffs of Dover?
- Why the reference to Sophocles?
- What are the kinds of faith that Arnold may be referring to?
- What does the speaker advocate as a refuge in a chaotic world?
- What effect is created by introducing the "love" in stanza 3?
- What is the speaker's judgement of the world?

- How do the sounds of the last stanza reinforce its meaning?
- What effect is created by the classical metaphor "Where ignorant armies clash by night"?
- What is the poem's final tone?
- What are the poem's stanza forms and rhythms?
- What forms of sound patterning does it use?
- What seems to be the poem's subject?
- What is Arnold's view of the prospects for human happiness?
- What images are used in the poem
- What range of classical references are used, and for what purposes?
- To whom is the poem addressed?
- What does the speaker ask of himself and of (presumably) her? Do we need to know more?

### 3.3.4 LIFE AND WORK OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS:

- Many of you may not have read any of Hopkins' work. He is considered to be one of the late Victorians and also a poet who extensively belonged to the modern period because of his innovations and experimentation in poetical techniques. Let us in this section get acquainted with his life, his poetry and read the poem God's Grandeur together.
- Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in 1844 Hopkins was born in Essex, England. His parents were devout Anglicans who encouraged from an early age their eldest son's commitment to religion and to the creative arts.
- His mother was well educated for those days and was an avid reader. His father wrote and reviewed poetry and even authored a novel, though it was never published.
- Hopkins also had a number of relatives who were interested in literature, music, and the visual arts. from an early age he and his siblings showed creative dispositions, and Hopkins enjoyed from his family a great deal of support and encouragement for his creative endeavors.
- He studied drawing and music and at one point hoped to become a painter--as, indeed, two of his brothers did. Even his earliest verses displayed a vast verbal talent.

- His family moved to the relatively unpolluted neighborhood of Hampstead, north of the city, in 1852, as the area im which they lived was caught in the changes due to industrial revolution. The family believed that a closeness to nature was important for a healthy, and religious upbringing.
- Hopkins attended Highgate Grammar School From 1854 to 1863. Here his tutor was Canon Dixon, who became a lifelong friend and who encouraged his interest in Keats.
- At Oxford, Hopkins practiced his study of Latin and Greek. He was taught by Walter Pater and made friends with the poet Robert Bridges.
- Hopkins in 1860s became influenced by Christina Rossetti and in matters of medievalism and religious poetry. He also developed a liking for the Pre-Raphaelite movement.
- He also became preoccupied with the major religious controversies that were fermenting within the Anglican Church. Absorbed in intense debate over such issues, Hopkins began a quest within his self and after much deliberation deserted the religion of his family and converted to Catholicism. He threw his whole heart and life behind his conversion, deciding to become a Jesuit priest.
- Hopkins undertook a lengthy course of training for the priesthood; for seven years he wrote almost no verse, having decided that one who had pledged his life to God should not pursue poetry.
- Much later in 1875 at the urging of church officials Hopkins renewed his passion for poetry. He wrote The Wreck of the Deutschland in 1876 and, during the course of the next year, composed many of his most famous sonnets.
- Hopkins's subject matter in most of the poems is religious. The poetry written after 1875 follow a style that is different from his earlier poetry. After his ordination in 1877, Hopkins did parish work in a number of locales.
- He spent the last years of his short life quite unhappily in Dublin, where he wrote a group of melancholy poems often referred to as the "Terrible Sonnets" or "Sonnets of Desolation"; they exquisitely render the spiritual anguish for which Hopkins is famous. The great poet died of typhoid fever in 1877 in Dublin in 1877.

### 3.3.5 RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND IN HOPKINS' POETRY:

- Gerard Manley Hopkins is thought to be one of the greatest Victorian religious poet. His poems have themes pertaining to religion, nature, and inner anguish of man.
- In his view of nature, the world is like a text written by God. In this text God expresses himself completely, and it is by comprehending this world that humans can approach God and learn about Him.
- Hopkins therefore sees the environmental degradation of the Victorian period as significantly connected to the spiritual crisis of the age.
- Many of his poems lament man's indifference to the destruction of natural and religious order.
- Hopkins had a great deal of curiosity about the scientific and technological advances of his day and he foresaw new discoveries as evidence of God's deliberate hand, rather than as refutations of God's existence.

### 3.3.6 POETIC INNOVATIONS:

- One of Hopkins's innovations in poetical techniques is the concept of "inscape." He invented this word to refer to the essential individuality of a thing, but with a focus not on its particularity or uniqueness, but rather on the unifying design that gives a thing its distinctive characteristics and relates it to its context. Hopkins was interested in the exquisite interrelation of the individual thing and the recurring pattern. He saw the world as a kind of network integrated by divine law and design.
- Another major innovation was a new metrical form, called "sprung rhythm." In sprung rhythm, the poet counts the number of accented syllables in the line, but places no limit on the total number of syllables. As opposed to syllabic meters (such as the iambic), which count both stresses and syllables, this form allows for greater freedom in the position and proportion of stresses. Whereas English verse has traditionally alternated stressed and unstressed syllables with occasional variation, Hopkins was free to place multiple stressed syllables one after another (as in the line "All felled, felled, are all felled" in 'Binsey Poplars'), or to run a large number of unstressed syllables together (as in "Finger of a tender of, O of a feathery delicacy" in Wreck of the Deutschland). This gives Hopkins great control over the speed of his lines and their dramatic effects.

- I am sure you remember the discussion of the sonnet form from Unit One. Hopkins used this form frequently but he used the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet, which consists of an octave followed by a sestet, with a turn in argument or change in tone occurring in the second part. Hopkins used the octave to present some account of personal or sensory experience and then utilised the sestet for philosophical reflection. Hopkins constantly stretched and tested the limitations of the sonnet too.
- Another unusual poetic resource Hopkins favored is "consonant chiming," a technique he learned from Welsh poetry. The technique involves elaborate use of alliteration and internal rhyme; in Hopkins's hands this creates an unusual thickness and resonance. This close linking of words through sound and rhythm complements Hopkins's themes of finding pattern and design everywhere.
- Hopkins's poetic form is also marked by a stretching of the conventions of grammar and sentence structure, so that newcomers to his poetry have difficulty understanding him.
- Additionally, Hopkins often invented words, and blended his vocabulary with a number of different registers of diction. This led to a surprising mix of neologisms and archaisms throughout his lines.

**GOD'S GRANDEUR:**

**3.3.7 PARAPHRASE:**

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will shine, like a flame from shook foil;
It gathers together greatness.
Why do men then now not break his rod?
Generations have trod, and trod,
And all is smeared with trade;
and smeared with toil;
All wears man's smudge and shares man's smell:
the soil is bare now, nor can foot feel, as it is shod.
But for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And after the last lights off the black West sky has gone
springs the morning, at the brown brink eastward,
This is because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with bright wings.

### 3.3.8 SUMMARY

Read the poem on your own and look up all the difficult words. Read the poem aloud once again to get the rhythm and melody. Now read the summary and commentary given below.

- The poem is a sonnet with two sections an octave of 6 lines and a sestet of 6 lines. The first four lines of the octave describes a natural world through which God's presence permeates like an electrical current, becoming momentarily visible in flashes like the refracted glint of light produced by metal foil when crumpled.
- God's presence is a rich oil, a kind of sap that wells up "to a greatness" when tapped with a certain kind of patient pressure. Given these proofs of God's presence in the world, the poet asks how is it that humans fail to heed (‘reck’) the divine authority (‘his rod’).
- The next four lines of the octave describe the state of contemporary human life that is the blind repetitiveness of human labor, and the grime and stain of ‘toil’ and ‘trade’.
- The landscape in its natural state reflects God as its creator. However the growth of industry and the economic boom have transformed the landscape, and robbed humans of their sensitivity to the beauties of nature.
- The shoes people wear disconnect the physical proximity of our feet with the soil/earth thus symbolizing an ever-increasing spiritual alienation from nature.
- The sestet asserts that, in spite of the decay of Hopkins's contemporary Victorian world, nature does not cease offering its spiritual powers.
- The world is pervaded with a deep "freshness" that proves the continual renewing power of God's creation. This power of renewal is seen in the way morning always waits on the other side of dark night.
- The source of this constant regeneration is the grace of a God who "broods" over a seemingly lifeless world with the patient nurture of a mother hen. This final image is one of God guarding the potential of the world and containing within Himself the power and promise of rebirth.
- Hopkins suggests both an awed intuition of the beauty of God's grace, and the joyful suddenness of a hatchling bird emerging out of God's loving incubation in the last exclamation.

**Rhythm:**

- This poem is an Italian sonnet--it contains fourteen lines divided into an octave and a sestet, which are separated by a shift in the argumentative direction of the poem. The meter here is not the sprung rhythm for which Hopkins is so famous, but it does vary somewhat from the iambic pentameter lines of the conventional sonnet. For example, Hopkins follows stressed syllable with stressed syllable in the fourth line of the poem, bolstering the urgency of his question: "Why do men then now not reck his rod?" Similarly, in the next line, the heavy, falling rhythm of "have trod, have trod, have trod," coming after the quick lilt of "generations," recreates the sound of plodding footsteps in striking onomatopoeia.

**3.3.9 COMMENTARY:**

- The poem begins with the surprising metaphor of God's grandeur as an electric force. The figure suggests an undercurrent that may not be visible always but which builds up a tension or pressure that occasionally flashes out in ways that can be both brilliant and dangerous. The optical effect of "shook foil" is one such illustration.
- The image of the oil being got by pressing an olive represents the notion of saturation and built-up pressure. The image of electricity is intensified in the fourth line, where the ‘rod’ of God's punishing power calls to mind the lightning rod in which excess electricity in the atmosphere will occasionally ‘flame out’.
- Hopkins carefully chooses this complex of images to link the secular and scientific to mystery, divinity, and religious tradition. Hopkins is sure that God's work is still to be seen in nature. It is upto the humans to recognize it.
- Hopkins believes that discoveries proclaim the grandeur of God and are not to be seen as challenges. Hopkins's wonderment at the optical effects of a piece of foil attributes revelatory power to a man-made object.
- The olive oil, on the other hand, is an ancient material, used for centuries in different ways as sources of food, medicine, lamplight, and religioun. This oil thus traditionally appears in all aspects of life, much as God suffuses all branches of the created universe. Hopkins's question in the fourth line focuses his readers on the present historical moment; in considering why men are no longer God-fearing.

- The second quatrain contains an condemnation of the way a culture's neglect of God translates into a neglect of the environment. At the same it also suggests that the ill-treatment of previous generations are partly to blame for this state of affairs.
- Yet the sestet affirms that, in spite of the decay of human beings and the earth, God has not withdrawn from either. God possesses an infinite power of renewal and regeneration.
- The poem thus reflects Hopkins's conviction that the physical world is made by God.
- In case you have noticed both Arnold, in 'Dover Beach' and Hopkins, in 'God's Grandeur' are concerned with the question of the presence of God and religious faith in the world. Both in their own ways question the role and position of faith in the world. If Arnold sees the 'Sea of Faith' withdrawing from the world, Hopkins optimistically views God's presence in everything around him. Both the poets, however, feel that to experience God human dilemma is necessary. Arnold's poem sees no openings and ends on a tone of pessimism but Hopkins denotes that there is some chance and that maybe when human beings recognize his grandeur in the things around them.

**COMPREHENSION:**

- Trace some images of science and technology in 'God's Grandeur'.
- How did Hopkins reconcile scientific understanding with religious belief?
- Why do you think the method of "sprung rhythm" appealed to Hopkins? How does it contribute to his poems?
- What is Hopkins's attitude towards physical labor?
- Hopkins is famous as a poet of both nature and religion. How does he combine these two traditional poetic subjects, and to what effect in 'God's Grandeur'?
- What does Hopkins believe about the presence of God in the natural world?
- Why is Hopkins considered as a modernist poet? Explain with an analysis of 'God's Grandeur'.

## UNIT – IV

LESSON 1: WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939)

**OUTLINE:**

- **Introduction to Modern Poetry.**
- **Life and Works of William Butler Yeats.**
- **Central issues Yeats' Poetry.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the central concerns of Modern Poetry.**
- **Know the political and social contexts of Yeats' poetry.**
- **Comprehend the major features of 'The Second Coming'.**

In this lesson we hope to provide you with a context to understand what we term as modern poetry. You should understand that terms like romantic, Victorian and modern have been used just to classify conveniently some of the works of the writers and does not mean that there is an overarching resemblance among the writers.

### 4.1.0 INTRODUCTION:

- It is not easy to state when poetry became modern. Definitely a number of changes and traditions have given rise to what we term as modern poetry. One of the major influences for the growth of modern poetry has been romanticism. Romanticism gave the space for the expression of the self. The romantics' primacy of imagination the power to recreate reality has helped the moderns to indulge in notions of individualism and create revolutionary ideas. One of the common strands in modern poetry has been the questions the reality of an objective reality. In this questioning the poets my adopt different themes and techniques.
- Modern poetry did not begin just like that. Hopkins whom you studied in the last unit was in a way the precursor of the modern movement. In 1885 the age commonly called Victorian was showing a shift in its stances. The Victorian period had set in a tone of pessimism and a kind of disillusionment. Thus Hopkins and Hardy whom you have not studied displayed a twinge of sadness at the human existence. The Victorian era of smugness, of placid and pious sentimentality was shattered and a new wave of thought began to creep into poetry.

- The poets of the Romantic period had inspired the generation ideas such as freedom, a deep and burning awe of nature, an insatiable hunger for truth in all its forms and manifestations. Only the pre-Raphaelite movement which you will read about in the next unit with its slogan of æsthetic freedom and its champion of beauty started displaying a change in the Victorian sensibility. The revolutionary "Art for Art's sake" began to swing the artists from ornamentation to reality. Mid-Victorian propriety and self-satisfaction collapsed under the swift and energetic daring-ness of the sensational younger authors and artists. But later on, the movement also crumbled due to too much revolt and finally degenerated into a half-hearted defense of artificialities.
- It was thus the work of symbolists such as Baudelaire and Rimbaud that shaped Yeats's poetry.

### 4.1.1 WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS:

**LIFE:**

- William Butler Yeats was born in Dublin in 1865. His father, a portrait painter, shifted the family to London when Yeats was two, and William spent much of his childhood shifting from the cold urban landscape of the metropolis to the pleasant countryside of County Sligo, Ireland, where his mother's parents lived.
- Even as a boy, Yeats began writing verse, and published his first work in 1885.
- In 1889, Yeats met the Irish patriot, revolutionary, and beauty Maud Gonne. With whom he fell in love. He remained infatuated with her for the rest of his life and every reference to a beloved in Yeats's poetry can be read as a reference to Maud Gonne.
- Unfortunately for Yeats Maud Gonne did not reciprocate his love, and though they remained closely associated never married.
- Yeats lived during a turbulent time in Ireland. He witnessed the political rise and fall of Charles Stuart Parnell, followed by the Irish Revival, and the civil war. Partly because of his love for the politically active Maud Gonne, Yeats devoted himself during the early part of his career to the Literary Revival of Celtic myths and to Irish patriotism, trying to develop a new religious iconography based on Irish mythology.

- Even though yeats was a  Protestant hedid not play a major role during the conflict between Catholics and Protestants that tore Ireland apart.
- Yeats quickly rose to literary prominence, and helped to found what became the Abbey Theatre, one of the most important cultural institutions in Ireland. While at the Abbey he was associated with such celebrities as Augusta Gregory and the playwright John Synge. In 1923, Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.
- One of the most remarkable facts about Yeats's career as a poet is that he only reached his full powers late in life, between the ages of 50 and 75. He was writing magnificent poems up until two weeks before his death.
- Yeats The Tower to the eerie mysticism of the Last Poems stand as  a testament to the force and commitment with which he devoted himself to transforming his inner life into poetry.
- His poetry interestingly straddles the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.  Yeats is stylistically quite a unique poet whose early work are modern for the nineteenth century, while his late work often seems un-modern for the 1930s.
- Yeats wrote great poems in every decade of his life, and his influence has loomed large over the past century and presently he is generally regarded as the greatest poet of the twentieth century.

### 4.1.2 THE CELTIC REVIVAL:

- In 1889, Douglas Hyde a  the scholar and folk-lorist, brought out his Book of Gaelic Stories. The revival of Gaelic and the renascence of Irish literature began to be a major movement from 1889. The writers from Ireland  began to reflect the strange background of dreams, politics, suffering and heroism that is immortally Irish. The writers who gave to this movement along with W.B. Yeats are George W. Russell, Moira O'Neill, Lionel Johnson, Katharine Tynan, and Padraic Colum
- After reanimating the old myths, surcharging the legendary heroes with a new significance, it seemed for a while that the movement would lose itself in a literary mysticism. But an increasing concern with the peasant, the migratory laborer, the tramp, followed; an interest that was something of a reaction against the influence of Yeats and his mystic other-worldliness.

- In 1904, the Celtic Revival reached its height with John Millington Synge, who was not only the greatest dramatist of the Irish Theatre. Synge's poetry and sharp prefaces that were to exercise a great influence.
- In the distinguished introduction to the Playboy of the Western World, Synge declared, "When I was writing The Shadow of the Glen some years ago, I got more aid than any learning could have given me from a chink in the floor of the old Wicklow house where I was staying, that let me hear what was being said by the servant girls in the kitchen. This matter is, I think, of some importance; for in countries where the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words—and at the same time to give the reality which is at the root of all poetry, in a natural and comprehensive form."
- Synge's In The Well of the Saints, The Playboy of the Western World and Riders to the Sea there is a beauty of form and richness of language that is distinctly Irish in tone.
- Yeats was greatly influenced by Synge and Synge's poetry had a surprising effect upon his followers. It marked a point of departure, a reaction against both the too-polished and over-rhetorical verse of his immediate predecessors and the dehumanized mysticism of many of his associates. In the preface to his Poems Synge wrote what was a slogan, and a manifesto for modern poetry. He stated : "I have often thought that at the side of poetic diction, which everyone condemns, modern verse contains a great deal of poetic material, using 'poetic' in the same special sense. The poetry of exaltation will be always the highest; but when men lose their poetic feeling for ordinary life and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose its strength of exaltation in the way that men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost happiness in building shops.... Even if we grant that exalted poetry can be kept successfully by itself, the strong things of life are needed in poetry also, to show that what is exalted or tender is not made by feeble blood."
- In a way it was Synge who set the tone of the Celtic revival.

### 4.1.3 IRISH NATIONALISM:

- Yeats believed that art and politics were fundamentally connected and used his writing to express his feelings toward Irish politics, as well as to inform his readers about Irish cultural history.
- From an early age, Yeats felt a deep connection to Ireland and his national identity, and he thought that British rule unconstructively impressed Irish politics and social life.
- His early compilation of folklore sought to teach a literary history that had been suppressed by British rule, and his early poems were odes to the beauty and mystery of the Irish countryside. This work frequently integrated references to myths and mythic figures such as the Oisin and Cuchulain.
- As Yeats became more involved in Irish politics through his relationships with the Irish National Theatre, the Irish Literary Society, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and Maud Gonne.
- Yeats wrote numerous poems about Ireland's involvement in World War I. Some of them are 'An Irish Airman Foresees His Death' (1919), 'A Meditation in Time of War' (1921), 'On a Political Prisoner' (1921), 'In Memory of Eva Gore Booth and Con Markiewicz' (1933), and the 'Easter 1916' (1916).
- Yeats believed that art could provide a political function because poems could both critique and comment on political events, as well as educate and inform a population.
- In these poems, a sense of cultural crisis and conflict seeps through, even though the poems are not explicitly about Ireland. By using images of chaos, disorder, and war, Yeats engaged in an understated commentary on the political situations in Ireland and abroad. Yeats's active participation in Irish politics informed his poetry, and he used his work to further comment on the nationalist issues of his day.

### 4.1.4 SPIRITUAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ATTITUDE:

- Yeats had a deep attraction to mysticism and the occult, and his poetry was infused with a sense of the otherworldly, the spiritual, and the unknown. His interest in the occult began with his study of Theosophy and expanded and developed through his participation in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a mystical secret society.

- Mysticism figures prominently in Yeats's discussion of the reincarnation of the soul, as well as in his philosophical model of the conical gyres used to explain the journey of the soul, the passage of time, and the guiding hand of fate. The rejection of Christian principles in favor of a more supernatural approach to spirituality creates a unique flavor in Yeats's poetry that impacts his discussion of history, politics, and love.
- Yeats's commitment to mysticism led to the development of a unique spiritual and philosophical attitude that accentuated the role of fate and historical determinism, and the belief that events had been preordained.
- Yeats had rejected Christianity early in his life, and had spent all his life studying mythology, Theosophy, spiritualism, philosophy, and the occult. Many of his poems are illustrations of this profound interest in the divine and its interaction with humanity.
- In the course of his life, he formed a complex system of spirituality, using the image of interlocking gyres (similar to spiral cones) to map out the development and reincarnation of the soul.
- Yeats believed that history was determined by fate and that fate revealed its plan in moments when the human and divine interact. This idea of history and inevitability are also found in many of his poems, particularly in descriptions of situations of human and divine interaction. Some of the examples are 'Leda and the Swan' (1923), 'The Second Coming' (1919), and 'Sailing to Byzantium' (1926).

**4.1.5 ROMANTICISM AND MODERNISM:**

- Yeats called himself as a late romantic but his poetry was more modernist in tone. His poetry in the 1880s had a lyrical, romantic style, and they focused on love, longing, loss, and Irish myths. His early writing followed the conventions of romantic verse, employing known rhyme schemes, metric patterns, and poetic structures. Although it is lighter than his later writings, his early poetry has still got the sophistication and style of modern poetry. Several elements contributed to his poetic evolution such as his interest in mysticism and the occult, his frustrated romantic relationship with Maud Gonne, and his concern with Irish subjects.
- Yeats shifted his focus from myth and folklore to contemporary politics, and finally, and most significantly, Yeats's connection with the changing face of literary culture in the early twentieth century led him to pick up some of the styles

and conventions of the modernist poets. The modernists experimented with verse forms, assertively engaged in contemporary politics, challenged poetic conventions and the literary tradition at large, and rejected the notion that poetry should simply be lyrical and beautiful. These influences caused W.B. Yeats' poetry to become darker, sharper, and more succinct. Although he never abandoned the verse forms that provided the sounds and rhythms of his earlier poetry, there is still a noticeable shift in style and tone over the course of his career.

### 4.1.6 IRISH MYTH AND FOLKLORE:

- Irish myth and folklore had been earlier suppressed by two factors namely, the church doctrine and the British control of the school system. Yeats used his poetry as a tool for imbibing in the Irish people a patriotism about their heritage and land. He retold entire folktales in epic poems and plays, such as The Wanderings of Oisin (1889) and The Death of Cuchulain (1939), and used fragments of stories in shorter poems, such as 'The Stolen Child' (1886), which is a retelling of an allegory about fairies luring a child away from his home. Similarly 'Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea' (1925), recounts part of an Irish epic where the Irish folk hero Cuchulain battles his long-lost son by at the edge of the sea.
- Other poems also deal with subjects, images, and themes gathered from folklore. In "Who Goes with Fergus?" (1893) Yeats imagines a meeting with the exiled wandering king of Irish legend, while "The Song of Wandering Aengus" (1899) captures the experiences of the lovelorn god Aengus as he searches for the beautiful maiden seen in his dreams.
- Most important, Yeats infused his poetry with a rich sense of Irish culture. Even poems that do not deal explicitly with subjects from myth retain powerful tinges of indigenous Irish culture. Yeats often borrowed word selection, verse form, and patterns of imagery directly from traditional Irish myth and folklore.

### 4.1.7 PARAPHRASE OF 'THE SECOND COMING':

As it turns and turns in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
And then things fall apart and the centre can no longer hold;

Then Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The tide of violence is let loose, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

The best lack all confidence and assurance, while the worst
are filled with passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;

Surely the Second Coming is at hand.

Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles me.

Somewhere in the sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,

A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,

Is moving around

Shadows of the indignant desert birds reel around and

The darkness drops again;

But now I know

That twenty centuries of stony sleep

Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,

Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

**4.1.8 SUMMARY:**

- This poem was written in 1919. It reflects Yeats attitude toward the Black and Tan war in Ireland when British troops were sent to Ireland to put down the republicans. The title uses and blends Christ's prediction of his Second coming in Mathew 24. In a way the poem is a hint about the up rise of fascism.
- The speaker describes a nightmarish scene when the world is in turbulence. In such a time Yeats uses the image of the falcon, turning in a widening "gyre" and therefore its inability to hear the falconer. At such a time things fall apart and the center cannot hold leading to anarchy and chaos. Thus The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere innocence is drowned. The best people, the speaker says, lack all conviction, but the worst "are full of passionate intensity." The speaker asserts, the world is near a revelation; "Surely the Second Coming is at hand."

- No sooner does he think of “the Second Coming,” then he is troubled by “a vast image of the Spiritus Mundi, or the collective spirit of mankind which he hopes will be reborn.
- ‘The Second Coming’ is written in a very rough iambic pentameter. However as its meter is not very rigid it seems closer to free verse with frequent heavy stresses. The rhymes are haphazard excepting from the two couplets with which the poem opens, there are only coincidental rhymes in the poem, such as “man” and “sun.”
- Due to its stunning, violent imagery and terrifying ritualistic language, “The Second Coming” is one of Yeats’s most famous poems and yet thematically it is obscure and difficult to understand. The first stanza describes the conditions present in the world and the second infers from those conditions that a monstrous Second Coming is about to take place. This Second Coming is not the religious one that is of the Jesus, but it is about the Second Coming of a new messiah, a “rough beast,” the slouching sphinx rousing itself in the desert and lumbering toward Bethlehem.
- Yeats spent years crafting an elaborate, mystical theory of the universe that he described in his book A Vision. The theory of history Yeats articulated in A Vision centers on a diagram made of two conical spirals, one inside the other, so that the widest part of one of the spirals rings around the narrowest part of the other spiral, and vice versa. Yeats believed that this image which he called the ‘gyres’ captured the contrary motions inherent within the historical process, and he divided each gyre into specific regions that represented particular kinds of historical periods. This could also be read as the psychological phases of an individual’s development.
- ‘The Second Coming’ was intended by Yeats to describe the current historical moment in terms of these gyres. Yeats believed that the world was on the threshold of an apocalyptic revelation, as history reached the end of the outer gyre and began moving along the inner gyre.

### 4.1.9 COMPREHENSION:

- What do the poem's last few lines suggest about poetry's power to render great events intelligible, or to relate present conditions to future possibilities?
- Explain the significance of the title?
- Write a note on the religious imagery of the poem?
- What is the significance of the poem's mention of the Sphinx myth?

LESSON 2: THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT (1888-1965)

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life and Works of T.S. Eliot.**
- **Central issues in Eliot's Poetry.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the central concerns of Eliot's Poetry.**
- **Know the political and social contexts of that period.**
- **Comprehend the major features of 'The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock'.**

**4.2.0**

I am quite sure that all of you have heard the name of Thomas Eliot. No student of literature can ignore him for it is thought by many rightly so that without Eliot modern poetry could not have begun. In this lesson we will get a glimpse of Eliot's life and works and try to understand one of his first poems.

**LIFE AND WORKS OF T.S. ELIOT:**

- Thomas Stearns Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. in 1888 to Henry Ware (and Charlotte Stearns Eliot. His father was a businessman and his mother a poetess. Eliot came from a family of distinguished scholars and you may be interested to know that Eliot's paternal grandfather established and presided over Washington University.
- Coming from a rich and influential family, Eliot went to only the very best schools, namely, Smith Academy in St. Louis, and Milton Academy in Massachusetts. By 1906 he had joined Harvard University. He later did his graduation in philosophy from 1910-1914, and then studied at the Sorbonne in Paris for a year.
- Eliot did not get his doctoral degree as he had shifted his residence to England and had decided not to return to America. In England he had fallen in love with Vivienne Haigh-Wood. Eliot later returned to America for occasional visits, and finally after a much soul-searching in 1927 became a British citizen. This is the

reason that Eliot is considered both as an English Poet and also as an American poet.

- In 1915 Eliot married Vivienne who died in 1945. Her health mentally and physically had been degenerating gradually leading to her death. Eliot remarried Valerie Fletcher in 1957.
- Eliot met Ezra Pound in 1914, and it was Pound who was his main mentor and editor and who got his poems published and noticed.
- During a 1921 break from his job as a bank clerk,to recover from a mental breakdown, Eliot finished the work that was to secure him fame, The Waste Land.
- This poem, heavily edited by Pound and perhaps also by Eliot's wife, Vivien, addressed the fragmentation and alienation characteristic of modern culture, making use of these fragments to create a new kind of poetry. It was also around this time that Eliot began to write criticism, partly in an effort to explain his own methods.
- In 1925, began to work for the publishing house Faber & Faber. Despite the distraction of his wife's increasingly serious bouts of mental illness, Eliot was from this time until his death the prominent literary figure in the English-speaking world. He was so monumental that younger poets often went out of their way to avoid his looming shadow, painstakingly avoiding all similarities of style.
- Eliot became interested in religion in the later 1920s and eventually converted to Anglicanism. His poetry from this point onward shows a greater religious bent, although it never becomes dogmatic the way his sometimes controversial cultural criticism does. Four Quartets, his last major poetic work, combines a Christian sensibility with a profound uncertainty resulting from the war's devastation of Europe.
- Eliot as already mentioned did various jobs throughout his lifetime. He was a schoolmaster, bank clerk, free-lance writer, assistant editor, editor, publisher with Faber and Faber and even professor of poetry at Harvard.
- Being a reflective man, Eliot underwent a deep religious transformation. After a great deal of inner turmoil, Eliot became a member of the Anglican church in 1927. This can be seen in the poetry he wrote after 1930s.
- T.S. Elot was a very private man and forbade in his will an official biography. Therefore there is not much known about his life. Eliot died in 1965.

### 4.2.1 PARAPHRASE OF 'THE LOVE SONG OF ALFRED PRUFROCK':

Let us go then, you and I,

When the evening is set

Like a patient etherized

Let us go, through some half-deserted streets,

and see the retreats

Of restless nights, the one-night cheap hotels

And restaurants with oyster-shells:

Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
And they talking about Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
and which licks its tongue in the corners of the evening,
Lingers upon the pools that stand in drains.

Let it fall upon its back Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,

And seeing that it was a soft October night,

Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time

For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,

Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;

There will be time, to prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;

There will be time to murder and create,

And time for all the works and days of hands

That lift and drop a question on your plate;

There will be time for you and time for me,

And time yet for a hundred indecisions,

And for a hundred visions and revisions,

Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go

Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—

They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!"
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—

Do I dare
and disturb the universe?
In a minute there will be time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons, I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already,
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the fag ends of my days and ways?

I have known the arms already,
Arms that have bracelets and are white and bare
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
Should I then presume?

And how should I begin?

. . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets

And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes

Seen lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws

Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!

Smoothed by long fingers,

Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.

Should I, after tea and cakes

Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?

But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,

As I have seen my head that  has grown slightly bald brought in upon a platter

I am no prophet--;

I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,

And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,

And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,

After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,

Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,

Would it have been worth while,

To have bitten off the matter with a smile,

To have squeezed the universe into a ball

To roll it toward some overwhelming question,

To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead

Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"— and then

Should I say: "That is not what I meant at all”.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the
floor--And this, and so much more?--
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:

Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
"That is not it at all,

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
I am only an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,

One who will advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous--
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old and
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.
Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

**4.2.2 SUMMARY:**

- Eliot's term "love song" is used loosely here. The poem centers on the feelings and thoughts of the persona, J. Alfred Prufrock, as he walks to meet a woman for tea and considers a question he feels compelled to ask her.
- The poem is composed of Prufrock's own neurotic imaginations. In the course of the poem, he sets up parallels between himself and various familiar cultural figures, among them Hamlet. This establishes a connection with Hamlet's famous soliloquy To be or not to be? Prufrock's doubt that he deserves the answer he desires from this woman transforms the poem into a kind of interior monologue or soliloquy in which "To be or not to be?"
- The poem can also be seen as an exploration of the modernist alienation of the individual in society to a point where internal emotional alienation occurs.
- In T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," the author is establishing the trouble the narrator is having dealing with middle age. Prufrock the persona believes that age is a burden and is deeply troubled by it. His obsession with the passing of time characterizes his fear of aging. The poem deals with these fears.
- Prufrock feels unsure about himself. He is alarmed of what will occur when people see his balding head or his aging body. He believes everyone will think that he is old and useless. He feels that they will talk about him behind his back. He thinks that they might say "How his hair is growing thin.
- This insecurity is definitely a impediment for him for it restrains him from doing the things he wishes to do. This is the sort of characteristic that makes Alfred into a tragic, doomed character. He will not find happiness until he finds self-assurance within himself. The repetition of some words like vision and revision, show his feelings of insufficiency in communicating with the people around him.
- The person’s lack of self esteem, also affects his love life. The woman he is in love with is younger than he, and this distresses him. He does not believe that some younger women could possibly accept him or find him attractive.

- His apprehensiveness in his love life, is very wearisome for him because even though he very much wants to express his affection it becomes concealed within him.
- He compares himself to Lazarus who was an aged man restored to life by Jesus. He feels that it will take a miracle to make him feel young again. Prufrock presumes that the response to his love will be unkind as women do not find older men attractive or romantic.
- The poem is written in free verse. The rhyme scheme Elliot uses in this poem depicts the disenchanted and confused mind of the narrator. The poem is written using a non-uniform meter and rhyme.
- Elliot wrote this poem at a time when social customs and classes were still considered an issue. Stereotypes of groups were used blatantly by Eliot in the poem to criticize society. His depiction of the lower class is displayed by the line "restless nights in one-night cheap hotels."(6) The rich on the other hand are educated and enjoy life every day and They are busy and bustle around joyfully in order to get things done. They are also hypocritical as evident by the line, “In the room the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo”.(13-14).
- The debate in Prufrock's mind finally comes to a close when he compares himself to Prince Hamlet from William Shakespeare's masterpiece "Hamlet". He feels he is more like Polonius an old attendant to Lord Hamlet who is intelligent, wise, and eager to please. Prufrock decides he is suave, assiduous, and strives for perfection even though he lsack some sort of mental power. This is the understanding he reaches.
- Eliot frequently uses the reference of time in order to show the state of mind of the narrator. The contrasts used show the total indecisiveness of Prufrock-- "And Indeed there will be time To wonder, Do I dare? and, Do I Dare?" "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons."(51) His perpetual dilemma is characterized by his belief that there will be time to consider everything.
- Feeling like that of an outsider, Prufrock discovers he cannot exist with the type of people he once did. He can communicate with them but he feels they will not accept him because of his age and appearance. His existence is uninteresting and tedious while their state is fun and exciting. "I know the voices dying with a dying fall/Beneath the music from a farther room."(52-53)

- Fantasizing of a world where these problems do not exist is a pleasant daydream for Prufrock. He imagines the peaceful world under the sea where social classes do not exist. Even though he has overcome his problem with his love life, he still has many other worries to contend with. The mermaids are singing beautifully, but in his opinion, they cannot possibly be singing for him. His insecurity is still present and seems incurable. His fantasy world is brought to a crashing halt when his dreams get over "Till human voices wake us, and we drown."(131)
- Although giving him temporary relief from the pressures of his life, this dreamlike state is destroying his heart and only returning to the real world will save him.
- Eliot's depiction of the worries of aging is a major aspect incorporated into the poem. Although Prufrock is a man of knowledge and society, he feels that he is a misfit because he is getting older. Age kills us all, but for Prufrock it has already killed him
- Segments of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," often called "the first Modernist poem," appeared in the Harvard Advocate in 1906 while Eliot was an undergraduate. He later read the poem to Ezra Pound in England and Pound arranged to have it published in the prestigious American journal Poetry in June 1915. It was included in Prufrock and Other Observations, Eliot's first book of poetry, in 1917.

**Explanations:**

These annotations were taken directly from B.C. Southam's A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T.S. Eliot.

- Dedication: Dedicated to Jean Verdenal, a friend of Eliot's who was killed in 1915 on the Anglo-French expedition to the Dardanelles.
- Title: Orginally titled "Prufrock Among the Women". "J. Alfred Prufrock" follows the early form of Eliot's signature "T. Stearns Eliot".
- Epigraph: These lines are taken from Dante's "Inferno", and are spoken by the character of Count Guido da Montefelltro. Dante meets the punished Guido in the Eighth chasm of Hell. Guido explains that he is speaking freely to Dante only because he believes Dante is one of the dead who could never return to earth to report what he says. Translated from the original Italian, the lines are as follows: "If I thought that my reply would be to someone who would ever return to earth,

this flame would remain without further movement; but as no one has ever returned alive from this gulf, if what I hear is true, I can answer you with no fear of infamy."

- spread out: This metaphor occurs many times in Bergson's "Time and Free Will (1910), the work which Eliot, while in Harvard, quoted from most frequently in his writings about Bergson.
- overwhelming question: In James Fenimore Cooper's "The Pioneers" (1823), a book Eliot loved as a child, a metaphorical "overwhelming question" occurs.
- In the room the women come and go...Michelangelo: Laforgue wrote: "In the room the women come and go/Talking of the masters of the Sienne school". Eliot imitates Laforgue, introducing an element of parody, set off as a kind of chorus (repeated later at lines 35-6) following a section of "vers libre" i.e. free verse. Michelangelo: great Italian sculptor, painter and poet.
- fog: According to Eliot, the smoke that blew across the Mississippi from the factories of St. Louis, his hometown.
- And indeed there will be time: Echoing "Had we but world enough and time", from Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress". The speaker of the poem argues to his 'coy mistress' that they could take their time in courtship games only if they lived forever.
- dying fall: In Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" the lovesick Duke Orsino orders an encore of a moody piece of music: "That strain again! It had a dying fall".
- sprawling on a pin: In the study and collection of insects, specimens are pinned into place and kept in cases. Prufrock feels as though he is being brutally analyzed in a similar manner.
- butt-ends: As in the ends of smoked cigarettes.
- Arms that are braceleted white and bare: "A bracelet of bright hair about the bone" in John Donne's "The Relic", a line with a "powerful effect" Eliot remarks upon in "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921).
- Though I have seen my head...brought in upon a platter: Matthew 14:3-11, Mark 6:17-29 in the Bible; the death of John the Baptist. King Herod was enamored of a dancing girl named Salome. He offered her a gift of anything she wanted in his kingdom. Salome's mother told her to request the head of John the Baptist on a silver platter. Herod complied.

- Lazarus: Another Biblical story. In Luke 16:19-31, a Lazarus is a beggar associated with a rich man named Dives in a parable. When they died Lazarus went to Heaven while Dives went to Hell. Dives wanted to warn his brothers about Hell and asked Abraham if Lazarus could be sent back to tell them. Abraham refused saying, "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."
- Prince Hamlet: Probably Shakespeare's most famous character. The hero Hamlet, like Prufrock, is crippled by indecisiveness. Prufrock echoes Hamlet's famous "to be or not to be" at the end of this line.
- attendant lord: Prufrock having an inferiority complex, stating that he will never be a main character with a purpose, like Hamlet, but rather an "attendant lord" (in this case Polonius), a side character who may slightly move the plot but is buffoonish, a fool (see below).
- Fool: Besides the common meaning, a standard character in Elizabethan drama, as in a court jester who entertains the nobility and speaks in seeming nonsense which contained paradoxical wisdom. Hamlet's court jester was Yorick ("Alas poor Yorick--I knew him Horatio..."). The fool was often also another character in the play, not a court jester, who was used as comic relief. In "Hamlet" it is the gravedigger; in "The Merchant of Venice" it is Launcelot Gobbo, in "Henry IV Part I and II" it is Falstaff, and so on.
- Shall I part my hair behind?: At this time such a hairstyle was considered "daringly bohemian".

### 4.2.3 COMMENTARY:

- The poem is an examination of the tortured psyche of the prototypical modern man--overeducated, articulate, disturbed, and pretentious. Prufrock, the poem's speaker, seems to be addressing a potential lover, with whom he would like to "force the moment to its crisis". Prufrock in his mind hears the comments others make about his inadequacies, and he chides himself for "presuming" emotional interaction could be possible at all.
- The poem moves from a series of fairly concrete physical settings to a series of vague ocean images conveying Prufrock's emotional distance from the world. The poem is potent for its range of intellectual reference and also for the vividness of character achieved.

- Prufrock" is a variation on the dramatic monologue. The poem is a carefully structured amalgamation of poetic forms. As scholars have stated the bits and pieces of rhyme become much more apparent when the poem is read aloud. One of the most prominent formal characteristics of this work is the use of refrains. Prufrock's continual return to the "women [who] come and go / Talking of Michelangelo" and his recurrent questionings ("how should I presume?") and pessimistic appraisals ("That is not it, at all.") both reference an earlier poetic tradition and help Eliot describe the consciousness of a modern, neurotic individual.
- Prufrock's compulsiveness is aesthetic, but it is also a sign of isolation. Another important formal feature is the use of fragments of sonnet form, particularly at the poem's conclusion. The three three-line stanzas are rhymed as the conclusion of a Petrarchan sonnet would be, but their pessimistic, anti-romantic content, coupled with the despairing interjection, "I do not think they (the mermaids) would sing to me," creates a contrast that comments bitterly on the bleakness of modernity.
- The Love song is strongly influenced by the French Symbolists, like Mallarme, Rimbaud, and Baudelaire, whom Eliot had been reading almost constantly while writing the poem. From the Symbolists, Eliot takes his sensuous language and eye for unnerving or anti-aesthetic detail that nevertheless contributes to the overall beauty of the poem The second defining characteristic of this poem is its use of fragmentation and juxtaposition. The kinds of imagery Eliot uses also suggest that something new can be made from the ruins: The series of hypothetical encounters at the poem's center are iterated and discontinuous but nevertheless lead to a sort of epiphany (albeit a dark one) rather than just leading nowhere. Eliot also introduces an image that will recur in his later poetry, that of the scavenger. Prufrock thinks that he "should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas." Crabs are scavengers, garbage-eaters who live off refuse that makes its way to the sea floor. Eliot's discussions of his own poetic technique (see especially his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent") suggest that making something beautiful out of the refuse of modern life, as a crab sustains and nourishes itself on garbage, may, in fact, be the highest form of art. At the very least, this notion subverts romantic ideals about art; at best, it suggests that fragments may become reintegrated, that art may be in some way therapeutic for a broken modern world.

In The Waste Land, crabs become rats, and the optimism disappears, but here Eliot seems to assert only the limitless potential of scavenging.

**4.2.4 COMPREHENSION:**

- How does Eliot use the relationships between men and women to comment on society and culture? Why is "Prufrock" a "love song"?
- What kinds of imagery does Eliot use?
- Think about Eliot's use of form and language. What is most "poetic" about his works? What linguistic devices does he use?
- Describe the kind of person Eliot creates in "Prufrock." How does Prufrock fulfill or rebut stereotypes of the modern intellectual
- Why is Eliot so fascinated with death imagery? What does the recurring imagery of drowning symbolize?
- Describe the use of time in the poem.
- What features of modernism are depicted through the poem.

**LESSON 3: W.H. AUDEN (1907-1973) & DYLAN THOMAS (1914-1953)**

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life and Works of W.H. Auden.**
- **Central issues in Auden's Poetry.**
- **Life and Works of Dylan Thomas.**
- **Central issues in Dylan Thomas's Poetry.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the central concerns of Auden's and Dylan Thomas's Poetry.**
- **Know the political and social contexts of that period.**
- **Comprehend the major features of 'Musee des Beaux Arts' & 'Fern Hill'.**

In this lesson you will learn about Auden and Dylan Thomas and try to read Auden's Musee des Beaux Arts and Dylan Thomas's Fern Hill.

### 4.3.0 W. H. AUDEN:

- Auden was born in 1907, in York. His father was a physician. At first Auden was interested in science, but in later years he developed a passion for poetry.
- In 1925 he joined the Christ Church College, University of Oxford, where he along with a group of literary intellectuals such as Stephen Spender, Christopher Isherwood, C. Day Lewis, and Louis MacNeice formed a poetic alliance.
- After graduation he worked as a schoolmaster in Scotland and England for five years.
- Auden and his group displayed a pro-leftist stance. His book Poems, which helped to establish his reputation, focused on the breakdown of English capitalist society but also showed a deep concern with psychological problems.
- He also authored three verse plays with Isherwood, The Dog Beneath the Skin, The Ascent of F-6, and On the Frontier.
- In 1937 he was awarded the King's Gold Medal for Poetry, a major honour.
- His trips to Iceland with MacNeice and China with Isherwood - resulted in two jointly written books, Letter from Iceland, and Journey to a War.
- Auden moved to America in 1939, where he became a citizen and was active as a poet, reviewer, lecturer and editor.
- His Double Man and For the Times Being echo an increasing concern with religion, which, he discovered, offered a better solution to his problems than communism.
- He won the 1948 Pulitzer Prize for poetry for his collection, The Age of Anxiety, which is described as a "baroque eclogue" that takes place in a New York City bar.
- His numerous other works include Collected Poetry, The Shield of Achilles, Collected Longer Poems.
- From 1956 to 1961 he was professor of poetry at Oxford, and in 1972 he returned to Christ Church as a writer in residence.
- He died in Vienna in 1973.
- In many ways Auden shared concerns with T.S. Eliot. He was like Eliot concerned with religion and he was also very much social problems.

### 4.3.1 MUSEE DES BEAUX ARTS:

- The title refers to the Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels. Auden visited the museum in 1938 and viewed the painting by Brueghel, which the poem is basically about. The central idea of the poem is the apathy with which humans view individual suffering.
- Auden wrote that "In so far as poetry, or any of the arts, can be said to have an ulterior purpose, it is, by telling the truth, to disenchant and intoxicate."
- The poem juxtaposes ordinary events and exraordinary ones, to explain that life goes on while a "miraculous birth occurs", but also while disasters such as Icarus's death occurs.

### 4.3.2 BACKGROUND:

**Myth:**

- The poem is based on a a Greek myth. Icarus was a Greek mythological figure, also known as the son of Daedalus. Icarus and his father were imprisoned in Crete, and Daedalus made some wings for Icarus and himself. Daedalus gave his son, Icarus instruction on how to fly and also warnings that he should not be not too close to the sea for the water would soak the wings, and he should not be not too close to the sky for the sun would then melt them. Icarus, however, disobeyed and went too close to the sun. This caused the wax that held his wings to his body to melt and as a consequence, Icarus crashed into the sea and died.

**Christian Religion:**

- Many critics have claimed that the poem represents Auden's re-conversion to Christiantiy in the poem. Richard Johnson, author of "Man's Place: An Essay on Auden", believes there is a touch of Christian awareness in the poem, especially the timeline. The reader of the poem is placed in front of the Breughel painting in a museum, and at the same time is expected to project those images and truths to the world outside. There is also a sort of continuity through the poem as you read it and are allowed to see what the poet means. This allows a reader to become aware of his human position.

  The poem first discusses a "miraculous birth", and at the end "the tragedy" of a death. The theme in the poem is human suffering.

**Painting:**

- Peter Breughel, who lived in the first half of the 16th century in a little country called Belgium. His paintings, in general, have allegorical or moralizing significance. The "Fall of Icarus" was his only mythological subject. In general Breughel accents the figures in his drawings with a delicate line, however, the persons he paints seem stubby and at the same time lively. His contemporaries tended to stick to religious subjects, but brave Peter broke away with his own painting style.

### 4.3.3 DYLAN THOMAS:

- Dylan Thomas was born in the coastal town of Swansea, Wales. His father David, who was a writer and possessed a degree in English, made his son to learn English.
- Dylan Thomas attended the Swansea Grammar School, where his father taught English Literature. his first poem was published in the school's magazine.
- Thomas's childhood was spent largely in Swansea, with regular summer trips to visit his mother's family on their Carmarthen farm in Wales. These rural sojourns, and their contrast with the town life of Swansea, was part of his work, later. One of these is the poem "Fern Hill".
- In 1937, Thomas married Caitlin Mac Namara. Their first child, Llewelyn was born in 1939. In 1934 a daughter, Aeronwywas born follwedby the birth of the third child, a son Colm Garan, in 1949.
- By the time he left the family home in 1934 he had become quite famous.
- He collapsed on November 4, 1953 at the White Horse Tavern after drinking heavily while in New York City on a promotional tour.
- Thomas later died at St. Vincent's hospital, aged 39.
- Dylan Thomas is widely considered one of the greatest modern poets writing in English, alongside Yeats, and T. S. Eliot.
- His vivid and often fantastic imagery was a rejection of the trends in the modern poetic form. When his contemporaries turned to address serious political and social concerns Thomas gave himself over to his passionately felt emotions. Thus his writing is often both intensely personal and fiercely lyrical.
- Thomas, in many ways, was more in tune with the Romantics than he was with the poets of his times such as Auden and Eliot.

- Among Thomas' short stories the most notably is a semi-autobiographical selection entitled, 'Portrait of an Artist as a Young Dog' (1940), in which he explores his youth.
- Thomas's circle, included Daniel Jones, the poet Vernon Watkins, and the artists Alfred Janes and Mervyn Levy.
- Thomas was invited to London by Neuberg, the poetry editor of the Sunday Referee, andwas subsequently introduced to the capital's influential literary circle.
- Dylan Thomas is remembered for the noteworthy radio-play Under Milk Wood, and the poem ‘Do not go gentle into that good night’, which is generally interpreted as a plea to his dying father to hold onto life.
- Another monument to Thomas stands in Cwmdonkin Park, close to his birthplace and on this memorial is inscribed lines from one of his best-loved poems, ‘Fern Hill’.
- Dylan Thomas’s knowledge of Welsh lore and poetry, and the bible, left their mark on his rich imagery and driving rhythms. Religion figures largely in his work, but in his writings the dark presence of primeval gods often takes a prominent place. He wrote, in an introduction to one of his books of verse, that his poems were written to the glory of God – “but we must never visualize his God as the one with which we are familiar”.
- Thomas was the product of two directly opposed natures and cultures. Despite early maternal guidance, Dylan was influenced most strongly by his father, who refused to have Welsh even spoken in the house.
- David John Thomas was steeped in the dissimilar poetic language of Shakespeare, which he often recited to his son. These resonances definitely had a lasting effect on Dylan.
- Dylan Thomas was in love with words which he thought had power and beauty.
- From the beginning, the only subject in which Dylan was interested, and indeed the only one at which he excelled, was English. His life in Swansea was a self indulgent one - he would take coffee with his artistic pals at the Kardoma Cafe, idled in the sands of Swansea Bay, went to the movies at the Uplands Cinema, watched cricket at St Helen's rugby and cricket stadium, and spent long hours in the pubs in Mumbles.

- Thomas, hard drinking habits impaired and ultimately curtailed his writing career. What began as an urge to prove his 'manliness' in the patriarchal culture of South Wales, gradually developed into something he could no longer control.
- His first book Eighteen Poems, was published in 1934, and he achieved immediate acclaim.
- His romantic, rhetorical style won a large following. Yet, arising from financial necessity, the poet's creative pursuits diversified - there was much money to be made from broadcasting, which he conducted from the BBC Wales Swansea studios in Alexandra Road and from London, between 1937 and 1953.
- Deaths and Entrances (1946), another volume of poetry, used religious imagery and took its subjects among others from the bombing of London during World war II.
- Thomas worked in a wooden cabin further up the cliff path and judging by the poems he managed to complete during the four years he lived in Laugharne, this place, with its inspiring views, provided the perfect working environment for him. As he wrote in an essay: "A poet must have a home to go back to in the provinces whenever he breaks down." The Boat House at Laugharne represented for him the last refuge of life and sanity in a nightmare world. Here, in what he affectionately called, "the romantic, dirty summerhouse," he wrote some of his most memorable poems. Every morning, in the isolation of his cabin, Dylan worked at his poems, striving for an elusive perfection. He would make as many as 500 alterations in a single poem, copying out the entire poem after each alteration, so that he could see his word sculpture taking shape before his eyes. He was a craftsman par excellence. Few poets have labored so mightily or sacrificed so much for their work - that "sullen art," as he called it.

### 4.3.4 FERN HILL

**PARAPHRASE:**

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
The night above the dingle starry,
Time let me hail and climb
Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves

Trail with daisies and barley
Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
In the sun that is young once only,
Time let me play and be
Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
And the sabbath rang slowly
In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass.
And nightly under the simple stars
And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,

Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace.

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep

And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

- In this poem, Dylan Thomas expresses belief in nature's innocence and beauty. Religion is used for its metaphors but it extends further to ideas of reincarnation.

- "The sabbath" is significant because on that day in particular he was free to enjoy the whole day.
- There are subtle references here to the creation - "after the birth of the simple light/ In the first, spinning place"; to the nativity and the virgin Mary eg: "blessed among stables".

**4.3.5 COMPREHENSION:**

- Write an essay pointing out the main features of Fern Hill.
- What are the Romantic elements that you notice in the poem?

**LESSON 4: THOMM GUNN (1929-2004), TED HUGHES (1930-1998) & SEAMUS HEANEY (1939 -)**

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life and Works of Thomm Gunn.**
- **Central issues in Gunn's Poetry.**
- **Life and Works of Ted Hughes.**
- **Central issues in Hughes's Poetry.**

- **Life and Works of Seamus Heaney.**
- **Central issues in Heaney's Poetry.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**
After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the poetry of Thomm Gunn, ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney.**
- **Know the political and social contexts of their poetry.**
- **Comprehend the major features of 'On the Move', 'Thought Fox' and 'Digging'.**

By now we have touched upon almost all the important poets. Here in this lesson you will encounter the writers who emerged after 1940s. For these writers the world war II had a great impact and many of them felt frustrated and unhappy with the human condition. They reacted in different ways and here we will come across three poets, Thomm Gunn, Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney who have changed the form and content of British Poetry.

**4.4.0 THOMM GUNN:**

- In the 1960s and early 1970s, English poetry was dominated by the two figures of Ted Hughes and Thomson William (Thom) Gunn. Hughes, as poet laureate and as a writer for children, stayed in the public eye till his death in 1998.
- Thom Gunn was born in Gravesend, Kent in 1929. He attended University College School in Hampstead, London and later, he studied English literature at Trinity College, Cambridge. He graduated in 1953, and published his first collection of verse, Fighting Terms, the following year.
- As a young British poet, his work was associated with The Movement, a group of poets who had formed an alliance. The Movement poets were a loose group and rejected the symbolist tradition of Yeats and Eliot and favoured wit over prophecy, and extravagant urbanity over commitment. The group consisted of poets such as Philip Larkin, Thomm Gunn, Kingsley Amis and John Wahn. The group wrote poetry which through its subject and diction would expres rather than overthrow the restrictions of ordinary urban life.
- In 1954, Thomm Gunn emigrated to the United States to teach writing at Stanford University and to remain close to his partner, Mike Kitay, whom he had met while at college. His later poetry written during the 1960s and 1970s, explored society's

increasingly liberal views of drugs, homosexuality, and poetic form. He explored modern anxieties as these lines from 'The Annihilation of Nothing' indicate:

- It is despair that nothing cannot be
- Flares in the mind and leaves a smoky mark
- Of dread.
- Look upward. Neither firm nor free
- Purposeless matter hovers in the dark.
- The discipline of writing to a specific set of visual images and the liberation of free verse were both advantageous to Gunn whose next collection, Touch (1967), had a photographic fidelity. Gunn's next book, Jack Straw's Castle (1976), changes a dream into nightmare, related partly to his actual anxiety-dreams about moving house, and partly to the changing American political climate. He stated in one of his essays that his life, "insists on continuities - between America and England, between free verse and metre, between vision and everyday consciousness." His next collection, The Passages of Joy reaffirmed those continuities as it possesses incidents of London in 1964-65 and New York in 1970.
- The Occasions Of Poetry, a selection of his essays and introductions, appeared at the same time. The Man With Night Sweats (1992) was published ten years later and in 1993, Gunn published a second collection of essays, Shelf Life, and his considerable Collected Poems. His final book of poetry was Boss Cupid (2000).
- Thom Gunn's first two collections, Fighting Terms (1954) and The Sense of Movement (1957) were welcomed with great interest because Gunn used rhyme and metre in a highly formal manner, but the work also was disturbing because of the poet's fascination with the anti-social, the rebellious and the unnatural, and, above all, with violence.
- Gunn examined these things with an almost scientific interest; here were people who had rejected conventional ways of living, finding them empty or inadequate, while searching for some alternative way to live.
- Even though he is sympathetic to the disgust at social convention, Gunn is also critical of the inadequacy of their protest. Among the macho characters one encounters in his poetry are soldiers, saints, revolutionaries, motorcycle gangs, sado-masochists, Roman emperors, and persona such as Merlin and Elvis Presley.

- Time and again, Gunn reveals how actual or intended violence is the expression of revolt. In My Sad Captains, Gunn begins to develop a more subtle view of the problems of existence; the tough stance is left behind, and Gunn moves towards a positive confirmation of more humane qualities and love in later works.
- Gunn's The Sense of Movement (1957) won a Somerset Maugham Award, which he used for travel in Italy.
- In the 1970s Gunn as we have already mentioned began to explore themes of homosexuality and drugs, and The Man with Night Sweats (1992) focuses on the AIDS epidemic. The Occasion of Poetry (1982) and Shelf Life (1993) are collections of autobiographical and critical essays. Gunn received numerous awards, including a Guggenheim (1971) and MacArthur (1993) fellowship.
- He died in 2004 in San Francisco, where he had lived since 1960

**4.4.1 ON THE MOVE:**

- **First read the poem.** When you have finished reading the poem, try to determine what Gunn is arguing about. Then try and follow the way in which Gunn uses the parallel of the actions of the motorcyclists to show how modern man in general lacks a clear sense of purpose.
- This poem, from Gunn's second collection, is his most famous piece, and among the best-known of all post-war poems. In it, the aimless but threatening movement of a motorcycle gang becomes an image for modern man's sense of alienation and lack of purpose.
- The metaphor is very much contemporary and illustrates a more lasting problem, not knowing one's destination and, so, joining the movement which offers the illusion of purpose, as a “part-solution”.

**4.4.2 COMPREHENSION:**

- Why are saints different from most people, and why are they likened to birds, rather than to other men?
- Try to understand what Gunn means by “uncertain violence” and the “dull thunder of approximate words”.
- How does Gunn justify this kind of movement (albeit equivocally) with his theory of the “part solution” later in the poem?
- The depiction of “the boys” in the second stanza seems sympathetic (they are seen very much as they wish to be seen, bikes, goggles, leather jackets) yet Gunn also views them critically. Discuss.

- Show how Gunn, in this poem, examines the idea that modern man invents or chooses, as a deliberate act of will, definitions of lifestyle and personality, to supply what nature has omitted.
- In conclusion, show how the bikers' activity, van be seen as a central existential problem.
- Make an attempt to show, how the form of the poem matches its content.

**4.4.3 TED HUGHES:**

- Edward J. Hughes was born in Mytholmroyd, Yorkshire, but raised in Mexborough, a coal-mining town in South Yorkshire.
- The rugged background of the northern England moors had a strong influence in Hughes's poetry. His father was a carpenter, who later turned into a news agent. His parents were warm-hearted and affectionate.
- After his studies at the Grammar School, Hughes served two years in the Royal Air Force. On winning a scholarship to Pembroke College, Cambridge, he studied English and then archaeology and anthropology.
- Hughes specialized in mythological systems, which provided much material for his poetry. He graduated in 1954 and moved to London, where he worked in different capacities--as a zoo attendant, gardener, and script reader for J. Arthur Rank.
- At Cambridge Hughes initiated with his friends a literary magazine, St Botolph's Review.
- He later met Sylvia Plath and married her.In 1957 the couple moved to America where Hughes taught English and creative writing at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Hughes's first volume of verse, The Hawk in the Rain (1957), which included some of his best poems, such as 'The Thought-Fox' and the title poem, ‘The hawk in the rain’. This was followed by Pike (1959) and Lupercal (1960), which won a Somerset Maugham Award (1960) and the 1961 Hawthornden Prize.
- Hughes along with Thom Gunn authored the collection Selected Poems in 1962.
- During this period Hughes had marital problems because of Plath’s bouts of depression. Hughes and Plath returned to England in 1959. Later in 1963 in one of her bouts of depression, Sylvia Plath committed suicide.
- After this for three years Hughes took time off to edit and publish Plath's poems.

- Sylvia Plath's death took its toll on Hughes as he was rejected by the public and by the Feminists and he was excommunicated by literary scholars and critics.
- After Plath's death, Hughes indulged in various activites and in one of these he promoted the work of Yehuda Amichai. In 1969 Hughes's adaptation of Seneca's Oedipus was produced at the National Theatre.
- Hughes edited a number of collections of verse and prose and was a founding editor of Modern Poetry in Translation magazine. He was also one of the founders of the Arvon Foundation.
- His most famous work, Crow was published in 1970. The Crow ids depicted as the protagonist that symbolises vitality that challenges the supremacy of 'Death'.
- During his travels to Iran in 1971 Hughes wrote the verse drama Orghast for the director Peter Brook.
- In 1984 he was appointed poet laureate of Britain. His appointemnet was greeted with surprise because he was thought by many to be a difficult poet. His poetry was complex and needed to be unraveled carefully. Moreover he was known a s violent poet who uses images of blood and violence in his poetry.
- In Poetry in the making (1970) Hughes stated that there is no ideal form of poetry or writing. Thus one finds that his poetry ranges from free verse to highly structured forms and rhyme schemes.
- Hughes is known as an animal poet for many of his poems often personified the primal forces of nature as mythical animals, such as the pike, the hawk, and Crow. The element of death is a part of the cycles of nature in many of his poems.
- Hughes also received the Order of Merit. Hughes died of cancer in October, 1998.
- Thomas Hughes poetry has a degree of sensitivity and understanding, the degree of empathy with his subject, and arouses strong emotions in the reader. Hughes was also a rebellious poet who does not conform to the conventions which society expects of him. Hughes had some very definite ideas about poetry and its functions, and about his own role as a poet.As stated by him poetry begins from the world of imagination. He calls it "a journey into the inner universe", and "an exploration of the genuine self". As he mentions,

> Poetry is the way to unlock the doors of those many mansions inside the head and express something - perhaps not much, just something – of the crush of

information that presses in on us....Something of the deep complexity that makes us precisely the way we are.... Something of the inaudible music that moves us along in our bodies from moment to moment like water in a river... (PIM.124)

- Hughes believes that poetry is a magical and powerful way of reaching the inner feelings and emotions and subconscious, natural energies. He believes that these energies have been repressed by an emphasis on the scientific approach to life and teaching. He mentions that society tells us that emotions are dangerous, can distort our judgment, should not be relied upon when we have decisions to make, and that they have nothing to do with truth. On the other hand he believes that emotions is the centre of a self.
- Hughes believes that the conventional notion of life leads to inflexibility and dead-ends culminating in war and destruction. In his poetry, Hughes celebrates the natural energies, and reveals that human wholeness depends on an acceptance of all aspects of our nature. In particular, he believes that we as humans must recognise ourselves as part of the natural world, subject to the same forces of nature as all other living things.
- According to him creativity is necessary for survival and it requires both imagination and logic. This is the major theme in Thought Fox.
- Hughes sees it as the job of the artist to help to liberate the suppressed creative energies, and he believes that poetry is particularly effective for this purpose.
- Often, he sees himself as a kind of tribal medicine man who makes symbolic journeys to the underworld of the subconscious to bring back lost souls and to cure sick people. The words, the symbols, the images and the musical rhythms of the poetry, are, for him, like the shaman's magic drum which helps him on his journey. It is these which stir our imagination, and the effect is a magical release of emotional energy. (PIM: 128)

**4.4.4 THE THOUGHT FOX:**

**COMMENTARY:**

- ‘The thought-fox’ is a poem about writing a poem. Its external action takes place in a room late at night where the poet is sitting alone at his desk. Outside the night is

starless, silent, and totally black. But the poet senses a presence which disturbs him:

- Through the window I see no star:
  Something more near
- Though deeper within darkness
  Is entering the loneliness.
- The disturbance is not in the exterior dark because the night is itself a metaphor for the inner darkness of the poet's imagination in whose depths an idea is mysteriously stirring.
- At first the idea has no clear outlines; it is not seen but just felt. The poet's task is to coax it out of formlessness and into fuller consciousness by the sensitivity of his language.
- The inner stirrings of the creative act are compared to the movement of an animal – a fox, whose body is invisible, but which feels its way forward nervously through the dark undergrowth:
- The idea of the delicate dark snow evokes the physical reality of the fox's nose which is itself cold, dark and damp, twitching moistly and gently against twig and leaf.
- Thus the poet in this way mysteriously defines the fox by way of feeling rather than by looks. Gradually the fox's eyes appear out of the same formlessness, leading the shadowy movement of its body as it comes closer. This is depicted in the lines,
- Two eyes serve a movement, that now/And again now, and now, and now
- Sets neat prints into the snow/ Between trees, ….
- In the first two lines of this passage the rhythm of the verse is broken by the punctuation and the line-endings, while at the same time what seemed the predictable course of the rhyme-scheme is deliberately departed from.
- The form of the poem thus imitates the nervous, unpredictable movement of the fox as it delicately steps forward, then stops suddenly to check the terrain before it runs on only to stop again. The tracks which the fox leaves in the snow are themselves duplicated by the sounds and rhythm of the line 'Sets neat prints into the snow'.

- This feeling of uneasiness is heightened by the last stanza of the poem. For although this stanza clearly communicates the excitement of poetic creation, it seems at the same time to express an almost predatory thrill.
- The prosaic matter-of-factness of the final line – 'The page is printed' – only reinforces the curious deadness of the thought-fox. If at the end of the poem, there is one sense in which the fox is vividly and immediately alive, it is only because it has been pinned so artfully upon the page.
- The studied and beautifully 'final' nature of the poem indicates that we are not in the presence of any untrained spontaneity, any primitive or naive vision. It might be suggested that the sensibility behind Hughes's poem is more that of an intellectual – an intellectual who, in rebellion against his own ascetic rationalism, feels himself driven to hunt down and capture an element of his own sensual and intuitive identity which he does not securely possess.

**4.4.5 COMPREHENSION:**

- Discuss briefly the major ideas in The Thought Fox.
- Elucidate the theme of creativity as seen in the poem.

**4.4.6 SEAMUS HEANEY:**

- Seamus Heaney was born in April 1939, the eldest member of a family. Like the Tennysons they were a large family.
- His father was a cattle-dealer even though he owned and worked a small farm of some fifty acres in County Derry in Northern Ireland.
- Heaney's mother came from a family called McCann who came from an urban setting and her family members were employed in the local linen mill. Heaney comments on this stating that that his parentage thus contains both the Ireland of the cattle-herding Gaelic past and the Ulster of the Industrial Revolution. He thought this to be a significant factor in his poetry.
- Heaney grew up in a rural atmosphere and attended the local primary school.
- His family left the farm where he was reared in 1953, and then they moved farther and farther away from his birthplace. Yet the shifts have only been physical and the environment of the childhood places still are prominent in his poetry.
- When Heaney was twelve years, he won a scholarship to St. Columb's College, a Catholic boarding school situated in the city of Derry.

- He lived between 1957 and 1972 in Belfast and then he moved to the Irish Republic where Heaney has made his home, and then, since 1982, by regular, annual periods of teaching in America.
- It is not surprising, that the theme of movement is recurrent his collection, Digging.
- At St. Columb's College, Heaney learnt Latin and Irish, and these languages, together with the Anglo-Saxon which he would study while a student of Queen's University, Belfast, were determining factors in many of the developments that marked his progress as a poet.
- The first verses he wrote when he was a young teacher in Belfast in the early 1960s and many of the best known poems in North, his important volume published in 1975, are linguistically tuned to the Anglo-Saxon note in English.
- Heaney's early study of Irish bore fruit in the translation of the Middle Irish story of Suibhne Gealt in Sweeney Astray (1982) and in several other translations and echoes and allusions. The Gaelic heritage has remained culturally and politically central to the poet and his work. Heaney's poems first came to public attention in the mid-1960s when he was active as one of a group of poets who were subsequently recognized as constituting something of a "Northern School" within Irish writing.
- Although Heaney shares with other Irish poets the fate of having been born into a society deeply divided along religious and political lines, one that suffered a quarter-century of violence, polarization and inner distrust.
- This had the effect not only of casting a shadow in Heaney's work in the 1970s, but also of giving him a deep preoccupation with the question of poetry's responsibilities in the world, since poetry is balanced between a need for creative freedom within itself and a pressure to express the sense of social obligation felt by the poet as citizen.
- The essays in Heaney's prose collections, The Government of the Tongue (1988) and The Redress of Poetry (1995), bear witness to the seriousness which this question assumed for him as he was coming into his own as a writer. These concerns also lie behind Heaney's involvement for a decade and a half with Field Day, a theatre company founded in 1980 by the playwright Brian Friel and the actor Stephen Real. At this place, he was also associated with the poets Seamus Deane and Tom Paul in, and the singer David Hammond in a project which sought

to bring the artistic and intellectual focus of its members into productive relation with the crisis that was ongoing in Irish political life.

- ‘Field Day’ contributed greatly to the vitality of the cultural debate which prospered throughout the 1980s and 1990s in Ireland. Heaney's married Marie Devlinwho like Heaney came from a large family. She came from afamily of writers and she has recently published an important collection of retellings of the classic Irish myths and legends titled, Over Nine Waves, 1994.
- Marie Heaney has been central to the poet's life, both professionally and imaginatively, appearing directly and indirectly in individual poems and helping in supporting the family.
- The Heaneys had spent a year abroad in 1970 and 1971 when Seamus was a visiting lecturer at the Berkeley campus of the University of California. It was the sense of self-challenge and new scope which he experienced in the American context that encouraged him to resign his lectureship at Queen's University (1966-72) not long after he returned to Ireland, and to move to a cottage in County Wicklow in order to work full time as a poet and free-lance writer.
- His first book, Eleven Poems, was published in November 1965 for The Queen's University Festival. In 1966, Faber and Faber published his first volume called Death of a Naturalist. This collection met with much critical acclaim and went on to win a host of awards. Also in 1966 he was appointed as a lecturer in Modern English Literature at Queen's University Belfast and his first son, Michael, was born. A second son, Christopher, was born in 1968.
- A few years later, the family moved to Dublin and Seamus worked as a lecturer in Carysfort College, a teacher training college, where he functioned as Head of the English Department until 1982, when his present arrangement with Harvard University came into existence.
- According to the present arrangement, Heaney gets to spend eight months at home without teaching in exchange for one semester's work at Harvard.
- In 1984, Heaney was named Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, one of the university's most prestigious offices and in 1989, he was elected for a five-year period to be Professor of Poetry at Oxford University.

- In the course of his career, Seamus Heaney has always contributed to the promotion of artistic and educational causes, both in Ireland and abroad. While a young lecturer at Queen's University, he was active in the publication of pamphlets of poetry by the younger generation and took over the running of an influential poetry workshop which had been established there by the English poet, Philip Hobsbaum in 1966.
- He also served for five years on The Arts Council in the Republic of Ireland (1973-1978) and over the years has acted as judge and lecturer for countless poetry competitions and literary conferences, establishing a special relationship with the annual W.B. Yeats International Summer School in Sligo.
- In recent years, he has been the recipient of several honorary degree and he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995. He then in 1996 was made a Commandeur de L'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture.
- Heaney's work often deals with "the local"—that is, his surroundings and everything inclusive of them. Inevitably this means Ireland, and particularly Northern Ireland. Hints of sectarian violence, which began just as his writing career did, can be found in many of his poems, even works that on the surface appear to deal with something else. Despite his many travels much of his work appears to be set in rural Derry, the county of his childhood. Like the troubles themselves, Heaney's work is deeply associated with the lessons of history, sometimes even prehistory. Many of his works concern his own family history and focus on characters in his own family, they can be read as elegies for those family members. He has acknowledged this trend.
- The Anglo-Saxon influences in his work are also noteworthy, his university study of the language having had a profound effect on his work. It also led to a small revival of interest in the verse forms of Anglo-Saxon poetry amongst a number of poets influenced by Heaney. He has also written critically well regarded essays and two plays. His essays, among other things, have been credited with beginning the critical re-examination of Thomas Hardy. His anthologies edited with friend Ted Hughes The Rattle Bag and The School Bag are used extensively in school curricula in the UK and elsewhere.

- In addition to his original works, Heaney has published translations, including a highly regarded verse translation of Beowulf from Old English in 1999, and a version of Sophocles' Antigone titled The Burial at Thebes in 2004.

**4.4.7 DIGGING :**

**PARAPHRASE:**

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests: snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean harsh sound
is made, when the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
I can see my father, digging.
I look down
Till I can see his straining back among the flowerbeds
When he bends low, he is twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.
The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft against the inside knee was levered firmly. He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.
By God, the old man could handle a spade.
Just like his old man.
The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots wake me up
But I've no spade to follow men like them.
However, between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

**4.4.8 SUMMARY:**

- The poem discusses the act of digging done by his father and grandfather in the potato field. Seeing his father (now old) “straining” to dig “flowerbeds”, the poet

recalls him in his prime, digging “potato drills”. And even earlier, he remembers his grandfather, digging peat. He cannot match “men like them” with a spade, but he sees that the pen is (for him) mightier, and with it he will dig into his past and celebrate them.

- This poem has a loose looks at two memories - the father digging the potato drills, the grandfather digging turf, for which he was famous as the best digger on the peat bog. The poet celebrates not so much their strength as their expertise. The digger's technique is exactly explained (“The coarse boot nestled on the lug...”). Each man dug up what has real value food - “new potatoes”, and fuel - “the good turf”.
- The poem also uses technical terms (“lug”, “shaft”) and colloquial terms: “By God, the old man could handle a spade.”
- The onomatopoeia (where the sound resembles or suggests meaning) is obvious in “rasping”, “gravelly”, “sloppily”, “squelch” and “slap”.
- There is a central extended metaphor of digging and roots, which shows how the poet, in his writing, is getting back to his own roots (his identity, and where his family comes from). The poem begins almost as it ends, but only at the end is the writer's pen seen as a weapon for digging.

**4.4.9 COMPREHENSION:**

- How does the poem explore ideas of heritage and family tradition?
- What does the poem suggest about physical labour?
- Explain in your own words the image in the last line of the poem.

## UNIT – V

LESSON 1: EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599) & SHAKESPEARE (1564 – 1616)

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life and works of Edmund Spenser.**
- **Shakespeare.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the poetry of Spenser.**
- **Understand the poetry of Shakespeare.**

In this unit we will be go on a quick tour of some of the writers whom we have not been able to look at in the earlier sections. These poets are important for certain innovations or changes that they may have done during that period.

**EDMUND SPENSER:**

- Edmund Spenser was born in or near 1552. He was possibly the son of John Spenser, a cloth maker who lived in East Smithfield in London. Whatever his parentage, it is likely that the Spensers (or Spencers) originated in Lancashire, where they may have been connected with some of the prominent local families.
- As a boy, the future poet entered the Merchant Taylors' school, probably at its opening in 1561 under the celebrated humanist and pedagogical writer Richard Mulcaster. While at the school, Spenser was supported at least in part by the generous bequest of Robert Nowell, brother of Alexander Nowell, dean at St. Paul's.
- Spenser later wrote in The Shepheardes Calender In May 1569, Spenser left school and went on to study at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, supported by the Nowell bequest. Although he had to work for his meals and accommodation, and may often have been ill during his studies, this appears to have been an important and productive time for the young poet. At Pembroke, Spenser built up a relationship with John Young, later Bishop of Rochester, and probably also met Lancelot Andrewes, the future Bishop of London and privy councilor. The most important influence on Spenser during this period, though, was undoubtedly his intimate

friendship with Gabriel Harvey, a Fellow of Pembroke Hall in 1570. Harvey appears to have introduced Spenser to a number of important connections and potential patrons, including Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

- After completing his B.A. (1573) and M.A. (1576), Spenser left Cambridge for Kent, where he acted as secretary for John Young, Bishop of Rochester. It was there that the poet probably composed The Shepheardes Calender, which seems to represent the Kentish landscape and certainly refers to Harvey as Hobbinol and Spenser himself as Colin Clout.
- Spenser may have been employed by the Earl of Leicester as early as 1577, perhaps carrying messages to Leicester's brother-in-law Sir Henry Sidney, then Lord Deputy in Ireland. In 1579 Spenser was employed by the Earl of Leicester, and was living in Leicester House on the Strand. While in Leicester's home and service, Spenser came into contact with Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Edward Dyer. With several others, including Harvey, and Daniel Rogers these men seem to have constituted an informal intellectual society called the 'Areopagus', discussing matters of law, philosophy, and poetry.
- It was at this time that the well-known printer Henry Bynneman put out two short volumes containing letters exchanged between Spenser and Harvey, letters that discuss trendy intellectual topics of the day and give a good deal of biographical information about Spenser's new contacts in London.
- Probably through Leicester's influence, Spenser was in July 1580 appointed secretary to Arthur, fourteenth Lord Grey de Wilton, then leaving England to take up office as Lord Deputy of Ireland. Arriving shortly thereafter in Dublin, Spenser accompanied Grey on his famous and tortuous overland march to Munster.
- In March 1581 Spenser was appointed clerk of the Chancery for Faculties in Dublin. He then seems to have moved to Munster sometime within the following two years, perhaps in the company of his sister Sarah.
- Spenser was at this time, and for many years following, involved in protracted legal wrangles with Maurice Viscount Roche of Fermoy, an Old English neighbor financially and socially threatened by the incursions of the New English undertakers in the area.
- In 1589 at the latest, Spenser appears to have made the acquaintance of Sir Walter Raleigh. It was Raleigh who, impressed by Spenser's manuscript, The Faerie

Queene, encouraged him to join him on a trip to London in 1590, where he presented the celebrated poet to the Queen.

- Spenser used his time in London to publish the first three books of The Faerie Queene, and seems to have attempted to secure enough court patronage to make it possible for him to remain in England.
- In his residence at Kilcolman, the poet shortly thereafter fell in love with and courted Elizabeth Boyle, daughter of James Boyle, later first earl of Cork. The marriage in 1594, was celebrated in Spenser's Amoretti and Epithalamion, published in London in the following year.
- The Faerie Queene had been completed shortly before the marriage, although it was not to printed until 1596. Spenser returned to London for the publication of the second half of The Faerie Queene, and probably remained there for almost a year, living in Essex House.
- It was probably during this stay that he began work on A vewe of the present state of Irelande, a treatise on the social and political reformation of Ireland. Among short works published during this period was ‘Prothalamion’.
- Later in 1598, he took up residence in King's Street, and died there, in penury according to Ben Jonson on a Saturday in January 1599. It is not clear how a poet who from what we understand was popular and famous died in penury. Camden recorded that the Earl of Essex paid for his funeral, and that poets carried his coffin, throwing their verses and pens, along with many tears, into his grave. His tomb is situated, appropriately enough, adjacent to that of Geoffrey Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.
- Spenser was known to his contemporaries as 'the prince of poets', as great in English as Virgil in Latin. He left behind him masterful essays in every genre of poetry, from pastoral and elegy to epithalamion and epic. A great number of scholars have admired Edmund Spenser for his subtle use of language, his unbounded imagination, his immense classical and religious learning, his keen understanding of moral and political philosophy, and his unerring ability to synthesize and, ultimately, to delight.

**SUMMARY:**

- Prothalamion was published in 1596. This was written to honour the wedding of the double wedding of Lady Elizabeth with Henry Gilford and Lady Catherine Somerset with William Peter. They were the daughters of the earl of Worcester. This poem was written when Spenser was in trouble. The poem expresses some of his discontent in life and also pays a special tribute to The Earl of Essex. The poem has a narrative structure.
- The poem opens with a description of the Thames river whose banks are full of differently coloured flowers. The poet is walking along the bank of the river brooding over the events of his life. Then the poet sees a group of nymphs each in bridal costume gathering flowers for garlands and bouquets. Then come two swans sailing along who symbolically represent the two brides. The swans are pure white in colour and they are whiter than the swan in whose shape Leda captured the heart of Jupiter. Even the gentle stream seems anxious to avoid polluting them. The nymphs receive them and throw flowers on them while the poet rains his blessings on them.

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

Since we have already met Shakespeare in the first unit let us just get acquainted with his poetry.

**PARAPHRASE OF SONNET 33**

Many times I have seen a glorious morning
Light up the mountain tops,
Bathe the green meadows in golden rays of sunshine,
Color the streams with its heavenly magic;
And then the morning allows the darkest clouds to ride
In a mass across the sun's face,
And from this sorrowful world the sun hides,
Fleeing to the west unseen while the sky remains overcast;
Like this, my own sun one morning did shine
With glorious splendour on my face;
But, alas, my sun was mine for only an hour;
The concealing clouds have masked him from me now.

Yet love thinks no less of him for this;

If the sun in heaven can be overcast, so can the suns in the world below.

- Shakespeare focused on his own mortality throughout Sonnets 27-32, but in sonnet 33 he has a new and more demanding obsession dilemma for him to think about. In Sonnets 33-35 the poet makes it clear that he has been deeply hurt by his young friend, who many believe to be the historical Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's patron. One cannot deduce what specific offense prompted such displeasure, although we can assume that the young man had many interests other than the poet, and he may have surrounded himself with other friends and possibly other lovers, leaving the poet feeling alone and unwanted. The poet's dislike of his friend's actions are clear from not only the general trend of the poem but also from his choice of words such as 'ugly', 'disgrace', 'basest', 'disdaineth', and 'staineth'. Moreover, the sun permits the clouds to cover his face as he cringes off to the west.
- The direct comparison is made between the sun and the poet's friend in the third stanza. Even though he denies it in the concluding couplet, the poet seems to resent the friend for causing a rift in their relationship. As mentioned, the Sonnet does end on a positive note with the poet ready to forgive his friend, content to accept that disappointment in this life is wholly natural. The excuse offered in the couplet may be unconvincing in the view of the next two Sonnets. J.D. Wilson, a Shakespeare scholar, argues that you can trace the story of the young man's transgressions by reading the Sonnets in this order: 48, 57, 58, 61; 40, 41, 41; 33, 34, 35; 92, 93, 94.

**PARAPHRASE OF SONNET 73**:

In me you can see that time of year

When a few yellow leaves or none at all hang

On the branches, shaking against the cold,

Bare ruins of church choirs where lately the sweet birds sang.

In me you can see only the dim light that remains

After the sun sets in the west,

Which is soon extinguished by black night

The image of death that envelops all in rest.

In me you can see the glowing embers

That lie upon the ashes remaining from the flame of my youth,

As on a death bed where it (youth) must finally die
Consumed by that which once fed it.
This you sense, and it makes your love more determined
To love more deeply that which you must give up before long.

**SUMMARY:**

- Sonnets 71-74 are typically analyzed as a group, linked by the poet's thoughts of his own mortality. However, Sonnet 73 contains many of the themes common throughout the entire body of sonnets, including the ravages of time on one's physical well-being and the mental anguish associated with moving further from youth and closer to death. Time's destruction of great monuments juxtaposed with the effects of age on human beings is a convention seen before, most notably in Sonnet 55.
- The poet is preparing his young friend, not for the approaching literal death of his body, but for the metaphorical death of his youth and passion. The poet's deep insecurities swell irrepressibly as he concludes that the young man is now focused only on the signs of his aging, as the poet surely is himself. This is illustrated by the linear development of the three quatrains. The first two quatrains establish what the poet perceives the young man now sees as he looks at the poet: those yellow leaves and bare boughs, and the faint afterglow of the fading sun. The third quatrain reveals that the poet is speaking not of his impending physical death, but the death of his youth and subsequently his youthful desires -- those very things which sustained his relationship with the young man.
- Throughout the sonnet addressed to the young man, the poet tries repeatedly to impart his wisdom of Time's wrath, and more specifically, the grim truth that time will have the same effects on the young man as it has upon the poet. The poet seems to have succeeded because the young man now 'senses' the importance of his own youth, which he will be forced to 'leave ere long' (14). Some critics assume the young man 'perceives' not the future loss of his own youth, but the approaching loss of his dear friend, the poet.

**COMPREHENSION:**

Explain the major concerns in sonnet 33.

Write briefly about the central theme in sonnet 73.

LESSON 2: GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633) & THOMAS GRAY (1716 – 1771)

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life and works of George Herbert.**
- **Life and works of Thomas Gray.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the poetry of George Herbert.**
- **Understand the poetry of Thomas Gray.**

Do you know of any religious poet in your language? Well, we will meet one of them in this lesson. After your introduction to him let us also meet Thomas Gray whose elegy is considered as one of the finest elegies in the English language.

- George Herbert was born at Montgomery Castle on the 3rd of April 1593. He was the fifth son of Sir Richard Herbert and a brother of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. His mother, Lady Magdalen Herbert, who was afriend of the metaphysical poet, John Donne seemed to have influenced him with her practical wisdom and sensibility.
- Herbert was educated privately until 1605, and later he was sent to Westminster School. In 1609 he became a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was obtained his B.A. in 1613. In 1616 he got his M.A. and also became a major fellow of the college. In 1618 he became Reader in Rhetoric, and in 1619 orator for the university.
- Being the orator of the university he met King James I frequently. While in Cambridge he wrote some Latin satiric verses in defense of the universities and the English Church. His group of friends were quite well known men of letters-- John Donne, Sir Henry, Bishop Andrews and Francis Bacon, who dedicated to him his translation of the Psalms.
- James I gave him in 1623 the sinecure lay rectory of Whitford, Flintshire, worth £120 a year. The death of his patrons, the Duke of Richmond and the Marquess of Hamilton, and of King James put an end to his hopes of a political career.
- Due to his mother's influence, he decided to take holy orders, and in July 1626 he was appointed parson of Layton. It was at the suggestion of his friend, Nicholas

Ferrar suggestion that he undertook to rebuild the church at Layton, an undertaking carried through by his own gifts and the generosity of his friends.

- In 1630 he was ordained priest in September. A year before, after three days acquaintance, he had married Jane Danvers, whose father had a great deal of respect and regard for George Herbert.
- Herbert devoted much time to explaining the meaning of the various parts of the Prayer-Book, and held services twice every day, at which many of the parishioners attended. He was passionately fond of music, and his own hymns were written to the accompaniment of his lute or viol. Herbert succumbed to consumptionin 1633 and was buried beneath the altar of his church.
- George Herbert's English poems were not published during his lifetime. On his deathbed he gave to Nicholas Ferrar a manuscript with the title The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations. This was published at Cambridge, apparently for private circulation, almost immediately after Herbert's death, and a second imprint followed in the same year. On the title page of both is the quotation "In his Temple doth every man speak of his honor."
- Herbert's work was a collection of religious poems connected by unity of sentiment and inspiration. Herbert tried to interpret his own devout meditations by applying images of all kinds to the ritual and beliefs of the Church. The major defects of his poetry are that they are diffuse. Besides this verbal conceits and a forced ingenuity which shows itself in grotesque puns, odd metres and occasional want of taste are other problematics of his poetry. However the picturesque beauty of Herbert's style and its musical quality give The Temple a high place.
- 'The Church Porch', 'The Agony', 'Sin', 'Sunday'", 'Virtue', 'Man', 'The British Church', 'The Quip', 'The Collar', 'The Pulley', 'The Flower', 'Aaron' and 'The Elixir' are among the best known of these poems.

**THE COLLAR:**

**PARAPHRASE:**

I struck the board, and cry'd, No more.
will I abide.
What? forever shall I sigh and pine?
My life is free; free as the road,and
Loose as the wind, aswell as being as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Don't I have no harvest but a thorn

To let me bleed, and not restore
What I have lost with cordiall fruit?

Sure there was wine
Before my crying stopped: there was corn
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no glories to crown it?
No flowers, no garlands? Is everything wasted?
Not so, my heart: but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures.

Leave your cold dispute
Of what is fit, and not. Give up thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,1
Which pretty thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
When you do not see, take heed:
for I will abroad.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need,
Deserves the work.
But as I ranted and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling, me as child:
And I replied immediately 'My Lord'.

- 'The Collar' resembles Donne's Holy Sonnets in its use of violent verse to depict violent spiritual crises. Its rhyme is a kind of mockery of rhyme that challenges the "free" poet's rebellion while he rants about what he's going to accomplish when he abandons religious verse.
- The persona in 'The Collar' rebels against the restrictions of the Christian life only to be brought back finally into childlike submission when he thinks he hears the "Lord's" gentle rebuke. The title Collar becomes a symbolical usage in the poem.
- The poem "The Collar" is a complaint as already mentioned. Frustrated by the human condition, the writer resolves to break free. "My lines and life are free, free as the road, / Loose as the wind, as large as store" he insists. However, the accompanying gesture, "I struck the board and cried, 'No more!'" is a dramatic and boastful act. The tone of these lines is recognized as an exaggeration. The writer is impatient with the need to recognize one's dependence and to accept one's need to

worship and serve God. The poem as a whole is a poem about giving vent to one's problems.

- Herbert develops two quite vivid major images to build the poem's theme. The images of restraints such as "collars / cages /cable / rope" suggests something stiff and restrictive, are contrasted with objects suggesting slackness.
- The title of the poem, 'The Collar', an article of clothing a man wears when he must be at his best. The word, Collar also refers to the white band worn by the clergy, and it is this role of priest that the poem alludes to. This collar symbolizes the priest's role of one who is subservient.
- The writer chafes at being "in suit." The image has at least a double meaning. The word "suit" refers to the clerical "suit" and connotatively to the attendance required of a slave at his lord's court.
- In the lines, "Forsake thy cage, / Thy rope of sands." the word 'cage' suggests a device for containing animals. The purpose is not to harm but merely to restrict movement, and keep from harm. This prevents the creature from getting hurt by its impulses and curiosity about what lies beyond the confines. This imagery of restraints suggests the writer of being in an animalistic state. This animalistic condition is clear when the poet states "as I raved and grew more fierce and wild/ At every word." The writer is getting himself worked up. He is unreasoning, like an animal. Even the text, seems to bark: "What?
- His confinement contains an element of choice. However, "Ropes of sand" suggest that the ropes are not chosen, and "sand" describes the way the discomfort of being chafed by when one struggles to get such ropes off.
- The whole image of the ropes represents a shift in thought. Service to God makes us sometimes feel strained. The writer is also enslaved by "petty thoughts," the writer's tirade is an example of such thoughts. The poet feels that such thoughts are true shackles, and not the disciplinary kind of restraint which "collar" or even "cage" is.
- Another significant image pattern in the poem is that of the harvest. The clergy, are workers in the vineyard. The writer, conversely, feels that his only harvest has been a thorn that has made him bleed. His "sighs" and "tears" have made him ruin the fruits of his labors.

- Herbert means that, when done in the wrong spirit, service is fruitless and self-pity cancels the good. The writer mourns for "bays to crown" the year, for "flowers [and] garlands gay," emblems of personal rewards, accomplishments, and pleasures.
- Herbert wishes for greater recognition for his talents. He wonders if he has given up too much; let many of life's rewards pass him by. The turn in the poem occurs near the end, when the writer replies to the Master's call: "Methought I heard one calling, Child! / And I replied, My Lord."
- At this point in the poem, the distressed note in the writer is silenced and the discontent is passed. The effect here is to arouse an identification with the whole situation in the reader, a recognition that we have all been there, whether our lives are modeled to conform with religious ideals, or mere humanist ones.

**PULLEY:**

**PARAPHRASE:**

When God at first made man,
He had a glass of blessings standing by;
He stated. “Let Us pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which lies spread out,
Contract.

Therefore, strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, followed by wisdom, honor, pleasure
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all His treasure
Rest in the bottom lay.

God thought, “For if I do, bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature:
So both should losers be.

“Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness:

**SUMMARY:**

- In this poem, the fusion of the classical and the Christian spirit add intensity and dimension to the poem's guiding metaphysical conceit, which is the depiction of a pulley that draws man slowly toward God.

In case you don't know pulleys and hoists are mechanical devices aimed at assisting us with moving heavy loads through a system of ropes and wheels. One should not be surprised at the choice of Herbert because the use of a pulley as a central conceit was part of the Victorian love of machines. As you already know since the domain of physics was quite well known at that time and imagery from that discipline would have felt quite comfortable to most of the metaphysical poets.

- In the poem, the central idea posited by Herbert is that when God made man, he poured all his blessings on him, including strength, beauty, wisdom, honor and pleasure. We are told that God "made a stay," that is, He kept "Rest at the bottom". We might, in modern parlance, call this God's trump card. God is aware that if He were to bestow this rest on Man as well then Man would adore God's gifts instead of God Himself.
- Therefore, God has withheld the gift of rest from man knowing full well that His other treasures would one day result in a spiritual restlessness and fatigue in man who, having tired of His material gifts would necessarily turn to God in his exhaustion.
- God, being omniscient and prescient, knows that there is the possibility that even the wicked might not turn to Him, but He knows that eventually mortal man is prone to laziness. Then his lassitude, would be the leverage that God needed to make humans recognize him. In the context of the mechanical operation of a pulley, the kind of leverage and force applied makes the difference for the weight being lifted. Applied to man in this poem, we can say that the withholding of 'Rest' by God is the leverage that will hoist or draw mankind towards God when other means would make that task difficult. It is also read by scholars that in the first line of the last stanza, Herbert has punned on the word "rest" suggesting that perhaps God will, after all, let man "keep the rest," but such a reading would seem to diminish the force behind the poem's conceit.
- The importance of rest -and, by association, sleep- is an idea that was certainly uppermost in the minds of Renaissance writers. Many of Shakespeare's plays include references to sleep or the lack of it as a punishment for sins committed. What is distinctly metaphysical about the poem is that a religious notion is

conveyed through a secular, scientific image that requires the reader's acquaintance with, and understanding of, some basic laws of physics.

**THOMAS GRAY:**

- Thomas Gray can be considered one of the finest Restoration poets. Gray was born in 1716, and educated at Eton College. At he made friends with Richard West, Thomas Ashton, and Horace Walpole.
- Gray's most famous poem, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" may have originated from the loss of his friend, West, as it deals with the theme of death in a melancholic and philosophic manner.
- Gray dealt with the theme of death in many forms, yet was not confined to it, as seen by ’The Progress of Poesy’, nor was he obsessed with the seriousness of the subject, as seen in ‘On a Favourite Cat’.
- ‘Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’ is perhaps Gray's most masterfully written poem. Every aspect of the poem mirrors the feeling of death and the mood of one who plods his way wearily through a country churchyard. The meter, iambic pentameter which remains practically unbroken, mirrors the feeling of melancholy that pervades the entire poem, and also the sense of a man wandering his way amidst the graves that hold the people of which he speaks. It also allows everything the poet says to soak into the reader's thoughts. Gray's "Elegy" is one of the best-known poems about death in all of European literature.
- The poem presents the reflections of an observer who, passing by a churchyard that is out in the country, stops for a moment to think about the significance of the strangers buried there. Scholars of medieval times sometimes kept human skulls on their desktops, to keep themselves conscious of the fact that someday they, like the skulls' former occupants, would die. The speaker of the poem is surrounded by the idea of death, and throughout the first seven stanzas there are numerous images pointing out the contrast between death and life.
- The first stanza deals with strength, specifically the strength of the plowmen in the fields, the same men who now lie beneath the poet's feet. The epitaph deals with the poet's feelings for the dead man, "a youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown" (118), whose soul was "sincere" (121). The poet asks for the world to leave the dead man to his rest; perhaps this is Gray asking the world to allow his friend West to rest in peace. In the first stanza, the speaker observes the signs of a country day

drawing to a close: a curfew bell ringing, a herd of cattle moving across the pasture, and a farm laborer returning home. The speaker is then left alone to contemplate the isolated rural scene. The first line of the poem sets a distinctly somber tone: the curfew bell does not simply ring; it "knells"—a term usually applied to bells rung at a death or funeral. From the start, then, Gray reminds us of human mortality. This stanza stands as an illustration to depict the tone of the next six stanzas.

**COMPREHENSION:**

- Briefly discuss Herbert's 'Collar' and the notion of Christainity in the poem.
- Explicate the major ideas in Herbert's 'Pulley'.
- Examine Gray's elegy as a metaphor of death.

LESSON 3: D.G. ROSSETTI (1828-1882) & D.H. LAWRENCE (1885 – 1930)

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life and works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.**
- **Life and works of D.H. Lawrence.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.**
- **Understand the poetry of D.H. Lawrence.**

You may have realized that the Victorian period was not the same throughout. The middle Victorian period underwent a change in thought. The writers at this point were artists, sculptors and poets who wanted to adopt some of the notions of the romanticism. In case you do not know this was the time when a new interesting movement came up in England the like of which has never again occurred in English History. Do read on and get to know about this movement, the major themes of this movement as well as its practitioners before you get to meet the modern writer, D.H. Lawrence.

**THE PRE-RAPHAELITE MOVEMENT:**

- The Pre-Raphaelites were a group of young men and women in the mid-nineteenth century who were against the conventional Victorian society. They fought against the current trends and thoughts of the society because they wished to return to the glorious world of medieval Christendom. During this time, England was home to a school of artists who not only had a great impact on popular thought, but also on poetry and art. This impact was on interior design, church ornamentation, book binding, and common household furnishings. This style was considered to be quite dull and restricting and therefore the Pre-Raphaelite painters revived the fresco technique, a process that originally was used by early Italian painters that involves painting oils on wet plaster. The Pre-Raphaelites made a slight alteration, instead of painting on wet plaster they painted on a canvas that is prepared by a ground of white lead and varnish. Using this method, the pigments are heightened and brightened in coloration by this background.

- These engravings are considered to be the catalyst of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, but the actual name for the Brotherhood came from a different source. According to Hunt "The name originated when he and a fellow student Millais, were criticizing Raphael's Transfiguration and other students proclaimed that they must then be the Pre-Raphaelites". This designation was officially accepted in September, 1848 at the Millais family house. The founding members of the pre-raphaelite movement were William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, Gabriel Dante Rossetti, James Collinson, W. M. Rossetti, F. G. Stephens, and Thomas Woolner. The founding principles or aims of the Brotherhood were as follows:
- To have genuine ideas to express.
- To study nature attentively, so as to know how to express them.
- To sympathize with what is direct and serious and heartfelt in previous art, to the exclusion of what is conventional and self-parading and learned by rote.
- To produce thoroughly good pictures and statues.
- In other words, the Pre-Raphaelites thought that what they produced was art and literature covering three areas of subject matter that include, Christian doctrine and medieval life; scenes from contemporary life, often expressing moral values founded on religious belief; and finally scenes from literature, particularly Shakespeare and other nineteenth century poets as Keats, Tennyson, Coventry Patmore, and Sir Henry Taylor.
- Later on in 1856, a second, more poetic movement in the Pre-Raphaelite organization included new members such as Christina Rossetti, William Morris, and Algernon Swinburne.
- In 1848, the revolution began as the Pre-Raphaelites grew in numbers. Some members became overtly political, while others like D. G. Rossetti responded to the social issues of his time. Many of the Pre-raphaelite thoughts were expressed in the journal called The Germ which was published in 1850. It consisted of the collective works of art, literature, and social commentary authored by the various members of the Pre-Raphaelites, but it was unfortunately short-lived.
- The most notable literary work was D. G. Rossetti's ‘The Blessed Damozel’. During this time the Brotherhood also produced several paintings, the first of which was also painted by Rossetti called the ‘Girlhood of Mary The Virgin’. The Pre-Raphaelites in their journal also published their comments and criticisms of other

contemporary writers like Poe and of fellow Brotherhood members. Members published their literary comments of each other including William Hunt Holman's statement after a critique of Rossetti's paintings.

- The Pre-Raphaelites lost its strength in 1850 when James Collinson left the Brotherhood as he felt that being a Catholic he could no longer subscribe to the tenets of the Brotherhood. The next member to leave was Thomas Woolner in 1854 who felt that as a sculptore he had not got much success. Millais left because he was elected Associate to the Royal Academy in 1853. Eventually, because of lack of participation, the Brotherhood was disbanded in 1857, when the last cooperative Pre-Raphaelite work 'The Valley of Jehoshaphat' was published.

**DANTE GABRIEL ROSETTI:**

- Dante Gabriel Rosetti was born in London, the son of the poet Gabriele Rossetti (1783-1854), and Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori Rossetti, sister of Byron's physician, Dr. John Polidori. Thus Rossetti's background was essentially Italian; Gabriele had emigrated to England mainly for political reasons.
- In the cultural atmosphere of his home, already as a child he became interested in romantic literature. From 1836 to 1843 he studied at King's College School, London. Between the years 1843 and 1846 he attended Cary's Art Academy, and entered in 1848 the Royal Academy, where he spent an unfruitful period. However, he also started to write 'The House of Life', a sequence of 102 sonnets, which is considered his masterpiece.
- For many years Rossetti was known only as a painter. On the other hand he had to face for some time the problem that his paintings were not bought. He idealized his subjects, and used literary themes of medieval romances. His early poems, such as 'The Blessed Damozel', a highly symbolic work, and 'My Sister's Sleep', in which death visits a family on a Christmas Eve, were published in the Pre-Raphaelite magazine The Germ in 1850.
- In most of Rossetti's early pictures his ideal ladies were portraits of his wife, the beautiful Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal. He had met her in 1850, and they married in 1860 when she was already in poor health. Rossetti encouraged Elizabeth's own painting and writing aspirations. She modelled for him and for many of his circle - perhaps the most impressive portrait is the drowned Ophelia in Millais's painting.

- After his wife died of an overdose of laudanum in 1862, Rossetti buried with her the only complete manuscript of his poems. The manuscript was recovered seven years later and published in 1870. It included most of his best verse and established his reputation as a poet.
- In 1868 Rossetti showed renewed interest in poetry. Sixteen sonnets, including the 'Willowwood' sequence, were published in The Fortnightly Review in 1869. He had a close relationship with Jane Morris, wife of the painter William Morris, and wrote the ballad 'Rose Mary'. In 1871 there appeared R. Buchanan's pamphlet 'The Fleshy School of Poetry' in the Contemporary Review, in which Rossetti and his associates were accused of obscenity. Later, Rossetti's reply, 'The Stealthy School of Criticism', appeared in The Athenaeum in 1872.
- Though he was admired by a younger generation of aesthetes such as Oscar Wilde, Rossetti's later years were shadowed by health problems, morbid thoughts, and paranoia. In 1872 he attempted suicide. Before his death at the age of fifty-three in 1882, he published Ballads and Sonnets (1881) Rossetti's collected works appeared in 1886 in two volumes.

**THE BLESSED DAMOZEL:**

- Victorian literature abounded in depicting images of passivity and subservience that often characterize the female in such roles as a dreaming damozel in heaven, a young girl crying silently, a suffering Madonna, or a sleeping prostitute. In addition to projecting all their desires onto a female object, male speakers in Victorian poetry sometimes use their narrative voice to suppress the female point of view and enforce codes of patriarchal domination. There are typically three ways in which male speakers objectify women. Sometimes speakers literally speak for the female subject by putting words in her mouth. In other, more subtle instances of females being objectified, speakers endow women with a quality, assign a value to them, or impose their views on them. In Victorian poetry there is a noticeable pattern of women being reduced to a fixed meaning as opposed to being treated as complex human beings. Rossetti begins the poem with this description:

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than depth

Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

- The "three lilies in her hand" and the seven "stars in her hair" are details added purely for aesthetic value and have no meaning whatsoever. D.G. Rossetti was criticized for images such as "the gold bar of Heaven" which make heaven appear overly materialistic. Images describing the "blessed damozel" such as her hair being "yellow like ripe corn" convey an incredible materiality. This poem and its corresponding painting refer not to reality, but to an imaginary world where female bodies are representations of the speaker's own subjective needs and desires. Not until an interspersed parenthetical statement in the poem does it become evident that a man is speaking and that the descriptions are actually projections of the speaker's daydream.

  (To one, it is ten years of years.
  . . . Yet now, and in this place,
  Surely she leaned o'er me -- her hair
  Fell about my face. . .
  Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.
  The whole year sets apace.)

- In the time of the dying year, the speaker fantasizes about how desperate his "blessed damozel" "surely" is for him. The desiring male figure finds his self-image confirmed by the beloved that pines for him. This poem exemplifies distortion of beliefs in the afterlife for the sake of one's own obsessive fantasies and egotism. D.G. Rossetti's speaker imagines the woman saying exactly what he wants to hear:

He shall fear, haply, and be dumb;
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

- Not only does the male speaker speak for his beloved, he is also convinced that the holy "Mother" in heaven approves of their earthly lust and desire for each other. In the last line of the poem, the speaker says that he "heard her tears" when in fact he is hearing only his projected fantasy of the woman grieving for him. Rossetti in thisa poem depicts that he is interested in artificial Petrarchan conceptions of love and constructed moods rather than situations where people are actually making contact.

**COMPREHENSION:**

- Why do the mortal lover's words appear in parentheses? How does he speak of the distance between the Damozel and himself? How does he represent her understanding of her temporal and spatial separation from him?
- What relationship does the poem put forward in its presentation of the Damozel, between spirit and body.
- What devices or strategies does the speaker employ to help us visualize the Damozel and interpret her words and actions?
- Where is the Damozel exactly and how is she clothed -- what is the significance of objects such as "stars," "lilies," etc?
- What role does nature imagery play in this poem?

**D. H. LAWRENCE:**

- David Herbert Lawrence was born in the province of Nottinghamshire. His father was a miner but Lawrence's mother being educated and refined tried to uplift her children from the working class to which they belonged.
- Lawrence from an young age understood the conflict between his parents and also began to despise the crude drunken behaviour of his father.
- When one of his brothers died his mother became emotionally dependent on him. His mother's possessiveness and need for support spoilt his own chances of a stable relationship with other women.
- These conflicts were part of his novel, Sons and Lovers (1913). Much later however Lawrence felt that he had not understood his father and felt that his father's his inner simplicity and vitality may have been corroded due to his miner's life.

- Due to the foresight of his mother Lawrence was given a good education. He got a scholarship to the Nottingham High School and later after working as a clerk and a elementary school teacher he attended the Nottingham University for two years where in he got his teacher's certificate.
- By this time he had published The White Peacock which was well received. From 1908-1912 he taught at Croyden but gave up when he fell in love with Frieda von Richthofen the wife of a French professor at Nottingham University. He went with her to Germany and married her in 1914 after she divorced her first husband.
- While in Germany he finished Sons and Lovers. The couple returned to England because of the war. However, Frieda's German background and Lawrence's support of Germany created problems for them in England. In 1915 after his novel Rainbow was banned Lawrence started feeling depressed with civilization. When war ended he sought refuge in Italy, Australia, Mexico and France. He finally died in 1930 in France after bouts of being physically ill and mentally depressed.

**SNAKE:**

**Before you read the next part you think of a snake and write down how you would describe it if you saw it in front of you. Now read the poem carefully and see how the images strike you. Are any of your descriptions close to what is written in the poem. Now read the lesson.**

**PARAPHRASE:**

- A snake came to my water-trough On a hot, day, to drink there. I was in pyjamas because of the heat,
- In the deep, scented shade of the great dark carob-tree I was coming down the steps with my pitcher And there I had to wait, stand and wait, for there was the snake at the trough right in front of my eyes.
- He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom And trailed his yellow-brown soft-bellied body, over the edge of the stone trough and rested his throat upon the stone bottom, to the place where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness. He sipped with his straight mouth, softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body, Silently.

- He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do, And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do, Then he flashed his forked tongue from his lips, and mused a moment, And stooped and drank a little more. The voice of my education said to me that he must be killed, for in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, but the gold are venomous.
- But must I confess how that I had begun to like him, and as to how glad I was that he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink at my water-trough And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless, Into the burning bowels of this earth?
- I wondered if it was cowardice, that I dared not kill him? Was it perversity that I longed to talk to him? Or was it humility, to feel so honoured?
- And yet those voices told me deep down that "If you were not afraid, you would kill him"! And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid, but I was more honoured that he should have sought my hospitality from out the dark door of the secret earth.
- When he had drunk enough he lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken, and flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black, he seemed to lick his lips and looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air.
- Then he slowly turned his head, and slowly, very slowly, proceeded to draw his slow length curving round and climb again the broken bank of my wall-face. And as he put his head into that dreadful hole, And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered farther, A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into that horrid black hole, deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing himself after, overcame me now that his back was turned.
- I looked round, and I picked up a clumsy log after putting down my pitcher, And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter. I think it did not hit him, But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed in undignified haste. He writhed like lightning, and was gone.
- Immediately I regretted my act and I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act! I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education. And I thought of the albatross and I wished he would come back, my snake.
- He seemed to me again like a king, like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld, Now due to be crowned again.
- And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords of life. And I have something to feel sorry about.

This lengthy blank verse poem, Lawrence describes an incident in his life in which he comes across a snake at his water trough in Sicily. The poet is immediately caught between two forces: one which demands that he should kill the snake; and the other which demands admiration for it. Lawrence eventually hurls a log at the snake, and the reptile quickly slithers away into a crack in a garden wall. Immediately the poet is angry with himself for allowing the voices of social prejudice to get the better of him. He realizes that he has missed such a wonderful opportunity to play host to one of the most beautiful creatures in life.

COMPREHENSION:

- Write an essay on the pre Raphaelite movement.
- Describe the Blessed Damozel's main ideas as portrayed by D.G. Rossetti.
- Write a note on Lawrence's depiction of the snake and his dilemma.

LESSON 4: WILFRED OWEN (1893-1918) & PHILIP LARKIN (1922 – 1985)

**OUTLINE:**

- **Life and works of Wilfred Owen.**
- **Life and works of Philip Larkin.**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

After reading this lesson you should be able to

- **Understand the poetry of Wilfred Owen.**
- **Understand the poetry of Philip Larkin.**

Did you know that during the first world war there were many soldiers who participated in the war. However when the war was over quite a few of them felt unhappy about the violence, the blood shed and loss of life. This resulted in a poetry that critiqued war and its ideals. Some of the poets of this period were Rupert Brooke, Edward Thomas, Siegfried Sassoon, Ivor Gurney, Isaac Rosenberg and Wilfred Owen. In this section let us hear and understand the voice of Owen.

**WILFRED OWEN:**

- Owen was brought up in the backstreets of Birken head and Shrewsbury. After finishing school he took up the post of a lay assistant in a vicar. He at that point of time, began to critique the role of church and religion in society. He showed sympathy for the poor and downtrodden and a number of letters of his display this fervour of his. In 1913 he left the vicar and went to teach English in France.
- Till 1915 Owen could not decide whether he should enlist for the war or become a poet or a man of religion. Later he enlisted and fought till May 1917 as an officer in the Battle of Somme. Then as he was invalidated due to shell shock, he was sent to Edinburgh Hosital where he met Sassoon whose war poems had just then appeared.
- Under his influence he removed Romantic elements in his poetry and began to display realism. All through his stay in the hospital he suffered from terrible nightmares. After his discharge he went back to war and was killed in action in 1918 just a week before the war was to end.

**THE STRANGE MEETING:**

**PARAPHRASE:**

- It seemed that out of battle I escaped
  Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
  Through granites which titanic wars had groined.
- Even here  sleepers groaned, who were too fast in thought or death to be woken up.
  Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
  With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
  Lifting distressful hands, as if to bless.
  And by his smile, I knew that we stood in Hell.
- A thousand pains were etched on that face
  And yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
  Moreover no guns thumped.
- 'Strange friend,' I said, 'here is no cause to mourn.'
  'None,' said that other, 'save the undone years,
  The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
  Was my life also; I went hunting wild
  After the wildest beauty in the world,
  Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
  But mocks the steady running of the hour,
  And if it grieves, grieves richer than here.
- For by my glee might many men have laughed,
  And of my weeping something had been left,
  Which must die now.
- I mean the truth untold,
  The pity of war, Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
  Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
- Courage was mine, and I had mystery,
  Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery:
  To miss the march of this retreating world
  Into vain citadels that are not walled.
- Then, when much blood had flown,
  I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,

Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint
But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.

- I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
  I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned
  Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
  I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
  Let us sleep now...

**COMPREHENSION:**

- Who is the narrator of the poem?
- What does the dead man mean by "the pity of war"?
- What does he predict for the future of Europe / humankind / civilisation? What aspects of this prophesized future does he lament?
- Look at the lines: "Courage was mine and I had mystery……Into vain citadels that are not walled, "What do you think the dead man intends to convey?
- Briefly describe he horror of the war as depicted in the poem.

**PHILIP LARKIN:**

- Philip Arthur Larkin was born on August 9, 1922, in Coventry. He was the second child of Sydney and Eva Larkin. His father was City Treasurer between the years 1922-44.
- Philip Larkin attended City's King Henry VIII School between 1930 and 1940. At school he not only made regular contributions to the school magazine, The Coventrian, which, between 1939 and 1940, but also edited it.
- Then he attended St. John's College, Oxford, and completed his degree in 1943 with a First Class Honours in English. He could not be enlisted in the army due to his poor eyesight. His closest friends at Oxford were Kingsley Amis and Bruce Montgomery.
- The first of his poems to be published in a national weekly was 'Ultimatum', which appeared in the Listener, November 28, 1940. Then in June 1943, three of his poems, 'A Stone Church Damaged By A Bomb', 'Mythological Introduction', and 'I dreamed of an out-thrust arm of land' were published in Oxford Poetry (1942-43).

- After graduating, Larkin lived with his parents for a while, before being appointed Librarian at Wellington, Shropshire, in November of 1943. While at Shropshirer he studied to qualify as a professional librarian.
- In 1945, ten of his poems appeared in Poetry from Oxford in Wartime. Later these appeared in The North Ship. Two novels, Jill and A Girl in Winter were published in 1946 and 1947 respectively.
- In 1946, Larkin became assistant Librarian at the University College of Leicester. He completed his professional studies and became an Associate of the Library Association in 1949. In October 1950, he became Sub-Librarian at Queen's University, Belfast.
- In 1954, the Fantasy Press published a pamphlet containing five of his poems. The same year The Marvell Press, based in Hessle, near Hull, published Toads and Poetry of departures in Listen.
- Larkin took up the position of Librarian at the University of Hull in March 1955, and in October of that year that The Less Deceived was published. It was this collection that formed his reputation as one of the foremost figures in 20th Century poetry.
- It wasn't until 1964 that his next collection, The Whitsun Weddings was published. Again, the collection was well received, and widely acclaimed, and the following year, Larkin was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry.
- It was during the years 1961-71 that Larkin contributed monthly reviews of jazz recordings for the Daily Telegraph, and these reviews were brought together and published in 1970 under the title All What Jazz: a record diary 1961-1968. He also edited the Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse, which was published in 1973.
- His last collection High Windows was published in 1974, and Aubade, his last great poem, was published in The Times Literary Supplement in December 1977.
- Larkin received many awards in recognition of his writing, especially in his later years. In 1975 he was awarded the CBE, and in 1976 was given the German Shakespeare-Pries. In 1982 the University of Hull made him a Professor. In 1984 he received an honorary D.Litt. from Oxford University, and was elected to the Board of the British Library. In December of 1984 he was offered the chance to

succeed Sir John Betjeman as Poet Laureate but he refused as he was unwilling to accept the high public profile and associated media attention of the position.

- In mid 1985 Larkin was admitted to hospital with an illness and after that gradually his health began to fail, and when he was awarded the much prized Order of the Companion of Honour he was unable, because of ill health, to attend the ceremony. Finally, Philip Larkin died of cancer in 1985. He was 63 years old.

**WHITSUN WEDDINGS:**

- This poem begins with a train journey**. T**he train journey gives the poet an opportunity to see a variety of things going on in England at roughly the same time, 'how their lives would all contain this hour', and that it is a set of 'social observations' of characters in their natural settings, some of them on special occasions, all fitting together to make a portrait of the people on Whitsuntide in the 1950's. It is a 'frail travelling coincidence'.

Larkin observes their customs and rituals as an outsider. Larkin looks at these people with some distaste (their mannerisms and clothes, for example) but he's quite gentle and indulgent and paints a portrait of the countryside a little ironically and the poem is an understated celebration of so-called 'ordinary' lives.

**COMPREHENSION:**

- Explain in your own words what sort of atmosphere is created at the beginning of the train journey?
- What is the attitude of the speaker?
- What does the speaker notice from the moving train?
- Why does the speaker become interested in the wedding groups?
- What message is conveyed by the depiction of the honeymoon couple at the end of the poem?
- Comment on the documentary style of the poem.