MODULE - I

1

CRITICAL STUDY OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER'S "THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE" FROM THE CANTERBURY TALES

Unit Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- This unit intends to introduce Geoffrey Chaucer to the readers
- The unit also studies Chaucer's classical poem The Canterbury Tales

Wife of Bath

1.1 LIFE OF CHAUCER

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London in the early 1340s. Several previous generations of Geoffrey Chaucer's family had been vintners and merchants in Ipswich. His family name is derived from the French chaucier, once thought to mean 'shoemaker', but now known to mean a maker of hose or leggings. Chaucer refers to himself as me Galfridum Chaucer, filium Johannis Chaucer, Vinetarii, Londonie, which translates as: "Geoffrey Chaucer, son of the vintner John Chaucer, London".

1.2 WORKS BY CHAUCER

The Book of Duchess-(1368)

Anelida and Arcite, The House of the Fame

Parlement of Foules

The Legend of Good Women

Troilus and Criseyde

The Canterbury Tales-(1380)

1.3 THE CANTERBURY TALES

The Canterbury Tales is a collection of short stories in verse form told by a group of pilgrims traveling to Canterbury Cathedral who compete in a storytelling contest. The narration reflects the concerns sparked by the social upheavals of late medieval England. Chaucer introduces in The General Prologue a wide variety of pilgrims from across different social classes. In the initial stage the Host suggests the storytelling contest and claims that the best storyteller will win a free tavern meal, he incites the plot because this contest both creates a reason for the pilgrims to tell stories and also places the pilgrims in competition with each other. Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales is a frame narrative, a tale in which a larger story contains, or frames, many other stories. It is a collection of twenty-four stories composed in 17,000 lines written in Middle English by Chaucer between 1387 and 1400 presented in the form of a story-telling contest by a group of pilgrims as they travel together from London to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. The Prologue makes clear Chaucer's intention to write four stories from the perspective of each pilgrim, two each on the way to and from their ultimate destination, St. Thomas Becket's shrine.

1.4 WIFE OF BATH

Geoffrey Chaucer wrote The 'Prologue of the Wife of Bath's Tale' during the fourteenth century at a time when the social structure was rapidly evolving during the reign of Richard II. It was evident that changes needed to be made within the traditional hierarchy at the court of Richard II. The feminist reading of the tale argues that Chaucer chose to address through "The Prologue of the Wife of Bath's Tale" the change in mores that he had noticed, in order to highlight the imbalance of power in a parochial society. Women were identified not by their social status and occupations, but solely by their relations with men. Further, a woman was defined as a maiden, a spouse or a widow - capable only of child-bearing and cooking.

"The Wife of Bath's Tale" is among the best-known of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. It provides insight into the role of women in the Late Middle Ages that showcases Chaucer’s skill in characterization. The poem projects one of the most developed characters by the poet. The Wife of Bath holds herself among the bickering pilgrims, but as her significance increases she receives the present tale. She calls herself both Alyson and Alys in the prologue. But to confuse the readers she uses the names of her 'gossib' (a close friend or gossip), whom she mentions several times, as well as many female characters throughout The Canterbury Tales.

The Canterbury Tales is a collection of tales that are often regarded as the first of the marriage group of tales, that includes the Clerk's, the Merchant's and the Franklin's tales. But some scholars disagree with this grouping, first proposed by Chaucer scholar, Eleanor Prescott Hammond and subsequently elaborated by George Lyman Kittredge, not least because the later tales of Melibee and the Nun's Priest exhibit this theme.

The tale is an example of the "loathly lady" motif, the oldest examples of which are the medieval Irish sovereignty myths such as that of Niall of the Nine Hostages. In the medieval poem The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle, Arthur's nephew Gawain goes on a nearly identical quest to discover what women truly want after he errs in a land dispute. It is a tradition that any knight or noble found guilty of such an abuse of power, might be stripped of his name, heraldic title and rights, and possibly even executed. The Wife of Bath's Prologue is by far the longest in The Canterbury Tales and is twice as long as the actual story, showing the importance of the prologue to the significance of the overall tale. In the beginning the wife expresses her views in which she believes the morals of women desire that each individual woman should have the opportunity to make the decision. Through this character Chaucer presents a modern woman as she candidly articulates her views on the individualism of women as human beings. The Wife of Bath attacks several typical customs of the time, and provides her critique of the roles of women in society. The Wife of Bath defends women who have married multiple times like her. To validate her argument she mentions many holy men and the men of repute who have had multiple wives. Chaucer's Wife of Bath is the most modern female who advocates female's liberty from the normative hegemony.

Further, she satirizes the double standards of society that respects men who have polygamy, and on the contrary, the same treatment is not given to women. Women are treated with the social belief in the inherent inferiority. In "The Wife of Bath's Tale" the speaker has been married five times, who argues that women are morally identical to men who have also had more than one spouse. Double standards for men and women were common and deeply rooted in culture. Chaucer unearths the pompous society of his times wherein men are always considered superior whereas women are pushed in social and cultural peripheries.

Gradually, the narrator tells a tale of a knight in King Arthur's time who raped a fair young maiden. King Arthur issues a decree that the knight must be brought to justice. When the knight is captured, he is condemned to death, but Queen Guinevere intercedes on his behalf and asks the King to allow her to pass judgment upon him. The Queen tells the knight that he will be spared of his life if he succeeds in finding for her the thing that women most desire. She allots him the time of a year and a day in which he can roam wherever he pleases and return with an answer.

Everywhere the knight goes he explains his predicament to the women he meets and asks their opinion, but "No two of those he questioned answered the same." The answers range from fame and riches to play, or clothes, or sexual pleasure, or flattery, or freedom. When at last the time comes for him to return to the Court, he still lacks the answer he so desperately needs.

Outside a castle in the woods, he sees twenty-four maidens dancing and singing, but when he approaches they disappear as if by magic, and all that is left is an old woman. The Knight explains the problem to the old

woman, who is wise and may know the answer, and she forces him to promise to grant any favour she might ask of him in return. With no other options left, the Knight agrees. Arriving at the court, he gives the answer that women most desire sovereignty over their husbands, which is unanimously agreed to be true by the women of the court who, accordingly, free the Knight.

Subsequently, the old woman explains to the court the deal she has struck with the Knight, and publicly requests his hand in marriage. Although aghast, he realizes he has no other choice and agrees eventually. On their wedding night the old woman is upset that he is repulsed by her in bed. She reminds him that her looks can be an asset—she will be a virtuous wife to him because no other men would desire her. She asks him which one he would prefer—an old and ugly wife who is true and loyal, or a beautiful and young woman, who may not be faithful. The Knight responds by saying that the choice is hers. In this way, she is happy as she has the ultimate power of sovereignty and relinquished control over the knight. She promises him both beauty and fidelity. The Knight turns to look at the old woman again, but now finds a young and lovely woman. The old woman makes "what women want most" and the answer that she gave true to him, sovereignty. “The Wife of Bath” ends by praying that Jesus Christ bless women with meek, young, and submissive husbands and the grace to break them. The conclusion amplifies the satire that Chaucer desires to convey that every woman wants a meek, young and submissive man as husband.

1.5 THEMES

Behaviour in marriage: The Chaucerian critics Carruthers and Cooper chronicle that the way that Chaucer's Wife of Bath is a rebel as she does not behave as societal norms in any of her marriages. Through her nonconformity to the expectations of her role as a wife, the audience is shown what proper behaviour in marriage should be like. Carruthers' essay outlines the existence of deportment books, the purpose of which was to teach women how to be model wives. Carruthers notes how the Wife's behaviour in the first of her marriages "is almost everything the deportment-book writers say it should not be." For example, she lies to her old husbands about them getting drunk and saying some regrettable things. Yet, Carruthers states that the Wife does a decent job of upholding her husbands' public honour. Moreover, deportment books taught women that "the husband deserves control of the wife because he controls the estate". Equally, it is clear that the Wife is the one who controls certain aspects of her husband's behaviour in her various marriages.

Cooper also notes that behaviour in marriage is a theme that emerges in the Wife of Bath's Prologue; where neither the Wife nor her husbands conform to any conventional ideals of marriage. Cooper observes that the Wife's fifth husband, in particular, "cannot be taken as any principle of correct Christian marriage". He fails to exhibit behaviour conventionally expected within a marriage. This can perhaps be attributed to his young age and lack of experience in relationships, as he does change at the end,

as does the Wife of Bath. Thus, the poem exposes the complexities of the institution of marriage and of relationships more broadly through both the Wife's and her fifth and favorite husband's failure to conform to expected behaviour in marriage,.

Female sovereignty:

The Wife holds the central position in the poem. Though the poem upholds parochial supremacy, the Wife of Bath plays the central role. The image of the whip underlines her dominant role as she tells everyone that she is the one in charge in her household, especially in the bedroom, where she appears to have an insatiable thirst for sex. However it is made evident at the end of both the Prologue and the Tale that it is not dominance that she wishes to gain, in her relation with her husband, but a kind of equality.

In the Prologue she says:

"God help me so, I was to him as kinde

As any wyf from Denmark unto Inde,

And also trewe, and so was he to me."

In her Tale, the old woman tells her husband: "I prey to God that I mot sterven wood,

But I to yow be also good and trewe

As evere was wyf, sin that the world was newe."

In both cases, the Wife says so to the husband after she has been given "sovereyntee". She is handed over the control of all the property along with the control of her husband's tongue. The old woman in the Wife of Bath's Tale is also given the freedom to choose which role he wishes her to play in the marriage.

Economics of love:

In her essay "The Wife of Bath and the Painting of Lions," Carruthers describes the relationship that existed between love and economics for both medieval men and women. Carruthers notes that it is the independence that the Wife's wealth provides for her that allows her to love freely (Carruthers 1979:216).

The Wife appears to make reference to prostitution, whereby "love" in the form of sex is a "deal" bought and sold. The character's use of words such as "dette (debt)" and "paiement (payment)" also portray love in economic terms, as did the medieval Church. Accordingly, sex was the debt women owed to the men that they married. Hence, while the point that Carruthers makes is that money is necessary for women to achieve sovereignty in marriage. Therefore, the text reveals that love is, among other things, an economic concept. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that her fifth husband gives up wealth in return for love, honour, and respect.

Further, the Wife of Bath takes men seriously and not only for sexual pleasure and money. The Wife of Bath states, "but well I know, surely, God expressly instructed us to increase and multiply. I can well understand that noble text" to bear fruit, not in children, but financially through marriage, land, and from inheritance when her husbands pass. Chaucer's Wife chose to interpret the meaning of the statement by clarifying that she has no interest in childbearing as a means of showing fruitfulness, but the progression of her financial stability is her ideal way of proving success. In this view, she is the most modern and an independent female.

Sex and Lollardy:

While sexuality is a dominant theme in The Wife of Bath's Prologue, it is less obvious that her sexual behaviour can be associated with Lollardy. Critics such as Helen Cooper and Carolyn Dinshaw point to the link between sex and Lollardy as they describe the Wife's knowledge and use of Scripture in her justification of her sexual behaviour. When she states that "God bad us for to wexe and multiplye", she appears to suggest that there is nothing wrong with sexual lust, because God wants humans to procreate. The Wife's determination to recover sexual activity within a Christian context and on the authority of the Bible echoes one of the points made in the Lollard Twelve Conclusions of 1395. The very fact that she remarries after the death of her first husband could be viewed as Chaucer's characterisation of the Wife as a supporter of Lollardy, if not necessarily a Lollard herself, since Lollards advocated the remarriage of widows.

On the contrary, Author Alistair Minnis makes the assertion that the Wife of Bath is not a lollard at all, in fact she was educated by her late husband Jankyn, an Oxford-educated clerk, who translated and read aloud anti-feminist texts. Jankyn gave her knowledge far beyond what was available to women of her status. This explains how she is able to hold her own when justifying her sexual behavior to the Canterbury group. Further, Minnis explains that "being caught in possession of a woman's body, so to speak, was an offense in itself, carrying the penalty of a life-sentence". It is easy to see that in medieval Europe, women could not hold priestly duties on the basis of their sex and no matter how flawless her moral status was, her body would always bar her from the ability to preach the word of God. Minnis goes on to say that "it might well be concluded that it was better to be a secret sinner than a woman" as a sinful man could always change his behavior and repent, but a woman could not change her sex.

Femininity:

In an effort to assert women's equality with men, the Wife of Bath points to the fact that an equal balance of power is necessary in a functional society. Wilks proposes that through the sovereignty theme, a reflection of women's integral role in governance compelled Chaucer's audience to associate the Wife's tale with the reign of Anne of Bohemia. By questioning universal assumptions of male dominance, making demands

in her own right, conducting negotiations within her marriages and disregarding conventional feminine ideals, Chaucer's Wife of Bath was ahead of her time.

The Queen's Law:

The Wife of Bath's Tale reverses the medieval general roles between men and women. Regarding legal power, it suggests a theme of feminist coalition-building. The Queen is appointed as the sovereign and judge. She holds the type of power that men are given in the world of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. The Queen in the Wife of Bath's Tale is given power as judge over the knight's life. Author Emma Lipton writes that the Queen uses this power to move court from a liberal one to an educational one. In this sense the court is moving beyond the offense beyond punishment. In the tale, the Queen is a figurehead of the greater feminist movement within the society, much like the misogynistic world in which the Canterbury Tales takes place. Because of this idea and feminist movement that the Queen leads in the Wife of Bath's Tale, women are empowered rather than objectified to demonstrate a theoretical change. The effect of feminist coalition building is evident through the knight. As a consequence to the knight's sexual assault against the maiden, when the old women ask the Queen to allow the knight to marry her, the Queen grants it. This shows the support and the broader female community's dedication to education of female values. In response to this fate the knight begs the court and the Queen to undo his sentence by using all of his wealth and power, "Take all my goods and let my body go," to which the Queen denies it. The lack of the knight's agency in this scene demonstrates a juxtaposition, or role reversal to the lack of agency of women in situations of rape.

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2

CRITICAL STUDY OF EDMUND SPENSER'S "PROTHALAMION"

Unit Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To briefly study about Edmund Spenser and his major contributions to English Literature
- To critically analyze his poem Prothalamion

2.1 EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599)

Edmund Spenser was born around 1552 in East Smithfield, London. During his schooling he learnt Hebrew, Greek and Latin apart from English. Spenser got his B. A. degree in 1573 and his Master's degree in 1576 from Cambridge University. Gabriel Harvey, a Fellow of Pembroke, was a great influence on Spenser who wanted to introduce the quantitative prosody of Latin into English language. Both of them planned and made some experiments. After Spenser's The Shepheardes Calender he came to be recognized as a poet in English tradition. Gabriel Harvey introduced Spenser to Sidney Leicester who gave him the job. Further, it was through Leicester that he hoped to rise to the life at the court as Leicester was one of the favorites of the Queen.

In 1580, Spenser was appointed as the secretary to the new governor of Ireland where he spent most precious part of his life. In 1581, he was a clerk of the Chancery for Faculties, an office entrusted with the issuing and recording of dispensations granted by the Archbishop of Dublin. In 1584 he was acting as a deputy to a gentleman called Lodovick Bryskett, a friend of Sir Philip Sidney. In 1585, Spenser was appointed Prebendary of Limerick Cathedral. Gradually, in 1589, he met Sir Walter Raleigh, an equally famous and youthful knight who had achieved what Sidney only dreamed. Soon he was drawn into intimacy of Raleigh, where he confided his greatest project, The Fairie Queene and Raleigh quickly recognized the poetic merits of the poem. Gradually, Raleigh presented Spenser to the Queen and he was "graciously" received.

Soon Spenser was back in Ireland to perform the duties of his clerkship and settled down to the management of his estate. On June 11, 1594, he married Elizabeth Boyle, a lady of good family whom Spenser had courted for more than a year. The record of this courtship is preserved in Amoretti and Epithalamion. In October 1598 rebellion broke out in Tyron, Ireland. Kilcolman Castle which was owned by Spenser was completely destroyed by the mob. Spenser fled first to Cork and then to London. But he was now a broken man, emotionally, physically and financially. Soon after his arrival in London, Spenser was taken ill. He died on 16 January, 1599. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

2.2 HIS WORKS

Shepheardes Calendar-1579, complaints (1591), Colin Clout's Come Home Again (1595), Fowre Hymnes-(1596), Amoretti- (1595), The Faerie Queene- (1590), "Prothalamion"-(1596)

"Prothalamion" (1596)

2.3 INTRODUCTION

"Prothalamion" was written by Edmund Spenser in celebration of the engagements of Elizabeth and Katherine Somerset, the daughters of the Earl of Somerset. Spenser coined the word "Prothalamion" specifically for it, modeling the title on the word "epithalamion," or "wedding song." Unlike an "epithalamion," which celebrates a wedding, a "Prothalamion" celebrates a betrothal. The betrothals of the poem were more than matters of the heart, and were politically important events in England. The poem thus meditates on the relationship between marriage, nature, and politics. It elaborates the beauty of the brides, the perfection of their marriages, and the natural world as a respite from the political complications of life at court.

2.4 SUMMARY

The poem begins with the poet saying, it was a calm day with a light breeze in the air, which cooled things down and lessened the heat of the brightly shining sun. He was frustrated with the time as he wasted at court: his political ambitions had failed, and his hopes turned out to be empty illusions. To feel better, he goes for a walk along the banks of the river Thames. The shore and the meadows surrounding the river are covered with beautiful flowers that could be hung up in young women's room, or made into crowns for their fiancés in advance of their wedding day, which is not far away. Gradually, in a meadow by the river he sees a group of nymphs—the mythological daughters of the river with their hair hanging down loosely, and they looked like brides. Both are carrying a wicker basket woven from twigs and full of flowers that they gathered from the meadow. The nymphs quickly and skillfully plucked all kinds of flowers—including blue violets, daisies, lilies, primroses, and vermeil roses—which they would use to decorate their bridegrooms on their wedding day. He finds two beautiful swans swimming down the river Lee.

The swans are whiter than the snow on top of the famous Pindus mountain range. Not even the god Zeus, when he transformed himself into a swan in order to seduce the princess Leda, was as white as those swans. And though people say that Leda was as pale as Zeus was, neither Leda nor Zeus came close to being as white as the swans before him in the river. In fact, the swans were so white that even the calm river upon which they swam seemed to make them dirty. The nymphs, who had by this point collected enough flowers, run to see those silver swans as they floated down the river. And when they saw swans, the nymphs stood in stunned amazement, filling their eyes with the wonderful sight. The nymphs thought that they had never seen such lovely birds, and they assumed that they were angelic, or that they were the mythological swans who drew the goddess Venus's chariot through the sky. The swans are so beautiful it seemed impossible that they are born from any mortal creature. The nymphs thought they are angels or the children of angels. Yet, the truth is that the swans are bred from the heat of the sun in the spring, when the earth is covered in fresh flowers and plants. They seemed as new and fresh as their wedding day, which is not far away. Further, the nymphs take out all the sweet-smelling flowers from their baskets and threw them onto the swans and onto the waves of the river. Now, the river seems like the river Peneus in Greece, which flows through the Tempe Valley in Thessaly. Indeed, the river is so covered in lilies that it seems like the floor of a bridal chamber. Two of the nymphs wove flower crowns from the freshest flowers they could find in the meadow; they presented these to the swans, who wore them on their foreheads. Meanwhile, another nymph sings a song, prepared for the swans' wedding day.

"You swans, who are the world's beautiful decoration and the glory of the skies: you are being led to your lovers, and I wish you joy and happiness in your marriage. I further pray that Venus, the queen of love, and her son, Cupid, will smile on you, and with their smiles, remove all fights and conflicts from your marriages. I pray that your hearts will be full of peace, your kitchens full of food, and your bedrooms proper and fruitful, so that your children defeat your enemies, and that your joy will overflow on your wedding day, which is not far away: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem."

Further, Spenser says that everyone sings the song that fills everywhere. Thus the joyful swans go down the river Lee. Its waters murmured as they pass. All the birds that lived on the river began to flock around the two swans, which are far more beautiful than those other birds—just as the moon is far more beautiful than the stars around it. In this way, they arranged themselves around the swans and waited on them, and lent them their best service for their wedding day, which is not far away.

Gradually, they all come to London, where the poet was born where there were brick towers on the banks of the Thames, which serve now as housing for law students, though in the past they were the headquarters of the Knights Templar, until that order crumbled due to pride. But, now, there lives an aristocrat who brings honor to England—and whom the rest of the world admires. On a recent mission, he terrorized the Spanish and

made the cliffs on either side of the straits of Gibraltar shake with fear. He is Man of honor, exceptional knight, the news of his triumphs travels across England. The poet is happy in the victory of the knight whose skills and victories in war, will make other countries not to harm England. Further, the poet is sure that Queen Elizabeth's name will be celebrated throughout the world, which some poet will preserve in his song for the rest of human history on the day of the wedding. The same aristocrat comes down to the river from the tall battlements of the house with many people following him. He rises like the evening star, Hesperus, who bathes his blond hair in the ocean all day and rises above the horizon at night.

2.5 THEME

Written as a song honoring the marriage of Elizabeth and Katherine Somerset, Edmund Spenser's poem "Prothalamion" centers its theme of celebration around the River Thames, which is a key symbol and setting. Images and ideas of beauty surround the Thames, such as nymphs gathering flower crowns for the two sisters. The poem is rich in imagery that paints the beauty of the two young brides who come for the engagement and their grooms who are brave and chivalrous. The poem celebrates the betrothal of two young princesses.

2.6 REFERENCE

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3

CRITICAL STUDY OF JOHN DONNE'S "THE CANONIZATION" AND ANDREW MARVELL'S "A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE RESOLVED SOUL AND CREATED PLEASURE"

Unit Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we have provided a brief summary of the various aspects of John Donne and Andrew Marvell's poetry that can be explored and analyzed deeply. Therefore, students are advised to examine the poems carefully in order to understand the poetic nature of their works, and human emotions such as love, and life that are discussed in their poetry. Concepts such as "The Metaphysical Poetry", "Love Poetry", and Conceit and Wit used in their poetry will be discussed in this unit. Students are advised to refer to scholarly articles and suitable study materials that will help them prepare better for the examination.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

John Donne is one of the most famous English metaphysical poets. He has also written sermons and devotional prose. John Donne's writing style is distinguished by abrupt openings, dislocations, argumentative structure, paradoxes, and images from a variety of fields that combine seemingly disparate things. These traits, along with his repeated spectacular or daily speech rhythms, tense syntax, and tough oratory, were a reaction to the smooth surface of conventional Elizabethan poetry as well as an ability to adapt to European baroque and expertise in a specific technique and methods into English.

Donne studied law at Lincoln's Inn (1592–1594) after spending some time

at Oxford (from 1584) and possibly Cambridge. His formal verse satires were written in the traditional English style. He also wrote many of his amatory poems in the 1590s. Most of them are dramatic monologues about love that range from cynical earthly realism to platonic idealism. It is more appropriate to think of them as revealing the extreme positions of carnal and divine love and trying to cast a positive light on matchmaking love. Between 1609 and 1610, he wrote an influential series of "Holy Sonnets" about illness, death, guilt, love, and forgiveness. He was also a member of Parliament.

3.2 JOHN DONNE AS A METAPHYSICAL POET

John Donne was the most well-known of the 17th-century metaphysical poets. George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Abraham Cowley, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, and others were among his contemporaries. Donne's knowledge of society is also expressed in his early poems. He used satire to point out the flaws in society. However, religion was Donne's most important subject. In his early career, he also wrote erotic poetry with unusual metaphors. His life has clearly influenced his poetry, and we can see references to his life in his poetry. It is also believed that the deaths of his wife and friends influenced his poetry style to be gloomy and sombre.

Characteristics of John Donne's poetry:

Because of the uniqueness of his poetry and his search for answers, John Donne's poetry is metaphysical. His poetry is characterised by a vague wit that assumes improbable conceits in general. His poems' themes include paradoxes; fidelity; religion; death and the afterlife; physical and spiritual love; humanity's interconnectedness; and so on. Let us look at the unique and intriguing characteristics of Donne's poetry.

Donne was a thinker, and his poetry was filled with original and novel ideas. In his poems, he would pose questions that most people would not consider, encouraging the reader to think about them. Because Donne's poetry introduced so many new philosophical ideas, ambiguity has become a defining feature of his work. There is no apparent right or wrong; all he does is provide an idea, and it is up to the reader to decide how he interprets it. As a result, the majority of his poetry is lost. One must read his writings many times to comprehend his subject matter. As metaphysical poetry is grounded in wit, so Donne's poetry is also characterised by wit. In metaphysical poetry, he is known as the Monarch of Wit. His wit spans the spectrum from seriousness to fun. His wit in poetry was also excellent thanks to his intellectual ability, syllogism, exaggeration, and irony.

John Donne's poetry is full of conceit. Conceit is the comparison of the most unlikely of things. In his poetry, John Donne compares two lovers to the two opposite ends of a compass. He claimed in his poem 'The Sun Rising' that he could eclipse the Sun as if he were a star. In his 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning ', he writes that parting should be

joyful, not sad, and that death should be peaceful. Despite the fact that death is viewed as wicked, he defied the quality principle by claiming that death brings people peace.

As we've seen, John Donne is a master of metaphysical poetry. In addition to the topics he chose for his poetry, he also incorporated imagery, irony, and far-fetched thoughts. Through poetry, he found himself as well as the answers to his questions. For him, poetry is more of a voyage of love, self-discovery, understanding, and spirituality. There are many works by John Donne, such as Sweetest Love, The Dream, The Ecstasy, Batter my heart, Three Person'd God, No Man is an Island, The Canonization, The Good Morrow, and others. Learners should read the above-mentioned poems by Donne to gain a better understanding of his poetry abilities.

3.3 JOHN DONNE AS A LOVE POET

John Donne's love poetry reflects his early life experiences. As a reader of "Love Poems," we are privy to the poet's intimate experiences, sensations, and emotions. However, Donne exaggerates his feelings in many sonnets. Somewhere, he mentions his beloved's company; somewhere, he prefers love to anything else in life; and somewhere, he mentions women's unfaithfulness. He ultimately changed his mind, though. His "Divine Poems" collection reflects spirituality. Despite his lack of technical development as a love poet, John Donne was lyrically mature enough to hold the attention of his audience. Aside from that, John Donne's "Love Poems" are universally applicable, with each poem putting the spotlight on love relationships from the viewpoint of a man.

Features of Donne's Love Poetry:

Donne's poetry has certain characteristics that set him apart from other poets of his time. Each poem describes the poet's personality and autobiography, as he was a realist poet. We can see that he has defied tradition and employed a range of lyrical methods. In this aspect, deception and hyperbole stand out. Furthermore, the following are the main characteristics of John Donne's "Love Poetry." As a love poet, John Donne's love poems reveal three layers.

The cynical attitude:

The most prominent among them is the cynical strain. In any case, his cynicism is inextricably linked to infidelity among women. He makes argument after argument in "Go and Catch a Falling Star" to show that female loyalty is extremely rare. A faithful girl is impossible to find; even if he does, the situation will have changed by the time the poet reaches her. John Donne had a vast understanding of life, but his experience was primarily centered around relationships with people. When his relationship doesn't work out or his beloved betrays him, he becomes pessimistic. As a result, in John Donne's love poetry, cynicism is an important strain.

Conjugal Love Strain:

Love brings serenity and tranquilly to John Donne. Instead of seeing it as a task, he sees it as a passion. A number of John Donne poems feature this train. For example, both "Valediction: Of Weeping" and "Valediction: Forbidden Mourning" are about spiritual calm. As a love poet, John Donne has demonstrated that love is an essential aspect of existence and that life would be empty and meaningless without it. He finds peace and serenity whenever he thinks of his sweetheart. He'll never underestimate her or the moments they shared. As a result, the conjugal love strain is seen in his collections of poems.

The Platonic Strain is the last but most important love strain. Whether formed before or after marriage, love is love. Spirituality is ever-present. This strain was created by Donne, the author of "Divine Poems." For example, the poet considers love to be the best thing on the planet in "The Sun Rising." In "Canonization," he considers love to be a sacred desire. As a result, the platonic strain stands in direct opposition to the cynical strain. John Donne has a wide range of moods in addition to the strains. Each poem has its own mood and strain. John Donne is known as the best unorthodox love poet of all time because of the strains and moods in his poetry.

John Donne as a poet of realism:

The traditional poems, which were about fairies and were translated from other languages, were not unique. John Donne and Ben Jonson both questioned the tradition. They wrote poetry that was based on their own experiences. Donne's poetry is also the most practical in nature.

Donne never praised the beauty of women, despite the fact that he spoke about them. In no way did he comment on the hair or lips of his beloved. He is a lover who is more concerned with feelings than with physical appearances. For him, love is about more than just sex. When he speaks of any part of her beloved's body, he simply expresses its allure.

Philosophy limited to love:

Donne's philosophy is limited to love. He has solely addressed the subject of love in his poetry. John Donne's love poetry isn't just about love philosophy; his "Divine Poems" are also about love. These poems, on the other hand, express love for the Church and the Divine. In love poems, he is usually paired with his wife Anne Moore.

Variety of emotions:

Emotions are at the heart of both songs and sonnets. John Donne is the best poet of all time because of his wide range of emotions; no other writer or poet before him has had such a diverse range of emotions. He's had a lot of love affairs as well.

To summarise, John Donne has both studied and lived love. He does not give advice to his readers, but rather tells them how it is. He lets the reader decide whether he is correct or not. Donne's vitality is based on his ability

to express emotions as well as his love ethic. John Donne is the greatest metaphysical love poet in the history of English literature. He is unique; he is overwhelming. Donne's love poetry expresses a broader range of emotions than Elizabethan love poetry. His imagery, diction, and versification are all unique.

3.4 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF "THE CANONIZATION"

The poem "The Canonization," which was first published in 1633, is regarded as exemplifying Donne's wit and irony. In the poem, John Donne, in the person of the speaker, muses on the possibility of being "canonised." Of course, he's using the term religiously, but in a mischievous way by suggesting that he and his lover will be raised to the level of saints because they love as they do. He's playful, witty, and a little sacrilegious. The tone is provocative from the start.

"For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,

Or chide my palsy, or my gout,"

At the beginning of the poem, the poet asks that his critics leave him alone so he can enjoy himself. The complainer should go elsewhere because love does not harm anyone. They are not sinking ships or causing floods, they're not delaying spring or killing others, and they're not supporting wars or lawsuits. The poet and his beloved take risks together, and their love is unified. They are like candles that will burn out on their own, but like the legendary Phoenix, they must be reborn together in a fire. On the other hand, their love may be forever remembered, canonised, and used as a prototype for all other love in the world.

In "The Canonization," Donne establishes a five-stanza argument to explain the purity and force of his love for another. The word "love" opens and concludes each stanza.

"Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?

What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?

Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?

When did my colds a forward spring remove?

When did the heats which my veins fill

Add one more to the plaguy bill?

Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still

Litigious men, which quarrels move,

Though she and I do love."

The title leads the reader to believe that the poem is about saints and sacred practices, but the first few lines sound more like spoken lines. "For

God's sake, hold your tongue" is practically blasphemous when it is followed by the sacred title. The reader has deduced by the end of the poem that "canonization" refers to the poet's love being accepted into the canon of true love. Therefore, they become the standard by which others judge their love. This hyperbole, as is customary, compels the reader to seek a spiritual or philosophical meaning inside the poem, and as was customary, this may lead us to conclude that Donne lays out divine love as the only realistic model for all others. In the first stanza, the poet expresses his displeasure with his adversary's lack of knowledge.

In the second stanza, the speaker gets involved in a series of silent reflections on what their love may have affected. He ponders who might have been harmed by their love. He begins by asking a series of questions in an attempt to find a solution. He wonders if his silent sighs or tears of love have drowned any merchant ship and caused someone's loss. He wonders if his tears flooded anyone's arable land. He wonders if his colds, caused by weeping in love, dared to obliterate the season of spring from the calendar. He wonders if the heat of passion coursing through his veins has ever caused a plague disease to break out. The Great Plague of London, also known as the bubonic plague, was thought to have been caused by the unusually warm weather that year. It caused rats aboard a ship to emerge and litter London's streets. The poet believes that soldiers, lawyers, and quarrelsome men are interested in wars because they see a profit in it. But the narrator and his beloved are only concerned with love. Thus, Donne uses commerce, agriculture, climate, diseases, and various occupations to explain the intensity of his love. These are excellent examples of metaphysical conceit.

"Call us what you will, we are made such by love;

Call her one, me another fly,

We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,"

The poet mentions the strangeness of their love in the third stanza. The poet becomes lackadaisical and declares that he is willing to be called by any name by others because he and his beloved are formed in this way by love. He indicates naming himself a fly and his beloved another. They circle around like insects, hoping to perish in the candle flame. He refers to himself and his beloved as candles that melt in the heat of their love. He discovers an eagle and a dove in them at the same time. The eagle signifies masculinity and strength, while the dove represents feminine grace and selflessness. Finally, he declares that they are reminiscent of the enigmatic phoenix, which is believed to arise from its ashes every 2000 years. However, the speaker believes that their love is more enigmatic than the riddles posed by the mythical phoenix. And, like the phoenix, they die and rise again, becoming strange and mysterious as a result of their love.

"We can die by it, if not live by love,

And if unfit for tombs and hearse

Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;"

In the fourth stanza, the poet considers the possibility of immortalising their love. He claims that if he and his beloved cannot live their lives in love, at least they can die. And if their bodies were not properly buried, with tombs and hearses or a song of lament, they would make do with verses or poetry. If their love is not strong enough to be recorded in history or chronicle, they will find a place for it in sonnets, making it immortal. In the same way that an urn can hold the ashes of the dead instead of a half-acre plot of land, they will find a place in hymns and everyone will gather to announce that they have been canonised for their love. As previously stated, canonization is the formal process by which one achieves sainthood. Thus, by referring to themselves as saints in love, the speaker conveys a sense of sanctity and religiousness.

The final stanza summarises all of the poet's concerns raised in the preceding stanzas. In a cheerful attitude, the speaker declares that they will be remembered for their love by future generations. People will honour them for their selfless love. They would sing praises to the poet and his beloved as if their love was a hermitage for each other—such as the enlightenment in their love. People would be disappointed if their love possessed none of the characteristics of the speaker's and his beloved's love. They would remember the peaceful nature of the speaker's love and bemoan their own love, which had turned horrifying. Their love was so great that it reduced the soul and spirit of the world into each other's eyes (the speaker's and the beloved's), and they expressed each other's love like reflectors. Their great love illustrated them as saints, and everyone began to idolise them. Countries, towns, courts, and important places now seek a design, a pattern of their love

Countries, towns, courts: beg from above

A pattern of your love!"

The final stanza expresses the poet's idea of future vindication over the critic. The poet expects the rest of the world to "invoke" him and his beloved in the same way that Christians do in their prayers. During this longer-term vision, the lovers' mysticism has grown, and they have achieved canonization. The world appears to the lovers as they appear in each other's sight, and this describes the trend of love that the world can follow.

3.5 ANDREW MARVEL

Andrew Marvell (1621–1678), an English poet and statesman who is widely regarded as one of the twentieth century's most admired poets, wrote sensuous, witty, beautiful, and at times impassioned lyric poetry. If Andrew Marvell had not been a well-known poet in his own right, he might only be regarded as a fascinating transitional figure. His writing is heavily influenced by John Donne and the metaphysical school but also shares the "tribe of Ben," formal grace and smoothness, with the poets who gathered around the great Ben Jonson to form the Cavalier school. He

was also a disciple and follower of John Milton, whose deep and extensive involvement with Renaissance metaphysical, lyrical, and doctrinal cultures can be found in his own work. He, like Milton, wrote a lot of poetry about current political issues, and he wrote verse satire in the style of John Dryden, who is widely regarded as the spirit of a new age.

On March 31, 1621, Marvell was born in the Yorkshire town of Winestead-in-Holderness. His father, a Calvinistic Anglican clergyman, was appointed master of the Charterhouse, an almshouse, and preacher at Holy Trinity Church in Hull, where the poet's mother died in 1638 and his father in 1641. Though he expressed royalist inclinations in poems published between 1645 and 1649, Marvell appears to have been drawn to Oliver Cromwell's powerful personality, writing "A Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" in 1650. This poem, often regarded as a masterwork of political poetry, has sparked debate about the poet's unconditional adoration of the Puritan general's military brutality.

In 1653, Milton tried unsuccessfully to get Marvell appointed as Cromwell's Latin secretary (a position similar to that of secretary of state); instead, Marvell became tutor to a young ward called William Dutton. He started tutoring at Eton in the home of a man who had visited Bermuda and may have been the inspiration for the lovely "Bermudas," in which a tropical island is presented as a Puritan paradise. After that, his tutoring duties took him to France.

Marvell, unlike the turbulent Milton, was a peaceful civil servant rather than an impassioned and passionately dedicated politician. He spent the last years of his life serving the government, penning political satire in poems and writing prose on current events.

In the 16th century, Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress" was regarded as "obscene and obscure" due to the poem's message and the church's control over the people. Marvell is regarded as a carpe diem writer and is often referred to as a metaphysical poet. Carpe diem refers to a writing style that inspires readers to "seize the day" as a result of the fact that life is short; metaphysical poets use several unique metaphors and are highly regarded for their originality. Marvell was not recognised for his unique but great poetry until after his death, when he changed the meaning of "Metaphysical Poet." Marvell achieved a number of achievements; his poems typically had a distinctive style and theme for his time, and his poetry includes a thorough analysis. His poems could be great for someone who enjoys love poems with deep meaning.

In many of his poems, Andrew Marvell is inspired by nature. In his one collection of poems, Andrew Marvell portrays himself as an ardent nature lover. The Garden, On a drop of dew, Bermudas The picture of little etc. These poems demonstrate his minute and loving observation of nature's beauty. Nature does, in fact, cast a spell on him. Nature's allure is absolutely breathtaking to him, and he succumbs to her allure with the utmost willfulness and joy.

On August 16, 1678, while still a bachelor, he died of a fever exacerbated by medical treatment. His housekeeper published Andrew Marvell's

Poems in 1681, which established his fame as a poet.

3.6 A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE RESOLVED SOUL AND CREATED PLEASURE

Several of Marvell's poems, most notably 'A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure," is about the soul and its virtues. This poem depicts a person's struggle between spiritual and material advantages and disadvantages through a dialogue between the body and the soul. The body and the soul talk about how they don't need each other; how the body despises control; and how the soul despises the ordinary body's captivity. The poem opens with the following lines:

“Courage, my Soul, now learn to wield
The weight of thine immortal shield.
Close on thy head thy helmet bright.
Balance thy sword against the fight.
See where an army, strong as fair,
With silken banners spreads the air.
Now, if thou be’st that thing divine,
In this day’s combat let it shine:
And show that Nature wants an art
To conquer one resolvèd heart.”

The tone of this poem is abrasive and depressing. It is evident throughout the poem, as the body and soul are unhappy together and troubled by their position. It's written in their dialogue with special words like "Tortur'd" and "destroys," and it's written with amazing rhyme schemes and excellent descriptions. Each line describes the body and soul's enmity towards one another, and the author's word choice is demonstrated. "[...]ill Spirit it possest," for example, is the body defining the soul by referring to it as a possessive spirit, which makes it appear domineering and unnatural. The human soul is presented as the noble hero as the main focus of the poem in 'A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure,' deflecting pleasure's try at urge in favour of the quest of its devotion to the spiritual world. Throughout the poem, there is war imagery, with the debate between the soul and pleasure referred to as "combat." This imagery emphasises the soul's place as a noble hero, as the chorus portrays the soul as a divine warrior with an "immortal shield," helmet, and sword.

The poem's imagery is quite powerful. "A soul hung up, as it were, in chains of Nerves, Arteries, and Veins," for example, demonstrates that the soul feels confined in the body and offers the reader the image of shackles composed of human innards. It's not a pretty image, and it conveys the idea that the body is harsh. Andrew Marvell has a distinct style that follows a pattern. Each dialogue part is divided into ten lines with a

repeated rhyme pattern that gives the text a musical impact when read aloud. All in all, the body and soul are usually portrayed as a cooperative alliance, but this poetry portrays them as opponents, illustrating the difficulties of human existence. The poet is attempting to illuminate the harmful effects of the substantial living body and surreal consciousness on one another. In Marvell's poetry, the soul is depicted as a pure being with a strong devotion to the heavens. This is emphasised by its separation from and refusal of the impure and momentary material world, which differs from the higher pursuit of a soul seeking redemption. Since there are dissenting portrayals of the soul's prominent involvement as a hero in 'A Dialogue between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure' and a silent role as the weak and vulnerable dew in his other poem 'On a Drop of Dew,' both views finally emphasise the soul's purity and attachment to heaven, and its final destination as the desired return to the 'pure' heavens.

Furthermore, the poet effectively employs personification and paradox to fully develop the poem. He gives the Body and Soul personalities throughout the poem to stress the tensions between spirituality and human nature by enabling them to converse and debate. A paradox appears several times in his writing. "Disease, but worse, the Cure" or "Shipwrackt into Health Again" are examples of phrases stated by the soul to indicate how it wants to be free of the body through death but must maintain the body. "Build me up for Sin so fit." illustrates how the body would simply have instincts without the soul, with no good and bad, right and wrong. This poem is wonderful and completely amazing, and it will surely please the readers.

3.7 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit, we have defined and discussed the introduction to the poets, John Donne and Andrew Marvell, and their poems, The Canonization and "A Dialogue between The Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure." Throughout the course of this unit, we have discussed the summary and analysis of the above poems as well as some of the major characteristics of these poems. We have also discussed some of the important themes in their poems, such as love and life, and concepts such as "The Metaphysical Poetry", "Love Poetry", and "Conceit and Wit" used in their poetry. The fundamental glimpses of the structure of metaphysical poetry help to understand the poem, The Canonization, and "A Dialogue between The Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure," and the study of these poems help the student understand the importance of metaphysical poetry in the tradition of poetry.

3.8 QUESTIONS

- What is your estimate of Donne as a love poet?
- John Donne as a metaphysical poet.
- Comment on the central theme of The Canonization.

- Write an essay on Andrew Marvell as a poet.
- Write a detailed note on the themes in Andrew Marvell's A Dialogue between The Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure.
- Comment on the features of Donne's love poetry.
- John Donne is called the 'Poet of Realism'. Explain with reference to his poems.

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MODULE - II

4

CRITICAL STUDY OF JOHN MILTON'S PARADISE LOST (BOOK II)

Unit Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we have provided a concise summary of the various aspects of the epic Paradise Lost and a detailed summary of Book II that can be explored and analyzed deeply. Therefore, students are advised to examine the text carefully in order to understand the significance of Book II in the epic, critical evaluation, and themes such as "Hierarchy and Order," "Disobedience and Revolt," "Sin and Innocence," and other materials that will help them prepare better for the examination.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

After William Shakespeare, John Milton is regarded as the most important English poet, pamphleteer, and historian. He was born on December 9, 1608, in London, England, and died on November 8, 1674. Milton's Paradise Lost is widely regarded as the greatest English epic poem ever written. Along with Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes, it establishes Milton's place as one of the greatest English poets. Milton's written works advocated for the overthrow of the Church of England and the execution of Charles I.

From the start of the English Civil Wars in 1642 to long after Charles II's reinstatement as king in 1660, he promoted a political philosophy that condemned tyranny and state-sanctioned religion in all of his works. He influenced the American and French revolutions as well as the civil wars and interregnum. In his theological writings, he promoted religious tolerance for dissidents, as well as the supremacy of Scripture as a guide in

matters of faith. Milton became the voice of the English Commonwealth after 1649 as a civil servant, handling the government's international correspondence and defending it against polemical attacks from abroad.

According to his friend Florentine, whom he befriended during his travels abroad in 1638–39, Milton was educated in Latin and Greek there, and later learned other languages, particularly Italian, in which he wrote several sonnets and spoke as fluently as a native Italian. Milton despised Cambridge in general, possibly because their studies there emphasised Scholasticism, which he thought suffocated the imagination. Milton also complained about a lack of relationship with fellow students in communication with Alexander Gill, a former tutor at St. Paul's School. Because of his lovely complexion, delicate features, and auburn hair, he was labelled "Lady of Christ's College." Despite this, Milton achieved academic success.

He wrote the Latin elegy "Epitaphium Damonis" ("Damon's Epitaph") in memory of Diodati.

4.2 JOHN MILTON AS AN EPIC POET

Milton was an English poet and pamphleteer. He studied Latin, Italian, and English at the University of Cambridge, where he penned the companion poems "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." In his private study, he wrote the masque Comus and the elegy "Lycidas," and he toured Europe, splurging a greater amount of time in Italy. He spent much of 1641–60 pamphleteering for civil and religious liberty and serving in Oliver Cromwell's government, concerned with the republican cause in England. His best-known prose can be found in the pamphlets Areopagitica, on freedom of Press as well as of Education (both in 1644). He also wrote anti-monarchy and anti-Church of England pamphlets, as well as pamphlets on divorce. In 1651, he became blind and began attempting to dictate his works. He was imprisoned as a strong defender of the Commonwealth after the Restoration but was soon released.

Milton's representation of Satan in Paradise Lost is considered a great portrayal of evil, and according to some critics, Milton took Satan's side and tried to present Satan in a positive light. His epic is widely regarded as the best epic poem in English, and he described the Fall of Man using blank verse and reworking classical epic patterns. Samson Agonistes (1671), a dramatic poem in which the Old Testament hero overcomes self-pity and despair to become God's defender, is a shorter epic in which Christ defeats Satan the tempter. After William Shakespeare, Milton is widely regarded as the finest English poet.

4.3 PARADISE LOST AS AN EPIC

In its strictest sense, the term epic refers to works that include the following elements: a long verse narrative on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style, and centred on a heroic or quasi-divine figure whose actions determine the fate of a tribe, a nation, or (in the case of

John Milton's Paradise Lost), the human race. Although any poem can be heroic, the epic is distinguished from other heroic stories by its size and style. To put it simply, epics are quite long and written in a very elevated style.

Traditional epic and literary epic are two styles of epic. Conventional epics, also recognised as folk epics or primary epics, have been written versions of oral lyrics composed during times of war about a tribal or national hero. The early Homeric epics, also known as main epics, were delivered orally by bards and included ritualistic displays. The Greeks assigned Homer's Iliad and Odyssey to him, as well as the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf, the French Chanson de Roland and the Spanish Poema del Cid in the twelfth century, and the thirteenth-century German epic Nibelungenlied. The Aeneid, a Latin poem by Virgil, later served as a major literary epic model for Milton's Paradise Lost.

John Keats' fragmented epic Hyperion was inspired by Paradise Lost. While Aristotle placed the epic second only to tragedy, many Renaissance critics ranked it first among all genres. The literary epic, according to M.H. Abrahams, is the most impressive of poetic endeavours, mandating a poet's expertise, creativeness, and technique to maintain the magnitude, greatness, and power of a poem that tries to embrace the world of its day and a massive portion of its learning.

John Milton wrote the epic poem Paradise Lost in the year 1667. Milton's Paradise Lost, like other Renaissance poems, includes many diverse thematic and structural aspects from a wide range of literary genres and types. It also features a plethora of precise allusions to important literary writings and works. In her essay, 'The Genres of Paradise Lost," Barbara Kiefer Lewalski points out that the genres of Paradise Lost share structural similarities with Virgil's Aeneid and provide a Christian interpretation of classical heroism.

While reading, it appears that paradise lost borrows many key components from other epics, such as a tragic epic theme from Homer's Iliad, Satan's wiles and craft from Odyssey, and many features of the struggle between good and evil angels from Hesiod's Theogeny. Milton appears to have been well-versed in the Homeric epics of the Iliad and Odyssey, as well as Virgil's Aeneid. Milton was also familiar with Dante's Divine Comedy, which, while not exactly an epic, possesses many epic qualities. As a result, Milton approached the epic form with the expected norms, but he also had his own epic in mind. In Paradise Lost, Milton created a wide range of literary forms and genres to complement the Renaissance concept of epic as a collection of subjects, forms, and styles. The distinct portrayals of Paradise, the talks between the unfallen Adam and Eve, and their joyous petitions to God in the Garden all feature lyric poetry with a blend of the pastoral mode.

The theme of Paradise Lost revolves around common epic subjects like war, nationalism, empire, and origin stories; It starts in the middle of the end, or in the middle of the action, or of the medias res. Although Satan is

already in Hell when Paradise Lost begins, all of the events leading up to that point are recounted in Books 5 and 6. Similarly, the world, Adam, and Eve are created sometime between Satan's fall and the realisation of his revenge schemes (Books 1-2), although the creation is portrayed in Books 7 and 8. To put it another way, the poem starts in the middle of the story and then goes back to fill in the nuances.

It is about heavenly and earthly beings and their relationships, and it employs tropes such as epic similes, lists of people and locations, and muse invocations. Milton begins by articulating his argument, or epic topic, before addressing his epic inquiry to the muse. It has a large scale setting. Because it takes place in heaven, on earth, in hell, and in the cosmic space between, the scope of Paradise Lost is the entire universe.

The deity and other supernatural beings, such as the Olympian gods in Homer and Jehovah, Christ, and the angels in Paradise Lost, play significant roles in theis epics.In the neoclassical period, these supernatural agents were referred to as machinery since they were part of the epic's literary conceits. An epic poem is a celebratory production that is told in a manner that is expressly detached from regular speech and endowed with the heroic theme and the grandeur and decorum of architectural style.

As a result, we find Milton's magnificent style in Paradise Lost, including his formal diction and intricate and stylized syntax, which are heavily influenced by Latin poetry, his sonorous lists of names and wide-ranging allusions, and his mimicry of Homer's epic similes and epithets. Despite the similarities, there are several aspects of Milton's Paradise Lost that do not adhere to the "literary epic" standards. The hero is a national or perhaps cosmic figure of tremendous importance.

Critics and writers such as William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley regarded Satan as the hero of Paradise Lost. However, due to the challenges linked to depicting Satan as a hero, modern critics have rejected this notion. As a result, Adam is the other prospect. Milton's employment of several literary forms and genres illustrates the versatility of his poetic abilities. No poet has ever been able to utilise the resources to such an extent. Milton creates a masterwork called Paradise Lost by adopting certain old epic conventions while also introducing some of the characteristics himself.

4.4 PARADISE LOST BOOK II

Toward the beginning of Book II, Satan sits on his throne like a Middle Eastern emperor and addresses the assembled devils on the best course of action. From a splendid golden throne, he addresses his armies. He claims that Heaven is not yet lost to them and that they can reclaim it by returning to battle. He applauds the rebellious angels' "firm agreement" and apparent democratic status. He then invites them to debate whether they should openly or secretly attack God. Moloch, one of the war's deadliest fighters, is the first to speak. Moloch argues that nothing – not even ultimate

annihilation – could be worse than the demons' current plight in Hell, therefore They have little to lose by encountering the Torturer and placing Hell's weapons to the test.

They might disturb Heaven's peace and injure God on his throne, allowing them to exact revenge "if not victory." Belial, the next voice, was always charming and articulate, but his words ring hollow even in Heaven. He disputes Moloch's warning and suggests that if they fight him again, God can punish them even more severely. Belial creates the best of the situation by indicating that the devils are no longer chained to the lake of fire, but rather are sitting and conversing happily. Belial describes a Hell that is many times worse than the one he describes, and in response, he advises that the devils bow to "The Victor's will." He also suggests that if they don't assault, God's wrath will gradually subside, reducing the devils' misery. Belial thereby tries to protect his hostility of Heaven, but he advises them to do nothing to avoid further anguish. As Milton points out, this is "ignoble ease and peaceful sloth, / Not peace."

Following that, Mammon discusses how unwise it would be to give up to God and try to restore to Paradise. Now that they have experienced revolt and freedom, they will never again bow to God's rulership and sang "Forced hallelujahs," "in worship paid / To whom we hate." Similarly, Mammon disregards fighting as futile, implying that the devils calmly broaden their freedom in their new domain of Hell. He advises them to dig even deeper into the riches and minerals they've found, and to work diligently to build a world and community that surpasses Heaven. When Mammon has finished talking, the devil applauds, clearly favouring his statement over the others. They are all terrified of going to Hell, as well as "thunder and the sword of Michael" if they return to battle. The gathering goes reverently silent as Beelzebub rises to speak. Beelzebub concurs that liberty in Hell is preferential to slave labour in Heaven, but warns that they are not independent here - they are God's "captive multitude."

Then Beelzebub proposes an "easier enterprise," returning to Satan's rumour that God was about to build a new world. This entire world will be inhabited by a race known as "man," who will be poorer than angels but more adored by God. According to Beelzebub, the demons find this new world and either deprave or dismantle it, exacting vengeance on God by ruining his joy and compelling him to "abolish his own works."

According to Milton, Satan came up with the concept first since he is the "author of all evil," yet God still intends to exploit the devils' wrath for his own glory. Beelzebub's proposition receives unanimous approval from the devils. Beelzebub reappears, this time explaining how they can find a better home in this new world of man and cure themselves of their horrible tribulations. He then asks for a volunteer to assist them in crossing the vast chasm and discovering the "happy isle" of the new world.

The devils are all afraid to go on this "dreadful voyage," therefore there is a long pause. Finally, Satan makes a hubristic offer, promising to overcome all of the evils of the journey in order to earn his place as Lord

of Hell. While Satan is away, the other devils are told to focus on making Hell "more tolerable" and healing their injuries. The other demons worship him and regard him as a god "equal to the highest in Heav'n." They applaud his courage in giving his life for the greater good. While people wage unending conflicts against each other, Milton wonders how even the devils of Hell could come to such a peaceful agreement.

The Pandaemonium's council is dismissed, and the devil leaves. Some devils rip the earth apart in a fit of rage, while others sing songs of their lost glory, or discuss the council or the fundamentals of destiny and free will, though it will certainly lead to "wandering mazes lost." Other devils travel through Hell, flying across the rivers Styx, Acheron, Cocytus, and Phlegethon, finding new horrors and forms of punishment along the way. Meanwhile, Satan flies towards Hell's gates and discovers that there are nine of them—three made of brass, three of iron, and three of adamantine.

Two bizarre guards stand in front of the gates. One has the upper half of a woman but the lower half of a snake, and the other has a pack of howling "Hell-hounds" around her waist. The other is a terrifying dark figure. Satan confronts the dark figure first, demanding passage through the gates. The figure mocks Satan's defeat in Heaven and orders him to return to his "punishment." The "snaky sorceress" gets involved, alluding to Satan as "father" and the dark figure as his "only son." Satan demands an explanation, and the woman-beast explains that she is Satan's daughter, having sprung forth from his skull in Heaven while Satan was still an angel, when he first conceived of rebelling against God. She was known as "Sin," and she was stunning at the time, quickly winning the hearts of the other angels. Satan grew "enamoured" with her and secretly impregnated her. Then the conflict in Heaven broke out, and Sin was flung into Hell with the other rebel angels, but she was handed a key to Hell's gates and told to keep them shut forever before she died. When Sin arrived in Hell, she gave birth to the evil force known as "Death." Death pursued Sin and raped her, and she gave birth to the dogs who now torture her, constantly tearing at her insides. She and Death are now protecting the gates alongside each other, hating each other but bound to meet.

Satan, who would seem to have neglected everything, now speaks kindlier to Sin and Death. He describes his process to reach and pollute God's new world, intending to bring Death and Sin with him once it's ready. Both Sin and Death appear to be delighted by this, especially Death, who appears to have a voracious hunger for new lives to take. Sin replicates her commands to guard the gates of Hell, but then says she likes to obey her father Satan over God, whom she disdains. She uses "the fatal key," the "sad instrument of all our woe," to open the gates.

The gates open and remain open since Sin lacks the ability to seal them. A vast pit of chaos and nightlies on the opposite side. All creation begins with these fundamental elements, and the atoms of "Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry" are continually at odds there. Chaos personified rules this world, the "dark materials" that God used to construct the creation. Satan spreads his wings and jumps into the void, but he plummets almost rapidly. He might

have gone down forever if a hot wind hadn't captured him and blown him up. Satan hears a massive cacophony of noise after flying over the strange, "boggy" landscape. When he gets close enough, he sees Chaos, his consort Night, and others like Chance, Confusion, and Discord. Satan describes them politely, requesting commands to Earth and promising to return it to its innate state of chaos, restoring Chaos' authority over it. Chaos acknowledges Satan and notifies him of Man's entire universe's place in the hopes that Satan will wreak "havoc, spoil, and ruin" there.

Satan advances, but his road becomes increasingly tough and perilous. Milton contrasts it to the journeys of Ulysses and the Argonauts but adds that Satan's journey was even more destructive. As "such was Heav'n's will," Sin and Death pursued him and started building a bridge from Hell to Earth. They build a wide and easy-to-cross bridge so that demons can quickly invade Earth and tempt mortal beings, and humans can easily be lured to Hell. As Satan gets closer to the new world, his journey becomes simpler, and he notices the distant light of Heaven. Humanity's entire universe is a little light in the vast darkness.

4.5 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF BOOK II

In this evil council, Milton satirises political disputes. Milton was an outspoken opponent of monarchs in England and a supporter of individual liberty; he wrote Paradise Lost while hiding from King Charles II. Instead of naming God, the devils use epithets to describe him. As part of their fall, the devils' previous, godlike names have been eliminated from Heaven, proving the strength of names in Paradise Lost. The Devils' Dispute, like much of politics in Milton's perspective, is forced to be a choice between multiple evils. He believed that God, he believed, was the only legitimate sovereign, and every human authority was necessarily partial. Belial is the embodiment of the clever politician, yet Milton uses him to demonstrate how political power corrupts, and how religious and political leaders mislead the people or do evil things in the name of betterment. This "debate" between the devils is a farce, as Satan has already made up his mind and is only allowing his servants to engage in democratic games.

In the shifting world of Hell, everything is relative, and Belial sensibly suggests that an omnipotent God can always punish you worse. One of the deadly sins is sloth, and Milton points out that Belial's proposal is not to make peace with God, but rather to be lazy and escape punishment. Even if they understand that they have been defeated, Mammon reflects Satan's thoughts that the devils are still too proud to bow to God. By presenting the devils' critiques of God first, Milton "tempts" the reader into expressing sympathy with the demons and figuring God despotic, necessitating "forced hallelujahs." The dilemma is whether Milton will subsequently "justify God" in response to these accusations, or whether his God will remain rigid and unsympathetic. Even though the devil's army is terrifying and massive, Milton reminds us that they are all terrified of Heaven's army, which is considerably more powerful. Here, Beelzebub serves as Satan's voice, maintaining the illusion of a fair political debate.

Satan's main argument against God is that God limits his freedom, which is related to the concepts of free choice and predestination.

The proposal that will lead to the Fall of Man and the poem's primary plot is ultimately made by Satan (through Beelzebub). Even after their defeat, the devils refuse to yield to God and insist on destroying his creation and bringing evil out of good, thus continuing their transgression (and hence their punishment). Because God is eternal, he can see these schemes coming and will look further ahead to make good out of them. The devils, like Eve, fall prey to Satan's machinations without even recognising it. This moment also becomes a parody of a heavenly scene in the following book, in which the Son or Jesus Christ, out of love for humanity, volunteers to die for them. As a consequence, Satan provides to "sacrifice" himself for the benefit of the other demons, putting his life to the test to cross the chasm and contaminate Earth. The devils continue to wish for a better abode, unaware that they are carrying their pain with them.

Hell is a horrific reflection of Heaven, where Satan is revered as a selfless, heroic God. To further lampoon the political injustices he perceives in the world, Milton mockingly celebrates the devils' agreement. After that, Milton satirises intellectual disputes. The "maze" is a recurring motif in Milton's poem since he equates it with a pursuit of forbidden knowledge that leads nowhere. Accepting the information God has provided and without delving too deeply into philosophy or one of the lessons of Paradise Lost, is to live in simple obedience rather than educated guesses. The gates of Hell resemble the gates of Heaven, yet God appears to allow Satan to escape Hell in order for him to tempt Adam and Eve. These two creatures (revealed as Sin and Death) are both actual figures and symbolism in the poem.

The link between Satan, Sin, and Death represents a twisted Trinity as well as the notions themselves: Satan, the father of disobedience and revolt, gives birth to sin, and so all sin is the result of disobedience against God. The attraction of sin to people is frightening at first, but eventually beautiful and irresistible. The ultimate fate of sin is loneliness and misery, which is the result of all sin. Death is the spawn of sin, demonstrating Milton's claim that Death was not born of Earth, but rather was the result of disobedience (Satan). The unholy three of Satan, Sin, and Death is also a hideous reflection of the Holy Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – despite Milton's belief that the Spirit was not equal to the Father and Son.

God appears to facilitate Satan's escape and, as a result, humanity's temptation and fall, by providing Sin with the key to Hell. If God is all-powerful, nothing can happen against his will, but many wicked things do happen, then God must at least allow or arrange for this evil. Milton portrays chaotic matter as pre-existing before the universe, alongside God himself, in a departure from traditional Christian belief. Milton incorporates aspects of his time's science, such as the universe's elemental constitution, into his description of humanity and Heaven. Again, "chance" aids Satan, yet this must be tolerated by God by necessity.

Chaos is similarly represented as an enigmatic, hazy entity that opposes all of God's order and hierarchy. However, unlike Satan, Chaos is not God's personal opponent and is allowed to have his own domain of darkness and confusion. Despite his objection to all instructions, Chaos receives his position within God's system and does not try to overreach his limits in the same way that Satan does. Milton compares his epic to previous works, but it is larger and more grandiose. Satan is not only crossing treacherous waters, but also the wide chasm that separates Hell and Earth. Milton's bridge Sin and Death tries to explain the terrible pain caused by Adam and Eve's later disobedience. They not only violate God's senses, but they also allow these beasts to infect all living things on Earth. Milton moves his focus as he plans to portray Heaven, telling the story of Earth's triviality.

4.6 THEMES IN THE EPIC

Inheritance and Hierarchy:

As he depicts the "Fall of Man" and the dispute in Heaven, Milton devotes much of Paradise Lost mentioning the cosmic structure and order that these events hinder. According to his 17th-century cosmology, heaven is above, the earth is below, and hell and chaos are below. The most important hierarchy of Heaven inside this geographically organised world is that of God as supreme king, creator and ruler of the universe, and his "only begotten".

Innocence and Sin:

The portrayal of "original sin," the story of how evil infiltrated a world that began as God's perfect creation, is in Paradise Lost. For a Christian like Milton, sin is anything that violates God's laws, including activities that damage other people or disrupt the universe's hierarchy. Both God's Paradise of Good Angels and the original Paradise are pure regions free of sin and misery.

Disobedience and Revolt:

Because Paradise Lost is about mankind's fall and Satan's and his angels' rebellion, the plot and conflict are nearly exclusively based on acts of rebellion against God's universe's hierarchy. When Satan becomes jealous of God's high esteem for the Son, the "Fall" occurs. After that, Satan persuades a third of Heaven's angels to join him in rebellion, arguing that they should be treated as gods and not be forced to serve God.

4.7 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit, we have defined and discussed the introduction to the poet John Milton and the epic Paradise Lost. Throughout the course of this unit, we have discussed the plot as well as some of the major characters in the epic. We have also talked about the critical evaluation of Book II and its significance. We have also discussed some of the important themes in Book II of the epic, such as Inheritance and Hierarchy, Disobedience and Revolt, Sin and Innocence etc. The fundamental glimpses of the plot and

Characters help to understand the epic, Paradise Lost and the study of these themes help the student understand the thematic concerns of the epic.

4.8 QUESTIONS

1. Write a detailed note on the theme of exploitation via political power and influence in Paradise Lost Book II.
2. By employing bombastic diction and lofty narrative, Milton has employed a grandiose style in his poem. Explain with reference to Paradise Lost Book II.
3. Discuss Milton as an epic poet.
4. Write an essay on the epic poem Paradise Lost.
5. Describe how Milton portrayed the devil's side in Paradise Lost Book II.
6. Comment on the major themes in Paradise Lost Book II.

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5

CRITICAL STUDY OF ALEXANDER POPE'S ESSAY ON MAN (EPISTLE I) AND THOMAS GRAY'S "ELEGY WRITTEN IN COUNTRY CHURCHYARD"

Unit Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce Alexander Pope and Thomas Gray to the readers
- To analyze two important works of Pope and Gray namely Essay on Man and Elegy Written in Country Churchyard
- To study major themes in the said poems

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Alexander Pope was a renowned poet and satirist of the Augustan period. He is best known for his poems An Essay on Criticism (1711), The Rape of the Lock (1712–14), The Dunciad (1728), and An Essay on Man (1733–34). He is considered as the leading English poet of the early 18th century and a master of the heroic couplet. He is one of the most epigrammatic of all English authors and is best known for satirical and discursive poetry.

Pope's father was a wholesale dealer in linen merchant. He retired from business in the year of his Alexander's birth and in 1700 went to live at Binfield in Windsor Forest. The Pope family was Roman Catholics, and at Binfield they came to know several neighbouring Catholic families who were to play an important part in the poet's life. Pope's religion procured him some lifelong friends, notably the wealthy squire John Caryll (who persuaded him to write The Rape of the Lock, on an incident involving Caryll's relatives) and Martha Blount, to whom Pope addressed some of the most memorable of his poems and to whom he bequeathed most of his property. But his religion also precluded him from a formal course of education, since Catholics were not admitted to the universities. He was trained at home by Catholic priests for a short time and attended Catholic

schools at Twyford, near Winchester, and at Hyde Park Corner, London, but he was mainly self-educated. He was a precocious boy, eagerly reading Latin, Greek, French, and Italian, which he managed to teach himself, and an incessant scribbler, turning out verse upon verse in imitation of the poets he read. The best of these early writings are the "Ode on Solitude" and a paraphrase of St. Thomas à Kempis, both of which he claimed to have written at age 12.

5.3 TEXT OF THE POEM ESSAY ON MAN (EPISTLE I)

An Essay on Man: Epistle I:

To Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke

Awake, my St. John! leave all meaner things

To low ambition, and the pride of kings.

Let us (since life can little more supply

Than just to look about us and to die)

Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man;

A mighty maze! but not without a plan;

A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot;

Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.

Together let us beat this ample field,

Try what the open, what the covert yield;

The latent tracts, the giddy heights explore

Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;

Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,

And catch the manners living as they rise;

Laugh where we must, be candid where we can;

But vindicate the ways of God to man.

I.

Say first, of God above, or man below,

What can we reason, but from what we know?

Of man what see we, but his station here,

From which to reason, or to which refer?

Through worlds unnumber'd though the God be known,

'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
He, who through vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied being peoples ev'ry star,
May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.
But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
The strong connections, nice dependencies,
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Look'd through? or can a part contain the whole?

Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?

II.

Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find,
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less!
Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade?
Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove?

Of systems possible, if 'tis confest
That Wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must full or not coherent be,
And all that rises, rise in due degree;
Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain
There must be somewhere, such a rank as man:
And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong?

Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.
In human works, though labour'd on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
In God's, one single can its end produce;
Yet serves to second too some other use.
So man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.

When the proud steed shall know why man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains:
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's God:
Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend
His actions', passions', being's, use and end;
Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and why
This hour a slave, the next a deity.

Then say not man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;
Say rather, man's as perfect as he ought:
His knowledge measur'd to his state and place,
His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
The blest today is as completely so,
As who began a thousand years ago.

III.

Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state:

From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:
Or who could suffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed today,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n:
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore!
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest:
The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.

To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV.

Go, wiser thou! and, in thy scale of sense
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such,
Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If man alone engross not Heav'n's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the God of God.
In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of order, sins against th' Eternal Cause.

V.

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, " 'Tis for mine:
For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew,
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;

For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies."

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
"No, ('tis replied) the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;
Th' exceptions few; some change since all began:
And what created perfect?"—Why then man?
If the great end be human happiness,
Then Nature deviates; and can man do less?
As much that end a constant course requires
Of show'rs and sunshine, as of man's desires;
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?
Who knows but he, whose hand the lightning forms,
Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms,
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?
From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;
Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:
Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?
In both, to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind;

That never passion discompos'd the mind.
But ALL subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life.
The gen'ral order, since the whole began,
Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.

VI.

What would this man? Now upward will he soar,
And little less than angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all?
Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd;
Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;
All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
Is Heav'n unkind to man, and man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleas'd with nothing, if not bless'd with all?

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,
T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,

To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore?
Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
If nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still
The whisp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

VII.

Far as creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends:
Mark how it mounts, to man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass:
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
To that which warbles through the vernal wood:
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew:
How instinct varies in the grov'lling swine,
Compar'd, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine:
'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier;
For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance and reflection how allied;
What thin partitions sense from thought divide:
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass th' insuperable line!

Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one?

VIII.

See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high, progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being, which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect! what no eye can see,
No glass can reach! from infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing!—On superior pow'rs
Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:
From nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

And, if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to th' amazing whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall.
Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And nature tremble to the throne of God.
All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—Oh madness, pride, impiety!

IX.

What if the foot ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand to toil, aspir'd to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another, in this gen'ral frame:
Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,
The great directing Mind of All ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns;
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

X.

Cease then, nor order imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
Submit.—In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing pow'r,

Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.

All nature is but art, unknown to thee;

All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;

All discord, harmony, not understood;

All partial evil, universal good:

And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,

One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

5.3 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF AN ESSAY ON MAN: EPISTLE I

Summary:

The subtitle of the first epistle is "Of the Nature and State of Man, with Respect to the Universe," and this section deals with man's place in the cosmos. Pope argues that to justify God's ways to man must necessarily be to justify His ways in relation to all other things. God rules over the whole universe and has no special favorites, not man nor any other creature. By nature, the universe is an order of "strong connexions, nice dependencies, / Gradations just" (30-1). This order is, more specifically, a hierarchy of the "Vast chain of being" in which all of God's creations have a place (237). Man's place in the chain is below the angels but above birds and beasts. Any deviation from this order would result in cosmic destruction. Because the universe is so highly ordered, chance, as man understands it, does not exist. Chance is rather "direction, which thou canst not see" (290). Those things that man sees as disparate or unrelated are all "but parts of one stupendous whole, / Whose body nature is, and God the soul" (267-8). Thus every element of the universe has complete perfection according to God's purpose. Pope concludes the first epistle with the statement "Whatever is, is right," meaning that all is for the best and that everything happens according to God's plan, even though man may not be able to comprehend it (294).

Analysis:

Pope's first epistle seems to endorse a sort of fatalism, in which all things are fated. Everything happens for the best, and man should not presume to question God's greater design, which he necessarily cannot understand because he is a part of it. He further does not possess the intellectual capability to comprehend God's order outside of his own experience. These arguments certainly support a fatalistic world view. According to Pope's thesis, everything that exists plays a role in the divine plan. God thus has a specific intention for every element of His creation, which suggests that all things are fated. Pope, however, was always greatly distressed by charges of fatalism. As a proponent of the doctrine of free will, Pope's personal opinions seem at odds with his philosophical conclusions in the first epistle. Reconciling Pope's own views with his

fatalistic description of the universe represents an impossible task.

The first epistle of An Essay on Man is its most ambitious. Pope states that his task is to describe man's place in the "universal system" and to "vindicate the ways of God to man" (16). In the poem's prefatory address, Pope more specifically describes his intention to consider "man in the abstract, his Nature and his State, since, to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection of imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being." Pope's stated purpose of the poem further problematizes any critical reading of the first epistle. According to Pope's own conclusions, man's limited intellect can comprehend only a small portion of God's order and likewise can have knowledge of only half-truths. It therefore seems the height of hubris to presume to justify God's ways to man. His own philosophical conclusions make this impossible. As a mere component part of God's design and a member of the hierarchical middle state, Pope exists within God's design and therefore cannot perceive the greater logic of God's order. To do so would bring only misery: "The bliss of man [...] / Is, not to act of think beyond mankind" (189-90).

Though Pope's philosophical ambitions result in a rather incoherent epistle, the poem demonstrates a masterful use of the heroic couplet. Some of the most quoted lines from Pope's works actually appear in this poem. For example, the quotation "Hope springs eternal in the human breast: / Man never is, but always to be blest" appears in the problematic first epistle (95-6). Indeed, eighteenth-century critics saw An Essay on Man as a primarily poetic work despite its philosophical themes.

Thomas Gray: "Elegy Written in Country Churchyard":

Thomas Gray was an English poet whose "An Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard" is one of the best known of English lyric poems. Although his literary output was slight, he was the dominant poetic figure in the mid-18th century and a precursor of the Romantic movement.

Born into a prosperous but unhappy home, Gray was the sole survivor of 12 children of a harsh and violent father and a long-suffering mother, who operated a millinery business to educate him. A delicate and studious boy, he was sent to Eton in 1725 at the age of eight. There he formed a "Quadruple Alliance" with three other boys who liked poetry and classics and disliked rowdy sports and the Hogarthian manners of the period. They were Horace Walpole, the son of the prime minister; the precocious poet Richard West, who was closest to Gray; and Thomas Ashton. The style of life Gray developed at Eton, devoted to quiet study, the pleasures of the imagination, and a few understanding friends, was to persist for the rest of his years.

5.4 TEXT OF THE POEM ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard:

The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to These the fault,
If Memory o'er their Tomb no Trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery sooth the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;

Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our Ashes live their wonted Fires.

For thee, who mindful of the unhonoured Dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred Spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed Swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay,
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

The Epitaph:

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown.
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

5.5 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE POEM ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

Summary:

Gray's elegy like other elegies of Milton, Shelley, Tennyson or Arnold is also a song of lamentation and mourning. But it is objective mourning whereas in the elegies of other poets the mourning is too personal. Though written to commemorate gray's friend, Richard West, the poem expresses grief over death in general. But he reflects upon death, the sorrows of life, and the mysteries of human life with a touch of his personal melancholy. And he honors the potentially of great people who live and die in obscurity. In this context, Swinburne said "elegy as a poem of high perfection and universal appeal to the tenderest and noblest depths of human feeling", and remarked as an elegiac poet, gray holds for all ages, his unassailable and sovereign station.

In fact, due to the new form of the elegy and both its theme and poetic techniques, its popularity has transcended the limits of time and place. It deals with the theme of death and the transitory quality of all worldly glory and human achievements. It also deals with the lot of common men on this earth. These universally appealing themes contributed much to the enduring popularity of the poem. The melancholic note of the poem is in keeping with the poetic taste of Gray's age and it enhances its appeal.

It has been widely read and admired in all places and in all times. Grierson and Smith regard it as the most widely known poem of the 18th century along with Oliver Goldsmith's Deserted Village. And it is probably still the most popular and the best loved poem in the English language. It has been translated into a large number of languages like Greek, German, Hebrew,

Dutch, Spanish, Russian, Latin, Italian, Japanese etc.

Gray's elegy is the best representative of the impersonal class of elegies. Here the poet doesn't lament at the death of a particular person; he mourns in a general manner for the lot of man. It mourns the death not of great or famous people, but of common men. The poet sees a country churchyard at sunset, which impels him to meditate on the nature of human mortality.

He considers the fact that in death there is no difference between great and common people. He goes on to wonder if among the lowly people buried in the churchyard there had been any natural poets or politicians whose talent had simply never been discovered or nurtured. This thought leads him to praise the dead for the honest, simple lives that they lived.

Gray did not produce a great deal of poetry; the Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard however, has earned him a respected and a well-deserved spot in literary history. The poem was written at the end of the Augustan Age and at the beginning of the Romantic period, and the poem has characteristics associated with both literary periods. On the one hand, it has the ordered, balanced phrasing and rational sentiments of Neo-

classical poetry. On the other hand, it tends toward the emotionalism and individualism of the Romantic poets; most importantly, it idealizes and elevates the common man. He provided a bridge between the Neo-classical style of his time and the Romantic era of John Keats.

In this elegy, Gray shows a keen interest in the life of humble people and village craftsmen. These poor, and insignificant people who lie in the churchyard, have in death, become equal to the most famous and prosperous men of all times: death comes to all men. He is able to express how all must die, and it does not matter if one is rich or poor, a noble or a commoner, or a poet or a politician. He is also able to elevate the common man with the elegy as a tool and his own freedom in the use of word power and poetic style.

There is little originality or novelty of thought or sentiment expressed in the Elegy. It expresses the feeling for the common man, which everybody has. The poet's views about death as an inevitable fact of life are quite common. The presentation of the contrast between the destiny of the rich and the poor is based on conventional views. The thought about fame and obscurity, human ambition and pride are quite old too. The Elegy abounds in what Tennyson calls 'divine truisms that make us weep'. However, Gray has lent great force to these common thoughts and truisms through his unique expression and has done it so beautifully, that they have become universally appealing. The commonest man finds the Elegy echoing his own feelings and sentiments. The poem transcends the limits of time and place, and appeals to people everywhere and in all times.

Analysis:

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 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.

According to Douglas Bush "the Elegy is a mosaic of traditional motifs, classical and modern." The dominant theme of this poem is death. It deals with the death of the rude forefathers of the village, death as a common occurrence in the world and the anticipated death of humans which means a cessation of life's simple pleasures. The forefathers of the village are lying buried in the ordinary graves, beneath the rough alms and yew-trees. The graves are on the turf and very small. The ancestors of the villagers were buried long ago. Now they sleep forever in their decaying graves which look like heaps of earth only. Gray reflects not only on the untimely death of young people, but also on the death that comes after a normal life span. Gray talks of youth who might be the poet himself, or his friend West, in whose memory the poem has been written. In fact the shadow of death constantly hovers over the poem.

Gray's elegy begins with the creation of the late evening atmosphere of

gloom and melancholy, suitable to an elegy. The poet sits alone in the country churchyard. The darkness is increasing all around and the cattle are returning home for rest. The bell has tolled, the curfew hour is on, indicating the end of day's business. The moping owl, the bird of ill-omen, hoots. The whole poem is filled with images and phrases of despair. The description of the rustic poet also gives a gloomy picture of his life. Thus the pall of death dominates the poem.

In the third stanza of the elegy the poet describes, "Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower, the moping owl does to the moon complain," which demonstrates the night is approaching because owls come out in the darkness of night or death, it also signifies the wealthy people because of the mention of the 'ivy-mantled tower'. This undoubtedly and naturally demonstrates the death of the forefathers and the men being put to rest within their tombs. Also, the use of the term fore-fathers seems to indicate that these men were from various walks of life - farmers, politicians, fathers, from both classes, rich and poor.

The poet sees a country churchyard at sunset, which impels him to meditate on the nature of human mortality. The poem invokes the classical idea of memento mori, a Latin phrase which states plainly to all mankind, "Remember that you must die." The speaker considers the fact that in death, there is no difference between the great and the common people. He goes on to wonder if among the lowly people buried in the churchyard, had there been any natural poets or politicians, whose talents had simply never been discovered or nurtured. This thought leads him to praise the dead for the honest, simple lives that they lived.

Then in the fourth stanza, Gray uses the churchyard scene to invoke important images: the strength of the elms, death as symbolized by the graves and the comfort provided by the yews giving shade to the bodies that sleep. The poet begins by reflecting on the death of the humble and the lower class.

Gray has the ability to demonstrate the individual and the emotional issues behind death and dying, and also to elevate the common man. In stanza five, he expresses how these forefathers will no longer be roused from their lowly beds by the breeze of the morning, the swallow twittering, or the cock echoing. They are dead and gone forever. He then highlights the fact that it does not matter if one is rich or poor.

Gray's poem An Elegy Written in the Country Churchyard does not lament the death of a particular person, but feels for the lot of common man. It shows the critical situation of poor people and also the social and economic injustice happening in their lives. Gray very clearly expresses the fact and tells the living upper class people that ultimately it does not matter what glory they achieve, or how elaborate the eulogy upon their tombstones. Death is inevitable. It comes to all and at the end they will also die just like the poor.

It is not a record of personal loss, but is a collection of serious and painful reflections by the side of a village church-yard containing a number of

decaying graves. His mourning is not for the famous, the wealthy or the powerful, but for the ordinary people buried in the churchyard.

He wonders what they could have become and praises their simple and virtuous lifestyles. Dr. Samuel Johnson, who otherwise was a strong critic of Gray, said of this poem: “the churchyard abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo”. The poet’s sympathy for the low and the downtrodden is clearly brought out in the poem.

Gray's elegy isn't just about death, and it isn't just doom and gloom. It's about the fear of being forgotten after you're gone. Gray looks at the graves of common folks, and instead of just shrugging and figuring that their lives were not worth remembering, he takes the time to think about what made them tick. And apparently this poem hit a sympathetic chord within the eighteenth-century readers.

There is also a fact that through this poem Gray raised the voice of democratic sympathy much before the French or the American Revolution, aiming at the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity. He may be said to have inspired the democratic sentiments of Wordsworth who, much later, wrote about poor rustics like Michael, the leech gatherer and the wagoner. Gray often gets interpreted as a kind of turning point from the more formal poetry of the 18th century, with its emphasis on rich and famous people, to the more loose, free-form poetry of the Romantics, which focused more on everyday folks.

The later Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley was an admirer of the poem and influenced by it, as was Thomas Hardy, who knew the poem by heart. At the end of the century, Matthew Arnold, in his 1881 collection of critical writings, said, “The Elegy pleased; it could not but please: but Gray's poetry, on the whole, astonished his contemporaries at first more than it pleased them; it was so unfamiliar, so unlike the sort of poetry in vogue.” In 1882, Edmund Gosse analyzed the reception of Gray's poem: “It is curious to reflect upon the modest and careless mode in which that poem was first circulated which was destined to enjoy and to retain a higher reputation in literature than any other English poem perhaps than any other poem of the world written between Milton and Wordsworth." An anonymous review of Gray in the 12th December 1896 issue, the Academy claimed that "Gray's 'Elegy' and Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village' shine forth as the two human poems in a century of artifice.”

This elegy presents a faithful account of the human condition on this earth, and if that condition turns out to be gloomy, Gray is not to be blamed for this. To him goes the credit for pointing out not only the obscurity of life of the poor, but also their good luck in having escaped, through death, the acts of cruelty and violence that they might have committed had they lived longer.

An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard moves from a meditation in a particular place upon the graves of the poor, to a reflection on the mortality of all humankind and on some of the benefits of being

constrained by poverty. The poem alludes to the wish of all people not to die and to the ways in which each is remembered after death. Gray concludes by imagining his own death and how he hopes to be remembered. He finally concludes that he wants the same as the common, ordinary people he has written about.

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MODULE - III

6

CRITICAL STUDY OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH: "RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE" AND P.B. SHELLEY'S "ODE TO THE WEST WIND"

Unit Structure

6.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce William Wordsworth and P.B. Shelley to the readers.
- To critically analyse William Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence" and P.B. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind"

6.1 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH: "RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE"

Introduction:

"Resolution and Independence" is a lyric poem by the English Romantic poet William Wordsworth. It was composed in 1802 and published in 1807 in Poems in Two Volumes. The poem contains twenty stanzas written in modified rhyme royal, and describes Wordsworth's encounter with a leech-gatherer near his home in the Lake District of England.

'Resolution and Independence' also titled as 'leech gatherer'. It's because Wordsworth deals with a leech-gatherer whom he and Dorothy had met during their trip to Scotland. Subsequently, the title stands to represent the

old man's resolution and independence' as well as the resolution of the narrator himself.

6.2 TEXT OF THE POEM

Resolution and Independence:

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

I was a Traveller then upon the moor;
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joys in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low;

To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could name.

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in 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 marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man 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;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,

"What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
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:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance;
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
Scarce 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;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,

My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
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 pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main; and, when he ended,
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!"

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE POEM

'Resolution and Independence' is a deeply moving poem of Wordsworth that teaches the value of faith, resolution, and independence through the life of an old leech gatherer the narrator meets in the poem.

In 'Resolution and Independence', Wordsworth deals with a leech gatherer who he met during his walks through the countryside after a night of rain. The poem begins with the positivity of nature. But soon the poet's mood reflects upon the balance of life between happiness and sorrow. Despite the happiness around him he worries thinking about life ending in despondency and madness. Soon this thought of him takes an opposite

turn when the poet meets with the old man who is weak yet works with resolution and lives an honest life. The poet resolves not to give in to misery, but to live independently with a firm mind similar to that of the leech gatherer.

Wordsworth begins the poem with the description of the joyous atmosphere of Nature. The poet contrasts the roaring wind and rain with the sunrise that is calm and bright. As the day breaks calmly, the birds, Stock-dove, Jay, and Magpie express their joy with the happy chatter. Alongside, he also hears the pleasant noise of waters filled in the air. Altogether, the poet too feels excited along with the blissful nature.

In the second stanza too, the poet continues with the description of nature. He sees all things out of doors being in full spirit, and describes hare in the moor running and rejoices the morning's birth. He beautifully captures how the hare raises a mist as it runs. According to him, it is not the first time it does that, but every other time it runs. This stanza presents the morning as a time of promise that gives joy to every living creature.

Wordsworth uses the first person 'I' in this stanza to give a personal feel to the poem. Into the description of nature, Wordsworth brings himself for he is witnessing the scene so far. He is a traveler who wandered listlessly in the moor and sees the hare running. He was so happy to be out in the pleasant weather, for he forgot all his gloomy thoughts and vain manners of people while engrossed in the scenes around him.

In stanza four, the poet speaks of his fear of depression and sorrow that he feels to await him at the end of his happiness. As it often happens, excess of happiness is followed by sad and gloomy thoughts; here the poet experiences the same. Happiness has its own limitations, so does the morning. So it turns out that he has experienced an imaginary fear, and unexplained sadness overpowering him. This sadness, that sank him low, in contrast to the happiness that made him feel high.

In the fifth stanza, the poet, amidst "the sky-lark warbling in the sky," compares himself to "the playful hare." He also compares himself to a happy child of earth, to project how happy he is at the moment. As he enjoys the blissful morning he feels far from the world, also "from all care.' While he is thinking of the joyous side of his life, he is reminded of that other kind of day that might come to him: A day of 'solitude, the pain of heart, distress, and poverty."

The poet in the sixth stanza recalls how his life has been in perfect happiness like that of "a summer, mood." He thinks of life and how gratuitously it has come to him as if he is on a holiday, which is meant only to be enjoyed and he would get everything without making any attempt to get it. Then he thinks of the possibility of God's infinite goodwill, and of how long it could last if he fails to take care of himself and expects others to take care of himself.

As Wordsworth thinks of himself as a poet, one endowed with his own privileged, joyous place in life. Simultaneously, his mind waver backs to

Thomas Chatterton and Robert Burns, the poets enjoyed glory and happiness in the English tradition and admired by Wordsworth. But, the fame they enjoyed at youth turned out to be the reason for their fall leading them to hopelessness and madness.

Stanza eight marks a turning point in the poem as the poet introduces a new character into the poem. He wonders how he by special favour of God or divine influence saw a man in day-light when he was engrossed in his perverse and melancholy thoughts. They seemed the oldest among the grey-haired old men. The old man looked like a huge stone on top of the mountain. Those who behold the stone may wonder about how it has come to occupy this position and where it came from. This motionless rock appeared to be full of life and looked like a sea-beast that had come out of the water to take rest on a reef or sandbank in the warmth of the sun.

In stanzas, ten and eleven, the poet continues with his description of the old man who seems virtually one with the scene. He seemed neither completely alive nor dead or inactive due to his extreme old age. His body was so bent that his feet and head were very close together as if this condition could have been caused due to his intense suffering or physical strain or some terrible disease. A great weight of his past suffering, rage, or sickness had taken a toll and bowed him down. He was carrying a weight too heavy for his old age. His weak limbs, his body with a pale face, were resting on the staff made of wood. The poet moves with gentle steps towards the old man, who stands beside the bank of the river. When the old man moves, his whole body moves similar to how he stays motionless.

At last in stanza twelve the old man moving disturbs the calm water of the lake with his staff. His eyes are fixed on the water as if he is deeply involved in reading a book. The poet moved towards him and starts a conversation like a usual stranger does. The old man answers back in a feeble voice using polite words. Further, he enquires after the old man and the work he is doing. When the poet says that it is dangerous for an old man like him to be alone at such a deserted place, the first reaction he sees is a sense of surprise from "the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes".

In stanza fourteen of 'Resolution and Independence', Wordsworth describes the old man's speech as "lofty utterance," "stately speech." Despite the feeble voice as a result of his old age and weakness, the old man uses a distinct and dignified accent. His words are well-chosen and balanced beyond the power of an ordinary man. The speech is dignified like that of a Presbyterians of Scotland perform their duty towards God and man.

In stanza fifteen, the poet continues with his interaction with the old man. The old man identifies that his work is leech- gathering and that is the reason he lives in such a lonely place. He, "being old and poor," finds his subsistence here, though the work may be "hazardous and wearisome," for he is helpless. He roamed from pond to pond, from moor to moor, sometimes taking shelter by his choice, depending on God's Providence to

help him find lodging. But in all, he gains "an honest maintenance," for a decent living.

The conversation between the poet and the old man continues in this passage too. Yet, now the voice of the old man seems to grow gradually indistinct as the sound of a distant stream. For the poet could not clearly understand what the old man is speaking. Now, the poet recollects his dream where he has met a man who looked similar to the leech-gatherer. Further, he says that his meeting with the leech-gatherer is not unexpected but a meeting planned for him to give "human strength by apt admonishment."

In stanza seventeen of 'Resolution and Independence' the poet once again begins to feel oppressed. Fear of future misery and helplessness and hope that cannot be fulfilled began to occupy his mind. He also thought of cold sufferings, labour, and mental worries on account of which many poets in the past have died. The poet greatly perplexed and with a desire to get some comfort and consolation, he again asked the Old man what he was doing and how he managed to live. For that the old man responds with a smile on his face, explains how he travels far to gather leeches. Now, since the leeches have become scarce it has become difficult for him to gather leeches, yet, he continues with perseverance.

The concluding stanzas of the poem deliberate the conversation between the old man and the poet. The gloomy and lonely place, the weary and pitiable condition of the old man troubled the mind of Wordsworth. In his imagination, he conjured up the vision of the old man walking silently with weary steps on the moors all alone. The old man resumes his conversation and adds other details of his life to his conversation. But, the poet could feel dignity in his manner of speaking. The poet is impressed by this resolution and independence that he began to scorn himself for being gloomy. He started to realize how God had been his support in the dire situations of his life. As he concludes the poem, Wordsworth calls upon God to be his guiding force and he also takes a resolution to think of the leech gatherer.

6.4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Irrespective of the development of the story in his poetry, William Wordsworth starts his poems with the vivid images of nature. Tintern Abbey introduces nature as realized by a boy and the Immortality Ode on its onset criticizes the changes in nature. Here in Resolution and Independence, also called The Leech Gatherer, the poet starts with the beauty of nature. The introduction of this poem doesn't really justify the development of the thought of the poem. But what does it matter for a poet laureate like William Wordsworth? He very delicately makes nature speak. For him, if nature is the source of beauty on the one hand, it also speaks of human beings on the other. It knows the 'sad music of humanity'.

Resolution and Independence records the intoxicating effect of nature on

the poet who totally forgets about the future. But as nature is the teacher for Wordsworth, she knocks at his door of his happy chamber. He realizes what he was avoiding either consciously or not. In stanza VI, he successfully connects his thoughts with the start of the poem. Both the sounds and images of nature bring out the remembrance of the past and leave enough to prepare for the future. So the poet, the happy child, is prepared to question himself. Stanza VII is very lyrical as it gives a personal message with a view to balancing the construction of the poem. The poet sympathizes with the short lives of Chatterton and Burns who were also eminent poets like Wordsworth himself.

6.5 THEMES

Nature and the joy of nature is the prominent theme of Wordsworth's poetry, so does in 'Resolution and Independence' too. Though the poet speaks of the old man in most parts of the poem, the central theme revolves around the poet and his thoughts. Wordsworth conveys his intended message through the old man in the poem. So, the central theme of the poem is the need for resolution and independence in the face of old age and acute suffering.

Form and Structure:

'Resolution and Independence' is a lyric poem. The poem is written in 20 stanzas of seven lines each. Iambic pentameter is used in the lines with an extra iamb in the seventh line. The poem uses the rhyme scheme ABABBCC unanimously in all the stanzas.

Tone and Mood:

The tone and mood of the poem are expressed through the figurative language the poet used in the poem. He begins the poem with a positive tone and mood. The positive mood of the poem is projected through the idyllic imagery in the first three stanzas, to represent the joy of nature. Later it moves towards melancholy and despair in the latter part of the poem. In stanza four and five, the mood of the poet is sinking into a melancholy that carried over to despair in the seventh stanza. Finally, ends the poem with a hopeful resolution, when he too decides to follow suit the old man in his independent attitude.

Literary and Poetic Devices:

Imagery is the major Literary Device used in 'Resolution and Independence'. A good example of this can be found in the second stanza, where the poet describes the Hare's activity. "The hare is running races in her mirth; / And with her feet she from the plashy earth / Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun, / Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run".

There are other literary devices too such as Alliteration, onomatopoeia, and Simile in the poem. Alliteration is found in the lines "choice or chance" and "moor to moor." Onomatopoeia "roar", "raced", "warbling"

provides the listener with more appreciation through sensory details and vivid imagery.

Wordsworth's employed a long simile in stanza nine to describe the leech gatherer as alive but almost not alive. Here, he is compared to "a huge stone/ couched on the bald top of an eminence." Also, he used the sea beast as a simile for the stone in "a sea- beast crawled forth."

6.6 CONCLUSION

Wordsworth is the poet of man and for him nature is the best teacher. This poem combines these two very well, as he creates great ideas with a humble man again and nature intervenes. More than a god-like figure, the man represents one who is with nature itself. If nature guides him to think about his future, it also sends a leech gatherer for the poet. Finally what the poet delivers is just an emotion to be 'recollected in tranquility'—is to remember the old man in his worries.

This poem is written with care. Even calling a composition a 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', here in this poem, William Wordsworth is very careful about every stanza. He tries best to compose with the theme of the poem. As he takes on a subject matter like resolution and independence, he knows how to steer his free expression. With a disciplined rhyme scheme and usages of figurative languages, Wordsworth, the teacher is on top.

6.7 P.B. SHELLEY: "ODE TO THE WEST WIND"

Percy Bysshe Shelley (4 August 1792 – 8 July 1822) was one of the major English Romantic poets. A radical in his poetry as well as in his political and social views, Shelley did not achieve fame during his lifetime, but recognition of his achievements in poetry grew steadily following his death and he became an important influence on subsequent generations of poets including Robert Browning, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Thomas Hardy, and W. B. Yeats. American literary critic Harold Bloom describes him as "a superb craftsman, a lyric poet without rival, and surely one of the most advanced sceptical intellects ever to write a poem."

Shelley's critical reputation fluctuated during the 20th century, but in recent decades he has achieved increasing critical acclaim for the sweeping momentum of his poetic imagery, his mastery of genres and verse forms, and the complex interplay of sceptical, idealist, and materialist ideas in his work. Among his best-known works are "Ozymandias" (1818), "Ode to the West Wind" (1819), "To a Skylark" (1820), and the political ballad "The Mask of Anarchy" (1819). His other major works include the verse drama The Cenci (1819) and long poems such as Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude (1815), Julian and Maddalo (1819), Adonais (1821), Prometheus Unbound (1820)—widely considered his masterpiece—Hellas (1822), and his final, unfinished work, The Triumph of Life (1822).

Shelley also wrote prose fiction and a quantity of essays on political, social, and philosophical issues. Much of this poetry and prose was not published in his lifetime, or only published in expurgated form, due to the risk of prosecution for political and religious libel. From the 1820s, his poems and political and ethical writings became popular in Owenist, Chartist, and radical political circles and later drew admirers as diverse as Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi, and George Bernard Shaw.

Shelley's life was marked by family crises, ill health, and a backlash against his atheism, political views and defiance of social conventions. He went into permanent self-exile in Italy in 1818, and over the next four years produced what Leader and O'Neill call "some of the finest poetry of the Romantic period".[12] His second wife, Mary Shelley, was the author of Frankenstein. He died in a boating accident in 1822 at the age of 29.

6.8 TEXT OF THE POEM

Ode to the West Wind:

I.

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

II.

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,

Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!

IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Introduction:

"Ode to the West Wind" is a poem written by the English Romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley. According to Shelley, the poem was written in the woods outside Florence, Italy in the autumn of 1819. In the poem, the speaker directly addresses the west wind. The speaker treats the west wind as a force of death and decay, and welcomes this death and decay because it means that rejuvenation and rebirth will come soon. In the final two sections of the poem, the speaker suggests that he wants to help promote this rebirth through his own poetry—and that rejuvenation he hopes to see is both political and poetic: a rebirth of society and its ways of writing.

6.9 SUMMARY

The speaker invokes the "wild West Wind" of autumn, which scatters the dead leaves and spreads seeds so that they may be nurtured by the spring, and asks that the wind, a "destroyer and preserver," hear him. The speaker calls the wind the "dirge / Of the dying year," and describes how it stirs up violent storms, and again implores it to hear him. The speaker says that the wind stirs the Mediterranean from "his summer dreams," and cleaves the Atlantic into choppy chasms, making the "sapless foliage" of the ocean tremble, and asks for a third time that it hear him.

The speaker says that if he were a dead leaf that the wind could bear, or a cloud it could carry, or a wave it could push, or even if he were, as a boy, "the comrade" of the wind's "wandering over heaven," then he would never have needed to pray to the wind and invoke its powers. He pleads with the wind to lift him "as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!"—for though he is like the wind at heart, untamable and proud—he is now chained and bowed with the weight of his hours upon the earth.

The speaker asks the wind to "make me thy lyre," to be his own Spirit, and to drive his thoughts across the universe, "like withered leaves, to quicken a new birth." He asks the wind, by the incantation of this verse, to scatter his words among mankind, to be the "trumpet of a prophecy." Speaking both in regard to the season and in regard to the effect upon mankind that he hopes his words to have, the speaker asks: "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

Form:

Each of the seven parts of "Ode to the West Wind" contains five stanzas—four three-line stanzas and a two-line couplet, all metered in iambic pentameter. The rhyme scheme in each part follows a pattern known as terza rima, the three-line rhyme scheme employed by Dante in his Divine

Comedy. In the three-line terza rima stanza, the first and third lines rhyme, and the middle line does not; then the end sound of that middle line is employed as the rhyme for the first and third lines in the next stanza. The final couplet rhymes with the middle line of the last three-line stanza. Thus each of the seven parts of "Ode to the West Wind" follows this scheme: ABA BCB CDC DED EE.

6.10 COMMENTARY

The wispy, fluid terza rima of "Ode to the West Wind" finds Shelley taking a long thematic leap beyond the scope of "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," and incorporating 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 sweep him out of his torpor "as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!" In the fifth section, the poet then takes a remarkable turn, transforming 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"—that is, to quicken the coming of the spring. Here the spring season is a metaphor for a "spring" of human consciousness, imagination, liberty, or morality—all the things Shelley hoped his art could help to bring about in the human mind. Shelley asks the wind to be his spirit, and in the same movement he makes it his metaphorical spirit, his poetic faculty, which will play him like a musical instrument, the way the wind strums the leaves of the trees. The thematic implication is significant: whereas the older generation of Romantic poets viewed nature as a source of truth and authentic experience, the younger generation largely viewed nature as a source of beauty and aesthetic experience. In this poem, 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.

6.11 THEMES

The Heroic, Visionary Role of the Poet:

In Shelley's poetry, the figure of the poet (and, to some extent, the figure of Shelley himself) is not simply a talented entertainer or even a perceptive moralist but a grand, tragic, prophetic hero. The poet has a deep, mystic appreciation for nature, as in the poem "To Wordsworth" (1816), and this intense connection with the natural world gives him access to profound cosmic truths, as in "Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude" (1816). He has the power—and the duty—to translate these truths, through the use of his imagination, into poetry, but only a kind of poetry that the public can understand. Thus, his poetry becomes a kind of prophecy, and through his words, a poet has the ability to change the world for the better and to bring about political, social, and spiritual change. Shelley's poet is a near-divine savior, comparable to Prometheus, who stole divine fire and gave it to humans in Greek mythology, and to Christ. Like Prometheus and Christ, figures of the poets in Shelley's work

are often doomed to suffer: because their visionary power isolates them from other men, because they are misunderstood by critics, because they are persecuted by a tyrannical government, or because they are suffocated by conventional religion and middle-class values. In the end, however, the poet triumphs because his art is immortal, outlasting the tyranny of government, religion, and society and living on to inspire new generations.

The Power of Nature:

Like many of the romantic poets, especially William Wordsworth, Shelley demonstrates a great reverence for the beauty of nature, and he feels closely connected to nature's power. In his early poetry, Shelley shares the romantic interest in pantheism—the belief that God, or a divine, unifying spirit, runs through everything in the universe. He refers to this unifying natural force in many poems, describing it as the "spirit of beauty" in "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" and identifying it with Mont Blanc and the Arve River in "Mont Blanc." This force is the cause of all human joy, faith, goodness, and pleasure, and it is also the source of poetic inspiration and divine truth. Shelley asserts several times that this force can influence people to change the world for the better. However, Shelley simultaneously recognizes that nature's power is not wholly positive. Nature destroys as often as it inspires or creates, and it destroys cruelly and indiscriminately. For this reason, Shelley's delight in nature is mitigated by an awareness of its dark side.

The Power of the Human Mind:

Shelley uses nature as his primary source of poetic inspiration. In such poems as "The Mask of Anarchy Written on the Occasion of the Massacre at Manchester" (1819) and "Ode to the West Wind," Shelley suggests that the natural world holds a sublime power over his imagination. This power seems to come from a stranger, more mystical place than simply his appreciation for nature's beauty or grandeur. At the same time, although nature has creative power over Shelley because it provides inspiration, he feels that his imagination has creative power over nature. It is the imagination—or our ability to form sensory perceptions—that allows us to describe nature in different, original ways, which help to shape how nature appears and, therefore, how it exists. Thus, the power of the human mind becomes equal to the power of nature, and the experience of beauty in the natural world becomes a kind of collaboration between the perceiver and the perceived. Because Shelley cannot be sure that the sublime powers he senses in nature are only the result of his gifted imagination, he finds it difficult to attribute nature's power to God: the human role in shaping nature damages Shelley's ability to believe that nature's beauty comes solely from a divine source.

Death and Rebirth:

Throughout "Ode to the West Wind," the speaker describes the West Wind as a powerful and destructive force: it drives away the summer and brings instead winter storms, chaos, and even death. Yet the speaker celebrates the West Wind and welcomes the destruction that it causes

because it leads to renewal and rebirth.

The West Wind is not peaceful or pleasant. It is, the speaker notes, "the breath of Autumn's being." Autumn is a transitional season, when summer's abundance begins to fade. So too, everywhere the speaker looks the West Wind drives away peace and abundance. The West Wind strips the leaves from the trees, whips up the sky, and causes huge storms on the ocean. And, in the first section of the poem, the speaker compares the dead leaves the West Wind blows to "ghosts" and "pestilence-stricken multitudes." The West Wind turns the fall colors into something scary, associated with sickness and death.

Similarly, the clouds in the poem's second section look like the "bright hair uplifted from the head / of some fierce Mænad." In Greek mythology, the Mænads were the female followers of Dionysus (the god of Wine). They were famous for their wild parties and their dancing, and are often portrayed with their hair askew. The West Wind thus makes the clouds wild and drunk. It creates chaos. Unlike its "sister of the Spring"—which spreads sweet smells and beautiful flowers—the speaker associates the West Wind with chaos and death.

Yet despite the destructive power of the West Wind the speaker celebrates it—because such destruction is necessary for rebirth. As the speaker notes at the end of the poem's first section, the West Wind is both a "destroyer" and "preserver." These are the traditional names of two Hindu gods, Shiva and Vishnu. Vishnu's role is to preserve the world; Shiva is supposed to destroy it. The West Wind combines these two opposite figures. As the speaker announces in the final lines—"O Wind, / If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"—the West Wind is able to merge these opposites because death is required for life, and winter for Spring. In order to have the beautiful renewal and rebirth that Spring promises, one needs the powerful, destructive force of the West Wind.

Poetry and Rebirth:

Throughout "Ode to the West Wind," the speaker praises and celebrates the West Wind's power—it is destructive, chaotic—and yet such destruction is necessary for rebirth and renewal. Indeed, the speaker so admires the wind that he wants to take, adopt, or absorb the West Wind's power's into his poetry.

The speaker describes himself as a diminished person: he is "chained and bowed." Far from condemning the destructive power of the wind, the speaker hopes the West Wind will revive him. At different points in the poem, the speaker has different ideas about what this might look like. Most simply, the wind simply becomes the speaker, or becomes part of him. "Be thou me," the speaker tells the wind.

But the speaker also proposes more complicated interactions between himself and the wind. At one point, he asks the Wind, to "make me thy lyre, even as the forest is." In other words he wants to be a musical instrument, specifically the lyre, the musical instrument that poets

traditionally play while they perform their poems. In this scheme, the speaker helps the wind—he's like a musical accompaniment to it. The speaker doesn't take an active role, the wind does. (These roles are reinforced later when the speaker imagines the Wind "driv[ing] my dead thoughts over the universe"—it certainly seems that the Wind is doing the real work).

The speaker wants to be (or to help) the West Wind because he wants to create something new, to clear away the old and the dead. Under the West Wind's influence, his or her "dead thoughts" will "quicken a new birth"—they will create something living and new. The speaker doesn't say exactly what new thing he hopes to create. It might be a new kind of poetry. Or it might be a new society. (Indeed, many readers have interpreted the poem as a call for political change). Either way, for the speaker, that newness can't be achieved through compromise with the old and dead; it can emerge only through the cleansing destruction that the West Wind brings.

6.12 REFERENCE

- https://poemanalysis.com/william-wordsworth/resolution-and-independence/
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7

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ALFRED TENNYSON'S "THE LADY OF SHALOTT" AND ROBERT BROWNING'S "ANDREA DEL SARTO"

Unit Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

To introduce the students to the poets Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning:

- To make them aware of their contribution to literature
- To make the students understand the summary and analysis of The Lady of Shallot and Andrea Del Sarto

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, in full Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Freshwater, (born August 6, 1809, Somersby, Lincolnshire, England—died October 6, 1892, Aldworth, Surrey), English poet often regarded as the chief representative of the Victorian age in poetry.

In 1842 Tennyson published Poems, in two volumes, one containing a revised selection from the volumes of 1830 and 1832, the other, new poems. The new poems included "Morte d'Arthur," "The Two Voices," "Locksley Hall," and "The Vision of Sin" and other poems that reveal a strange naïveté, such as "The May Queen," "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," and "The Lord of Burleigh." The new volume was not on the whole well received. But the grant to him at this time, by the prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, of a pension of £200 helped to alleviate his financial worries. In 1847 he published his first long poem, The Princess, a singular anti-feminist fantasia.

The year 1850 marked a turning point. Tennyson resumed his correspondence with Emily Sellwood, and their engagement was renewed and followed by marriage. Meanwhile, Edward Moxon offered to publish

the elegies on Hallam that Tennyson had been composing over the years. They appeared, at first anonymously, as In Memoriam (1850), which had a great success with both reviewers and the public, won him the friendship of Queen Victoria, and helped bring about, in the same year, his appointment as poet laureate.

In Memoriam is a vast poem of 131 sections of varying length, with a prologue and epilogue. Inspired by the grief Tennyson felt at the untimely death of his friend Hallam, the poem touches on many intellectual issues of the Victorian Age as the author searches for the meaning of life and death and tries to come to terms with his sense of loss. Most notably, In Memoriam reflects the struggle to reconcile traditional religious faith and belief in immortality with the emerging theories of evolution and modern geology. The verses show the development over three years of the poet's acceptance and understanding of his friend's death and conclude with an epilogue, a happy marriage song on the occasion of the wedding of Tennyson's sister Cecilia.

After his marriage, which was happy, Tennyson's life became more secure and outwardly uneventful. There were two sons: Hallam and Lionel. The times of wandering and unsettlement ended in 1853, when the Tennysons took a house, Farringford, in the Isle of Wight. Tennyson was to spend most of the rest of his life there and at Aldworth (near Haslemere, Surrey).

Tennyson's position as the national poet was confirmed by his Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington (1852)—though some critics at first thought it disappointing—and the famous poem on the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, published in 1855 in Maud and Other Poems. Maud itself, a strange and turbulent "monodrama," provoked a storm of protest; many of the poet's admirers were shocked by the morbidity, hysteria, and bellicosity of the hero. Yet Maud was Tennyson's favourite among his poems.

A project that Tennyson had long considered at last issued in Idylls of the King (1859), a series of 12 connected poems broadly surveying the legend of King Arthur from his falling in love with Guinevere to the ultimate ruin of his kingdom. The poems concentrate on the introduction of evil to Camelot because of the adulterous love of Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, and on the consequent fading of the hope that had at first infused the Round Table fellowship. Idylls of the King had an immediate success, and Tennyson, who loathed publicity, had now acquired a sometimes embarrassing public fame. The Enoch Arden volume of 1864 perhaps represents the peak of his popularity. New Arthurian Idylls were published in The Holy Grail, and Other Poems in 1869 (dated 1870). These were again well received, though some readers were beginning to show discomfort at the "Victorian" moral atmosphere that Tennyson had introduced into his source material from Sir Thomas Malory.

In 1874 Tennyson decided to try his hand at poetic drama. Queen Mary appeared in 1875, and an abridged version was produced at the Lyceum in 1876 with only moderate success. It was followed by Harold (1876; dated

1877), Becket (not published in full until 1884), and the "village tragedy" The Promise of May, which proved a failure at the Globe in November 1882. This play—his only prose work—shows Tennyson's growing despondency and resentment at the religious, moral, and political tendencies of the age. He had already caused some sensation by publishing a poem called "Despair" in The Nineteenth Century (November 1881). A more positive indication of Tennyson's later beliefs appears in "The Ancient Sage," published in Tiresias and Other Poems (1885). Here the poet records his intimations of a life before and beyond this life.

Tennyson accepted a peerage (after some hesitation) in 1884. In 1886 he published a new volume containing "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," consisting mainly of imprecations against modern decadence and liberalism and a retraction of the earlier poem's belief in inevitable human progress.

In 1889 Tennyson wrote the famous short poem "Crossing the Bar," during the crossing to the Isle of Wight. In the same year he published Demeter and Other Poems, which contains the charming retrospective "To Mary Boyle," "The Progress of Spring," a fine lyric written much earlier and rediscovered, and "Merlin and the Gleam," an allegorical summing-up of his poetic career. In 1892 his play The Foresters was successfully produced in New York City. Despite ill health, he was able to correct the proofs of his last volume, The Death of Oenone, Akbar's Dream, and Other Poems (1892).

Tennyson was also regarded as the preeminent spokesman for the educated middle-class Englishman, in moral and religious outlook and in political and social consciousness no less than in matters of taste and sentiment. His poetry dealt often with the doubts and difficulties of an age in which established Christian faith and traditional assumptions about man's nature and destiny were increasingly called into question by science and modern progress. His poetry dealt with these misgivings, moreover, as the intimate personal problems of a sensitive and troubled individual inclined to melancholy. Yet through his poetic mastery—the spaciousness and nobility of his best verse, its classical aptness of phrase, its distinctive harmony—he conveyed to sympathetic readers a feeling of implicit reassurance, even serenity. Tennyson may be seen as the first great English poet to be fully aware of the new picture of man's place in the universe revealed by modern science. While the contemplation of this unprecedented human situation sometimes evoked his fears and forebodings, it also gave him a larger imaginative range than most of the poets of his time and added a greater depth and resonance to his art.

2.2 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE LADY OF SHALLOT

The Lady of Shalott by Alfred Lord Tennyson is a popular ballad that illustrates the isolation of a woman in a tower far from what she wants to live and experience. She lives a life imprisoned by a curse she knows no consequence for and so hesitates to live her life the way she would have

liked. If looked at closely we can see how her situation is like that of many individuals who struggle to step out of their comfort zones to experience life to its fullest. They lose out on seeing their dreams come to existence through the chances that they took without letting doubt and fear get in the way.

The Lady of Shalott Analysis:

Part I:

Stanza 1:

On either side the river lie

Long fields of barley and of rye,

That clothe the wold and meet the sky;

And thro' the field the road runs by

To many-tower'd Camelot;

And up and down the people go,

Gazing where the lilies blow

Round an island there below,

The island of Shalott.

Summary:

The opening stanza of this poem is introducing the two most important places that are present in this narrative: Camelot, and Shalott. We, as readers are given a vivid image of the beautiful mainland of Camelot. The road to which, is full of natural beauty and the constant flow of people traveling in and out. Shalott, on the other hand, is mentioned almost as if in passing and is portrayed as just a place that is merely noticed by people on their journey to and fro Camelot.

Analysis:

Tennyson uses the opening stanza of his poem to really set the tone for the rest of the poem. We are introduced to two high contrasting places: Camelot and Shalott. Camelot can effortlessly represent the dream of any and every person: a world full of life and opportunities, even the roads to which look attractive and inviting. There are roads that lead to a life of opportunity for every person. Each individual has their own Camelot and every tower within symbolizes the desires and hopes that they would love to reach one day. Shalott, however, can just as easily represent the bubble that we as individuals create for ourselves. It is a place that people merely notice in passing. So the comfort zones and rules that we create for ourselves that no one else really pays attention to, are without much difficulty represented by Shalott in this poem.

Stanza 2:

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

This stanza shifts the imagery in the direction of winter; with snowy white willows, and aspen trees that "quiver" in the cold. It also mentions the "little breezes" that run through the waves of the river near the island of Shalott, which flows towards Camelot. The island is finally given some attention, as the introduction to the Lady of Shalott surfaces. The Lady of Shalott is described to be sheltered in a building or structure, which is described to have four grey walls and towers and is located on a lifeless island. This depiction is in obvious high contrast with the flowers and eye-catching view of Camelot that is surrounding her.

Analysis:

Here, we start to grasp the mood that Tennyson is creating for the story he's about to tell. The winter represents the chilly nature of the events that will unfold in the rest of the poem as well as the bitter cold that awaits us outside our comfort zones. "Little breezes" of our hopes and dreams travel down to Camelot, to add to the world that we want to reach so desperately in our own ways.

In this stanza, the common man/woman is introduced through the character of the Lady of Shalott. Like the lady, we as humans often live our lives with caution and safety; so the depiction of four grey walls and towers fits well in representing a dull bubble that we have created for ourselves to stay alive and afloat in the world. Our dreams and desires for our futures, however, reside in the attractive world of Camelot.

Stanza 3:

By the margin, willow veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?

Or at the casement seen her stand?

Or is she known in all the land,

The Lady of Shalott?

Summary:

Stanza three begins by painting a picture of willows that cover the bank of the river; diverting our attention back to the busy scene outside the small castle-like building that the Lady of Shalott is encased in. This river and the road leading to Camelot are described to be busy with "heavy barges" (boats carrying goods), horses, and "shallop flitteth silken sail'd" (small boats flying down the river with their silk sails). The narrator here starts to throw around questions that force the reader to wonder more about who the lady of Shalott actually is.

Analysis:

This stanza takes the focus from our personal bubbles back to "Camelot", where there is so much potential for everything we have ever wanted. It is definitely not grey and safe. Just the path leading to it is covered with trees of life and "heavy barges", horses and other small boats, which could easily portray the ideas we have for our lives that are too risky to stay in Shalott. They are then slowly making their way across the rivers and roads to Camelot, where they will be housed. The questions asked at the end of this stanza highlight how trapped we are in the safe zones we have created for ourselves that the things and people outside of those zones seem like a farfetched idea instead of a reality, much like the lady of Shalott is to the people of and around Camelot.

Stanza 4:

Only reapers, reaping early

In among the bearded barley,

Hear a song that echoes cheerly

From the river winding clearly,

Down to tower'd Camelot:

And by the moon the reaper weary,

Piling sheaves in uplands airy,

Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy

Lady of Shalott."

Summary:

This stanza begins by answering the questions stanza three concluded with. The only people who saw her wave her hands, stand by her window, or just acknowledge her existence was the "reapers" who were harvesting barley in the early hours. These men would hear the echoes of her singing being carried out from Shalott, and recognize her as "the fairy Lady of

Shalott." The last four lines of this stanza illustrate, that not only could they continue to hear her in the late hours of their harvesting, but also that she's a "fairy" given that she is such a mysterious being to all of those who are outside her small castle-like home.

Analysis:

This stanza concludes the first part of the poem. Here Tennyson mentions reapers who are harvesting barley, and they are the only ones who know of the lady's existence because they hear the echoes of her singing day and night. Because they don't know much about her and she is a mystery to most, they consider her a fairy. If we look at the lady of Shalott as ourselves we can see that we are mere ideas to people whom we haven't stepped out of our comfort zones to meet and because of that, our aspirations for life are mere echoes that reach people. We are fearless when it comes to creating our "Camelot", but so very fearful when it comes to taking risks to achieve those goals.

That is why our words will not impact those around us, and our voices will stay as hollow as echoes no matter if we sing about our plans day and night. If we want to be acknowledged we have to take the risk of stepping out of what is normal for us.

Part II:

Stanza 5:

There she weaves by night and day

A magic web with colours gay.

She has heard a whisper say,

A curse is on her if she stay

To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,

And so she weaveth steadily,

And little other care hath she,

The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

As we go through the poem, this stanza catches the first details of who the lady of Shalott is. She is a woman who busies herself in weaving a "magic" colorful web. She has been cursed with a curse she doesn't know the consequences of. All she does know, however, is that she is not to look down from her towers, at Camelot (if she wants to be protected from this curse). We are also told that she focuses her life on her weaving not giving anything around her care in the world, mainly because there is nothing else to keep her busy.

Analysis:

Every individual has a web of thoughts and ideas that they are busy with on a daily basis. Like the Lady of Shalott, we busy ourselves with weaving them in routine-like rituals, every single day. She was cursed with an unknown curse if she ever looked towards Camelot. As humans we let doubt be the unknown curse that threatens to ruin our normalcy and ritualistic life. The doubt that anything other than what we know to be real and true can also become a reality that is achievable if only we take the risk to try. Now, much like the lady, we like to stay in our grey comfort zones, so we don't care to try risking the peaceful routine with all that awaits us in our "Camelot".

Stanza 6:

And moving thro' a mirror clear

That hangs before her all the year,

Shadows of the world appear.

There she sees the highway near

Winding down to Camelot:

There the river eddy whirls,

And there the surly village-churls,

And the red cloaks of market girls,

Pass onward from Shalott.

Summary:

Stanza six continues in giving the readers a little insight into the character of the lady of Shalott. Here, we learn that she owns a mirror that hangs in front of her as she weaves. The interesting quality of the mirror is that it shows her "shadows" of the world around her, so the images are unclear or blurred. From this mirror she can get a glimpse of the whirlpools in the river and some people. There are various kinds of people that the lady of Shalott can make out in her mirror of "shadows. Some of these people are depicted as impolite and rude, most probably describing the peasants. Others are described to be girls from the market who are passing by Shalott, wearing red cloaks.

Analysis:

This is where things get interesting. The lady of Shalott is given a mirror that allows her to glimpse outside her towers only through the shadows or blurry pictures that's it displays. The mirror is an extremely important symbol. It represents the perceptions, views, biases, and experiences in our lives that shape what we see. We never see situations or events in life for what they are, we can only understand them through our understanding of what happened, and that will vary from person to person. While we sit still in our comfort zones (Shalott) weaving our daily routines, we look

through this mirror to see if we can see what awaits us outside.

Another reason the images are blurry is that we can't truly know what is there until we take the risk to go out and see for ourselves. Until then, we can only guess through the shadows (perceptions/bias) that we do see in our mirrors. Of the people we see through the mirror are those who are rude (those who have complete opposite comfort zones than us) and the market girls (who can easily represent those people who pass by our "Shalott" with no interest in who we are but have eyes only for traveling, taking risks and not just building their "Camelot" but striving to live in it to).

Stanza 7:

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,

An abbot on an ambling pad,

Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,

Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,

Goes by to tower'd Camelot;

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue

The knights come riding two and two:

She hath no loyal knight and true,

The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

Here, we see that the list of people that the lady of Shalott sees through her mirror continues. We are told she sometimes sees "glad" young women and an abbot (a person of authority amongst the monks/monastery) who rides "an ambling pad" (a slow road horse). A curly-haired shepherd, and a long-haired "page in crimson" (an attendant of a nobleman wearing crimson) on his way to the towered Camelot. The narrator mentions that the lady has sometimes even seen "knights riding two by two" and is quick to point out she has no knight of her own, who would shower her with love and loyalty. We are also finally given some description of the lady's mirror: it is blue.

Analysis:

As the character of the lady sees these various people in the mirror, we can relate easily to seeing such people in our own mirrors too. The young Shepherd symbolizes the people who try to lead the "herd" in various situations in life. The page in crimson is a person who has managed to get to a point in life where they are seen in high regard. Finally the knights are those people who seem to embody all our wishes and desires. The Lady not having a knight to dote on her emphasizes that she has not seen her most tempting hopes and desires show up in her mirror yet, like many of us.

Stanza 8:

But in her web she still delights

To weave the mirror's magic sights,

For often thro' the silent nights

A funeral, with plumes and lights

And music, went to Camelot:

Or when the moon was overhead,

Came two young lovers lately wed:

"I am half sick of shadows," said

The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

Stanza eight shifts the story back to the Lady of Shalott, and her occupation of weaving. The narrator exposes that the content of her weaving is based on all the sights she sees in her mirror. These sights often include a funeral or a wedding. As readers, we witness the first dialogue of the lady of Shalott, and it clearly explains that she is tired of watching these shadows in the mirror.

Analysis:

Besides the people that she sees, the mirror has another purpose for the lady, it gives her something to weave. The sights she sees are a relief from the four grey walls that she's trapped in. the two sights which she often sees are that of funerals and happy newlyweds. These sights are significant in our analysis because they embody our fears. As we sit in Shalott we watch through our experiences and bias (our mirrors), two extremes: people who fail miserably in their attempt to reach or live in the Camelot that they had envisioned, or people who newly start their journey of creating risky hopes and dreams and are not afraid to dive in and see if they can reach their idea of a perfect future.

Only after this does the lady speaks out for the first time, saying she is sick of watching the world through the shadows. Much like the motivation, we obtain by watching people strive for better and take risks to get there.

Part III:

Stanza 9:

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,

He rode between the barley-sheaves,

The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,

And flamed upon the brazen greaves

Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for everkneel'd

To a lady in his shield,

That sparkled on the yellow field,

Beside remote Shalott.

Summary:

Here, begins part three of this poem, and the scene changes to introduce a second character: Sir Lancelot. He enters the story by riding through the barley fields, with his armor "dazzling" in the sun, quite close to where the Lady resides. He is described as "bold" and has a picture of a knight kneeling before his lady on his shield. The narrator is not shy about reminding us that he was near "remote Shalott", emphasizing the obvious difference between him, and Shalott.

Analysis:

Part three of Tennyson's poem is mostly all about the second character, Sir Lancelot. He is a famous knight as most know, from around King Arthur's table. Three out of four of the stanzas in this section are spent just describing Lancelot; this highlights his importance and significance in the poem. In this specific stanza, we are told he was very close to Shalott and very attractive in his appearance. What is close to our comfort zone and very attractive to us? Our most desired and most ambitious goals. That is what Lancelot embodies. You will notice that Camelot which has been the center of every stanza (literally line five in ever stanza mentions Camelot) is replaced by Lancelot here, giving him the limelight as well as emphasizing the connection between Lancelot (a most desired and ambitious goal) and Camelot (the dreams and aspirations we have that require risk to achieve).

Stanza 10:

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,

Like to some branch of stars we see

Hung in the golden Galaxy.

The bridle bells rang merrily

As he rode down to Camelot:

And from his blazon'd baldric slung

A mighty silver bugle hung,

And as he rode his armour rung,

Beside remote Shalott.

Summary:

Stanza ten is purely a detailed illustration of Sir Lancelot. It starts with the comparison of his beautifully adorned bridle to the decoration of stars in

the sky. The bells on his bridle ring "merrily", as he rides "down to Camelot". A small silver trumpet hangs from his quite obvious strap belt (baldric) as he noisily passed by "remote Shalott".

Analysis:

From this stanza, we take away that Lancelot makes noise as he passes by Shalott looking quite magnificent. Very similar to the way our most desired and ambitious goals attract our attention every time we are reminded of them as we sit in our safe towers in Shalott. There will always be something tempting enough to push you out of your comfort zones. Lancelot seems to represent that directly in the poem of the lady of Shalott as well as indirectly to the reader who has his own most desired goals waiting just outside his comfort zone.

Stanza 11:

All in the blue unclouded weather

Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,

The helmet and the helmet-feather

Burn'd like one burning flame together,

As he rode down to Camelot.

As often thro' the purple night,

Below the starry clusters bright,

Some bearded meteor, trailing light,

Moves over still Shalott.

Summary:

The importance of Lancelot is rather obvious through the number of stanzas dedicated to just his description. Here, we observe that even the leather of his saddle was shining bright and his helmet had feathers on it that looked quite fierce. Lancelot riding to Camelot is compared to a "bearded meteor" (referring to the feathers on his helmet) that is trailing light in the sky. Again, as the stanza concludes, the strong contrast between Lancelot and Shallot is emphasized by describing Shallot as "still" after eight lines of plain admiration for Lancelot.

Analysis:

This stanza is important because we can easily reinforce the idea that Lancelot represents the most attractive goals and desires because of the comparison of him and meteors; since meteors are the "falling stars" that people wish upon. Still, lifeless Shalott is once again mentioned in contrast to the tempting vision of Lancelot, identical to the contrast between our still, quiet lives without risk and the temptation of taking chances to achieve our most desired goal.

Stanza 12:

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;

On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;

From underneath his helmet flow'd

His coal-black curls as on he rode,

As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river

He flash'd into the crystal mirror,

"Tirra lirra," by the river

Sang Sir Lancelot.

Summary:

This is the fourth stanza in which the reader is continuously given nothing but heightened compliments of Lancelot. Here, we are told that his "broad clear brow" glowed in the sunlight, and his horse's hooves were polished and glossy. His black curly hair flowed beneath his helmet as he rode to Camelot. Then, finally, he makes an appearance in the Lady of Shalott's mirror, singing "Tirra Lirra". This is an important stanza because, after eleven stanzas, our two characters finally cross paths, obviously still unbeknownst to Lancelot.

Analysis:

Not only is this stanza describing Lancelot's greatness but also the horse that he rides and the mannerism in which he enters Camelot, – singing. This shows us that in the narrative of the poem, Lancelot is calling attention to himself carelessly as he prances into Camelot almost teasing, daring the lady to have a look and be tempted to take that risk. Very much like how our dearest goals tease us and tempt us to take chances if we want to see them become a reality.

Stanza 13:

She left the web, she left the loom,

She made three paces thro' the room,

She saw the water-lily bloom,

She saw the helmet and the plume,

She look'd down to Camelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide;

The mirror crack'd from side to side;

"The curse is come upon me," cried

The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

The tale takes a turn as the reader gets thrown into the lady's reaction to Lancelot. Her instant response was to leave the web that she had been weaving; she stepped away from where she was sitting and walked over to the window in three steps. For the first time, she sees the world with her own eyes and not through the shadows in the mirror. She witnesses the water lily bloom, Lancelot's helmet and Camelot. At the sight of Camelot, her web flew out and floated away and her mirror cracked. The Lady of Shalott then speaks for the second time in the entire poem. She basically cries out that she has been cursed as she realizes what she has done.

Analysis:

Finally something is shaking up Shalott, both in the narrative and in our interpretation. The lady decides to take a chance with the curse and look down towards Camelot. She takes her first steps to break out of her comfort levels and safe zone so she can simply just look at the Camelot she was forbidden to look at. This act liberated her. Exactly like the liberation of a person who was trapped in his own bubble, because of the limitations set by himself, only to gather the courage and cross that line. Just as anyone would panic with the first steps towards taking big chances to make dreams reality, the lady of Shalott frets that she will now suffer the consequences: the curse (which in our interpretation is doubt).

Part IV:

Stanza 14:

In the stormy east-wind straining,

The pale yellow woods were waning,

The broad stream in his banks complaining,

Heavily the low sky raining

Over tower'd Camelot;

Down she came and found a boat

Beneath a willow left afloat,

And round about the prow she wrote

The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

We are now entering the last part of this poem. Stanza fourteen begins with stormy weather, portraying to the reader the circumstances of the situation. There is now a "stormy" wind, the yellow leaves of the forest seem to be disappearing, the river is complaining and heavy rain begins to fall. The lady of Shalott finally leaves her abode to find a boat floating under a willow tree. She gets in the boat and carves "The Lady of Shalott" on the front of the boat.

Analysis:

The stormy weather represents the chaos we create for ourselves and our environment when we let the curse (our doubts) become a reality when it really doesn't have to. In the story, the lady loses hope in retaining any normalcy in her life and that pushes her to leave her comfort zone that she has never left before. Sometimes you need that fear of doubt and failure to push you into taking the steps you need to be forced out of your comfort zone and into a place where you can easily reach your Camelot in search of your Lancelot.

Stanza 15:

And down the river's dim expanse

Like some bold seër in a trance,

Seeing all his own mischance—

With a glassy countenance

Did she look to Camelot.

And at the closing of the day

She loosed the chain, and down she lay;

The broad stream bore her far away,

The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

Stanza fifteen continues the Lady of Shalott's journey outside her normal domain. Before she actually gets in the boat, she looks down the river at Camelot like a fortuneteller who is in a "trance" once he realizes his own misfortunes that await him. At the end of the day, she eventually loosens the chain that is tying the boat to land and lays down in it. The boat then starts to take her "far away".

Analysis:

In this stanza, The lady anticipated the curse to befall her and basically froze her attempts to gain anything out of the risk that she took when she glanced at Camelot. Most of us can relate to this situation, as we feel like eminent inevitable doom awaits those who take big chances to get their "Lancelot". As the lady lay in the boat she was basically preparing her grave waiting for the curse to befall her. What we learn is that sometimes we are bringing hardships upon ourselves, for no reason but our fear of a doubtful unfamiliar future.

Stanza 16:

Lying, robed in snowy white

That loosely flew to left and right—

The leaves upon her falling light—

Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot:

And as the boat-head wound along

The willowy hills and fields among,

They heard her singing her last song,

The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

This stanza is illustrating an image that is most popular amongst the art that is very commonly available for the poem. The Lady of Shalott dressed in white, as she lay at the bottom of the boat with her garments moving in the wind, and leaves lightly falling on her as the boat travels through the river at night towards Camelot. Everything that surrounded the boat, including the willows, and fields were witnesses of the last song that the lady of Shalott sang as she drifted by.

Analysis:

This depiction is the perfect romanticized vision of a person who has lost their battle in an attempt to earn freedom from their ritualistic daily routine. The only problem is, the lady has inflicted this upon herself almost like a need to punish herself for stepping out of line from the way she used to live. We must not punish ourselves for pursuing the goals in our lives. Doing so will only bring unnecessary rifts on your journey to Camelot, once you are brave enough to start it.

Stanza 17:

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,

Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,

Till her blood was frozen slowly,

And her eyes were darken'd wholly,

Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide

The first house by the water-side,

Singing in her song she died,

The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

Stanza seventeen is highlighting the dramatic event that the lady of Shalott is suffering and it emphasizes that through the vivid imagery of mourning, chants, sacredness, and carols. The lady of Shalott continues to sing as she drifts in the river towards Camelot until her blood slowly freezes and the light from her eyes had "darkened". This is either happening as a consequence of the weather or the curse that she was so afraid of her entire

life. As the boat has a chance to reach the first house in Camelot, the lady dies along with her song.

Analysis:

Here we witness what self-inflicted punishment can do to a person. The lady sang until she breathed her last breath. Until then, she was singing to mask the horror she was experiencing as her blood froze and the light literally left her eyes. This is important because this is portrayed as the curse, however, we as readers know that she chose to do this to herself, there was no one forcing her to act this way. Only her guilt and fear of the curse left her to curse herself to a terrible death. Sometimes we sabotage ourselves unknowingly because we are afraid of the possibility of creating a new reality for ourselves. We become so comfortable in our daily routines that even the thought of following our greatest desires makes us feel insecure.

Stanza 18:

Under tower and balcony,

By garden-wall and gallery,

A gleaming shape she floated by,

Dead-pale between the houses high,

Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,

Knight and burgher, lord and dame,

And round the prow they read her name,

The Lady of Shalott.

Summary:

This stanza is quite simple as it describes how her body finally reaches Camelot and how it travels within. The boat carrying her body passes under the towers and balconies, past the gardens, galleries, and houses in the very Camelot that the lady was never to see. Everyone (those of nobility and good social ranks) came out and crowded around the waterfront to come and see the boat and read her name clearly written on the front of the boat: The Lady of Shalott.

Analysis:

The lady finally makes it to Camelot, the one she wanted to see. Unfortunately it was her dead body that got the opportunity to tour Camelot. The interesting thing to note is that even out of Shalott, she brought the silence with her to Camelot because she was too afraid to risk a chance at a new reality. As the people of Camelot (who by the way are successful, which fits nicely with the interpretation that they are those who took risks to get their Camelot") came to view the sight of a person who cursed themselves to a death for trying to step out of their comfort zone.

Stanza 19:

Who is this? and what is here?

And in the lighted palace near

Died the sound of royal cheer;

And they cross'd themselves for fear,

All the knights at Camelot:

But Lancelot mused a little space;

He said, "She has a lovely face;

God in his mercy lend her grace,

The Lady of Shalott."

Summary:

Stanza nineteen concludes this poem with the voices of the people of Camelot as they asked the many questions they had at the sight of a lady frozen to death in a boat floating down the river. The sight shook them and they "crossed themselves" because they were afraid. Lancelot then steps forward and after seeing her declares that she was beautiful and prays for God's mercy and grace to be with her. This stanza is important not only because it concludes the poem, but because our two characters finally meet in person, but this time unbeknownst to the lady of Shalott.

Analysis:

As the poem finally concludes we see that fate did have a meeting planned for the lady of Shalott to be in Camelot and meet her Lancelot, but unfortunately because of her own insecurities she could not enjoy the scene. Interestingly enough, Lancelot found her beautiful, if only he knew how much was riding on his shoulders as he rode into Camelot the other day. Let this be a lesson to those who hesitate to take chances and easily become nervous about the consequences and cause more harm than good anticipating failure. You will not have success in achieving your greatest goals and making it to your dream life if you carry the curse of doubt with you.

2.3 INTRODUCTION TO ROBERT BROWNING

Robert Browning, (born May 7, 1812, London—died Dec. 12, 1889, Venice), major English poet of the Victorian age, noted for his mastery of dramatic monologue and psychological portraiture. His most noted work was The Ring and the Book (1868–69), the story of a Roman murder trial in 12 books.

Browning's works fall roughly into three periods: Pauline (1833), Paracelsus (1835), Sodello (1840) belong to the first period. Pauline is a self confessional monologue, Paracelsus deals with man's unquestionable thirst for knowledge and Sodello upholds the spirit of the Renaissance.

Browning's more mature poem published at Italy and that includes Dramatic Lyrics (1846), Dramatic Romance (1848), Men and Women (1855), Dramatic Personae (1864), The Ring and the Book (1868). The Dramatic Lyrics has such remarkable poems as 'Evelyn Hope', 'Porphyria's lover', 'My Last Duchess', 'The Pied Piper of Hamlin' etc; The Dramatic Romance include some beautiful poems like The Lost Leader, How they Brought the Good News etc. In this Dramatic Lyrics Browning found the innovative literary form-the dramatic monologue. Dramatic monologue is actually a one man's speech, almost like Soliloquy in a dramatic situation where the speaker entails a second person. Browning's Men and Women consists purely of dramatic monologue such as Fra Lippo Lippi, Andrea Del Sarto, Rabbi Ben Ezra, Abt Voglar etc. The Ring and the Book, Browning's masterpiece in the 3rd phase is a concerted work of imagination that may be said to constitute Browning's crowning achievement.

Browning also wrote some 11 dramas like Stafford, Pippa Passes, A Blot in Scutchian, In The Balcony, A Soul's Tragedy. But as a playwright Bowning could not be successful. Infact Browning's poetry reveals him more as dramatic thinker than as a dramatic creator – his is not the drama of outer world of events but of the inner world of thoughts and ideas.

Few poets have suffered more than Browning from hostile incomprehension or misplaced admiration, both arising very often from a failure to recognize the predominantly dramatic nature of his work. The bulk of his writing before 1846 was for the theatre; thereafter his major poems showed his increasing mastery of the dramatic monologue. This consists essentially of a narrative spoken by a single character and amplified by his comments on his story and the circumstances in which he is speaking. From his own knowledge of the historical or other events described, or else by inference from the poem itself, the reader is eventually enabled to assess the intelligence and honesty of the narrator and the value of the views he expresses. This type of dramatic monologue, since it depends on the unconscious provision by the speaker of the evidence by which the reader is to judge him, is eminently suitable for the ironist. Browning's fondness for this form has, however, encouraged the two most common misconceptions of the nature of his poetry—that it is deliberately obscure and that its basic "message" is a facile optimism. Neither of these criticisms is groundless; both are incomplete.

Browning is not always difficult. In many poems, especially short lyrics, he achieves effects of obvious felicity. Nevertheless, his superficial difficulties, which prevent an easy understanding of the sense of a passage, are evident enough: his attempts to convey the broken and irregular rhythms of speech make it almost impossible to read the verse quickly; his elliptical syntax sometimes disconcerts and confuses the reader but can be mastered with little effort; certain poems, such as Sordello or "Old Pictures in Florence," require a considerable acquaintance with their subjects in order to be understood; and his fondness for putting his monologues into the mouths of charlatans and sophists, such as Mr. Sludge or Napoleon III, obliges the reader to follow

a chain of subtle or paradoxical arguments. All these characteristics stand in the way of easy reading.

But even when individual problems of style and technique have been resolved, the poems' interest is seldom exhausted. First, Browning often chooses an unexpected point of view, especially in his monologues, thus forcing the reader to accept an unfamiliar perspective. Second, he is capable of startling changes of focus within a poem. For example, he chooses subjects in themselves insignificant, as in "Fra Lippo Lippi" and "Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha," and treats through them the eternal themes of poetry. This transition from particular observation to transcendental truth presents much the same challenge to the reader as do the metaphysical poets of the 17th century and much the same excitement. Third, because Browning seldom presents a speaker without irony, there is a constant demand on the reader to appreciate exactly the direction of satiric force in the poem. Even in a melodious poem such as "A Toccata of Galuppi's," the valid position must be distinguished from the false at every turn of the argument, while in the major casuistic monologues, such as "Bishop Blougram's Apology," the shifts of sympathy are subtler still.

It has also been objected that Browning uses his poetry as a vehicle for his philosophy, which is not of itself profound or interesting, being limited to an easy optimism. But Browning's dramatic monologues must, as he himself insisted, be recognized as the utterances of fictitious persons drawing their strength from their appropriateness in characterizing the speaker, and not as expressions of Browning's own sentiments. Thus his great gallery of imagined characters is to be regarded as an exhaustive catalog of human motives, not as a series of self-portraits. Nevertheless, certain fundamental assumptions are made so regularly that they may be taken to represent Browning's personal beliefs, such as his Christian faith. In matters of human conduct his sympathies are with those who show loving hearts, honest natures, and warmth of feeling; certainly these qualities are never satirized. He is in general on the side of those who commit themselves wholeheartedly to an ideal, even if they fail. By itself this might suggest rather a naive system of values, yet he also, sometimes even in the same poem, shows his understanding of those who have been forced to lower their standards and accept a compromise. Thus, although Browning is far from taking a cynical or pessimistic view of man's nature or destiny, his hopes for the world are not simple and unreasoning.

In The Ring and the Book Browning displays all his distinctive qualities. He allows a dramatic monologue to each character he portrays—to the man on trial for murder, to his young wife, whom he has mortally wounded, to her protector, to various Roman citizens, to the opposing lawyers, and to the pope, who ultimately decides the accused's fate. Each monologue deals with substantially the same occurrences, but each, of course, describes and interprets them differently. By permitting the true facts to emerge gradually by inference from these conflicting accounts, Browning reveals with increasing subtlety the true natures of his characters. As each great monologue illuminates the moral being of the speaker, it becomes clear that nothing less than the whole ethical basis of

human actions is in question. For over 20,000 lines Browning explores his theme, employing an unfaltering blank verse, rising often to passages of moving poetry, realizing in extraordinary detail the life of 17th-century Rome, and creating a series of characters as diverse and fully realized as those in any novel.

During Browning's lifetime, critical recognition came rapidly after 1864; and, although his books never sold as well as his wife's or Tennyson's, he thereafter acquired a considerable and enthusiastic public. In the 20th century his reputation, along with those of the other great Victorians, declined, and his work did not enjoy a wide reading public, perhaps in part because of increasing scepticism of the values implied in his poetry. He has, however, influenced many modern poets, such as Robert Frost and Ezra Pound, partly through his development of the dramatic monologue, with its emphasis on the psychology of the individual and his stream of consciousness, but even more through his success in writing about the variety of modern life in language that owed nothing to convention. As long as technical accomplishment, richness of texture, sustained imaginative power, and a warm interest in humanity are counted virtues, Browning will be numbered among the great English poets.

2.4 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF ANDREA DEL SARTO

'Andrea del Sarto' by Robert Browning was published in the collection, Men and Women. It is written in the form of a dramatic monologue told from the perspective of the Italian Renaissance painter, Andrea del Sarto.

The poem begins with the speaker, the artist Andrea del Sarto, asking his wife, Lucrezia, to come and sit with him for a moment without fighting. He wants the two of them to have a quiet moment together before he jumps into a reflection of his life. The speaker begins by describing the passage of time and the lack of control he feels he had over his life.

The speaker then spends the majority of the poem discussing how his skill level compares to the work of other artists. He knows that he has more skill than others such as Michelangelo or Raphael, but his art does not have the soul the others can tap into. Somehow they have been able to enter heaven and leave with inspiration that he never receives. The artist is disappointed by this fact as no one seems to value his own art the way he thinks they should.

At points, he tries to put most of the blame for his life onto his wife. He thinks that she is the one that has been holding him back. He points out the fact that the other artists don't have the same impediment. He thinks about the time that he spent in France working for the king. There, he was applauded by the court but then forced back to Italy by his wife who was tired of the way things were.

By the end of the poem, he concludes that although his life has not been what he wanted he knows that he cannot change it. He is happy to have

spent this time with his wife and says as much to her. This nice moment is interrupted by the arrival of Lucrezia's cousin. This "cousin" is demanding money from del Sarto to help pay off gambling debts. He gives in to the request and tells his wife, solemnly and sadly, that she can go.

Analysis of Andrea del Sarto:

Lines 1-10:

But do not let us quarrel any more,

No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:

Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.

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

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

Treat his own subject after his own way,

Fix his own time, accept too his own price,

And shut the money into this small hand

When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?

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

The speaker of this poem, Andrea del Sarto, begins the piece by addressing his wife. These two will be the predominant characters that feature in this poem and many parts of the monologue are clearly spoken to Lucrezia.

He asks her at the beginning of the poem if they can just have one moment in which they are not fighting or "quarrel[ing]." He hopes that she will listen to him for just this once as he has every intention of conceding to her wishes. Lucrezia turns her face towards the speaker but he does not believe that she is genuine. He asks her if she brought "her heart" to their conversation.

Del Sarto tells his wife that he is willing to do what she asked and pay, or lend money to her "friend's friend. It is unclear why the friend needs money but he promises to do it "to-morrow."

Lines 11-20:

I often am much wearier than you think,

This evening more than usual, and it seems

As if—forgive now—should you let me sit

Here by the window with your hand in mine

And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,

Both of one mind, as married people use,

Quietly, quietly the evening through,

I might get up to-morrow to my work

Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.

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

He confesses to her at the beginning of this section, in an attempt to keep her full attention, that oftentimes he is much "wearier" than she might think, and especially so this evening.

To help remedy this weariness, del Sarto asks that Lucrezia come and sit by him, with her hand in his, and look out on "Fiesole," a section of Florence, Italy. Together there they will sit "quietly," and maybe be able to refresh themselves for the next day.

Lines 21-28:

Your soft hand is a woman of itself,

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

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

For each of the five pictures we require:

It saves a model. So! keep looking so—

My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!

—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,

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

The speaker is deeply endeared by the feeling of his wife's hand. He sees it as being a representation of her entire body that can curl inside his own, a representation of "the man's bared breast."

He is cherishing how his wife appears to him at this moment. He sees her as being a "serpentining beauty" that will serve him as the model for "five pictures" that he is planning. He says that it will save them money that way and he would rather paint her anyway. She's so perfect and pristine that he can't imagine why she would ever even pierce her ear to wear earrings.

Lines 29-40:

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

Which everybody looks on and calls his,

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

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

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

There's what we painters call our harmony!

A common greyness silvers everything,—

All in a twilight, you and I alike

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

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

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

To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.

He continues to lavish praise on his wife as he thinks about her image hanging in the homes of men that have purchased his work. Each of these men looks at the painting and considers it theirs but she does not belong to any of them.

The speaker seems to believe that Lucrezia is the ideal model for his work as he says that with one smile from her he can compose a whole painting. That is all the inspiration that he needs. She is what "painters call our harmony!" She is his muse.

He remembers a time when they were both new to one another when they first met. Initially, she was proud of who he was and what he was going to be, but he knows that is "gone." Additionally, he says that back then he had his, "youth…hope…[and] art" that he was living through. All this has been "toned down" later in life as things did not turn out quite as he expected.

Lines 41- 51:

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

That length of convent-wall across the way

Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;

The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,

And autumn grows, autumn in everything.

Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape

As if I saw alike my work and self

And all that I was born to be and do,

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

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

So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!

From where the two are sitting overlooking Fiesole, he can hear the chiming, or "clinking" of a bell "from the chapel-top" as well as observe the church and the "last monk" leaving the garden for the day.

The speaker then takes a moment here to ponder how "we," he and Lucrezia, as well as all of humankind, are in "God's hand." Time is passing, allowing him to look back on his life and see if he was able to accomplish what he wanted. He recognizes that the life God makes for "us" is both free and "fettered."

Lines 52-59:

I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!

This chamber for example—turn your head—

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

Nor care to understand about my art,

But you can hear at least when people speak:

And that cartoon, the second from the door

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

Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.

The speaker believes that God made a "fetter" for human life and let it do what it wanted to. At this point in the poem, the speaker begins to lament the career that he did not quite have.

He believes that all those throughout his life did not truly understand his art. They did not care to take the time to truly see it.

Del Sarto does mention an instance of happiness, that was more than likely reoccurring, as people commented from afar that his "cartoon," or sketch for a painting, was just "the thing." Many have felt "Love!" For his work, but just not to the extent that he feels he deserves.

Lines 60-67:

I can do with my pencil what I know,

What I see, what at bottom of my heart

I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—

Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,

I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,

Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,

And just as much they used to say in France.

At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!

The artist knows the skills that he possesses, and he can feel his own ability, coming from his heart, that allows him to create anything. It is easy for him to do "perfectly" what others struggle with.

He does interject here to say that he does not want to sound like he's bragging, but "you," meaning Lucrezia, know of "my" ability and the ease with which "I" create.

Lines 68-77:

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

I do what many dream of, all their lives,

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

And fail in doing. I could count twenty such

On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,

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

To paint a little thing like that you smeared

Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—

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

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

The speaker goes on, allowing himself a few more lines of self-indulgence saying that he has never needed to sketch or study a subject before he draws it.

He can do what many "strive to do, and agonize to do, / And fail in doing." There are many such men in this town.

Lines 78-87:

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

There burns a truer light of God in them,

In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,

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

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

Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,

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

Enter and take their place there sure enough,

Though they come back and cannot tell the world.

My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.

While these men may envy the ease with which he creates perfect paintings, he does not have something that they do. They have in them a true light of God that exists in their "vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain." These men are blessed by God but also suffer for his gifts.

Del Sarto goes back to speaking about himself, using an insult that is often cast his way. He calls his own hand that of a "craftsman" that does not create with heart, only with skill. His art and his mind are "shut" out of heaven where the other men are readily entering and exiting with the subjects they paint. He can get close to heaven, but not quite all the way.

Lines 88-96:

The sudden blood of these men! at a word—

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

I, painting from myself and to myself,

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

Or their praise either. Somebody remarks

Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,

His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,

Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?

Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?

The speaker has now worked himself into a serious frustration at the state of his own artistic ability. He is trying to find flaws in "these men" that can tap into the divine subject matter. While del Sarto sees himself as being even-tempered, "these men" are easy to upset and quick to cast blame on others.

Whenever someone comments on his work and critiques his efforts he thinks, "what of that?" He doesn't care if he is criticized for how something is drawn because he knows his own skill.

Lines 97-106:

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

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

Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!

I know both what I want and what might gain,

And yet how profitless to know, to sigh

"Had I been two, another and myself,

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

Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth

The Urbinate who died five years ago.

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

All this being said, the speaker knows that a man should reach for things that might seem unattainable. He looks at his own work and sees how it is perfectly one thing. It is "Placid" in a way that bothers him.

Even though he can see what he wants to create, he is unable to imbue his art with the soul that other's works have. He knows that if he had been "two" different people in one body, himself, and someone with the skill of Michelangelo, he would have conquered the world of art.

From where the speaker is sitting he references a piece of art across the room. This line drags the audience back into the physical room with del Sarto and Lucrezia. The piece that he is referencing was sent to him by "George Vasari," the famous Italian biographer of artists and their works.

Lines 107-114:

Well, I can fancy how he did it all,

Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,

Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,

Above and through his art—for it gives way;

That arm is wrongly put—and there again—

A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,

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

He means right—that, a child may understand.

This particular piece is easy for the speaker to break down. He knows how it was painted and how the artist "Pour[ed] his soul" into the art for "kings and popes to see."

The art may be beautiful in its conception but del Sarto, with his eye for detail, can see that the "arm is wrongly put" and that there are faults in the "drawing's lines." These details are excused by other viewers as its "soul is right." All may understand that, even a child.

Lines 115-126:

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

But all the play, the insight and the stretch—

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

Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,

We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!

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

More than I merit, yes, by many times.

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

And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,

And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird

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

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

Even del Sarto understands that even if the arm is not quite right, it is still beautiful. He knows that with his skill he could fix it.

Once more he bemoans the fact that he was not given the soul to rise above everyone else. He could have even surpassed "Rafael." He refers to himself and Lucrezia as rising together through the ranks of the art world and that if she with all of her perfections of physical beauty, only brought with her a mind that might have improved del Sarto's life. He is casting part of his disappointment in himself onto her.

Lines 127-136:

Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
"The present by the future, what is that?
"Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
"Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?

Some women, the speaker states, do bring brains with them into their marriages. Why, he thinks, didn't his wife? The next lines of the poem are what the speaker wishes his wife had said to him throughout his life.

If she had really wanted to help his career and further his art she would have told him that he should give all glory to God without caring for "gain." He should be attempting to raise himself to the status of "Agnolo," meaning Michelangelo or climb up to where "Rafael," or Raphael, is.

If she had said this he might have done it for her. Or, he says, maybe it wouldn't have worked that way because God controls everything. He changes his tone here and says that it was not her fault for not speaking up to him. Instead, he should never have had a wife in the first place, like Michelangelo and Raphael.

Lines 137-148:

In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.

In the world in which they are living, the speaker says that the men who want to do something are unable to, and the men who can do it, won't. This is frustrating to him and to all the "half-men" that are only blessed with half the talent they need.

He decides that it is safer for him to have been given the life he has as he was not fit for one in which he has to speak with the "Paris lords." He claims to like it when they ignore him.

Lines 149- 161:

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

And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!

I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,

Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,

In that humane great monarch's golden look,—

One finger in his beard or twisted curl

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

One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,

The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,

I painting proudly with his breath on me,

All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,

Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls

Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—

In this stanza, the speaker is slightly standing up against those that talk about him unkindly. He is remembering when he worked for the king of France, Francis, and was at Fontainebleau for a year.

It was here that he had confidence and could put on the clothes, or stature of Raphael. This was caused by his closeness with the king. He remembers how Francis' clothes sounded when he walked and how he stood over his shoulder as the speaker painted. When he had this position he was admired by the French court and with his paint, he could influence them and gain confidence from their looks.

Lines 162- 171:

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

This in the background, waiting on my work,

To crown the issue with a last reward!

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

And had you not grown restless… but I know—

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

Too live the life grew, golden and not grey,

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

Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.

How could it end in any other way?

One more he speaks directly to his wife. He remembers that in those days the best thing of all was her face waiting for him, approving of his work. He asks her if these days were not "kingly," and says that it is her fault, "had [she] not grown restless…" and made him leave, his future might have been brighter.

But, he concedes, what's "done" is done. At this point in his life, he is but a "weak-eyed bat" that cannot be tempted out of his routine and "four walls." He despondently concludes this section by saying that it could not have ended any other way.

Lines 172-182:

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

The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since

I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?

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

You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!

"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;

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

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

Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge

Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows

My better fortune, I resolve to think.

It appears as if Lucrezia, bored with their situation in France, had asked him to come home and so he did.

He reaches his hands up to "frame" her face and golden hair and comforts himself by remembering that she is his. He "resolve[s] to think" that ending up with her, rather than painting something lasting, was his "better fortune."

Lines 183-193:

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

Said one day Agnolo, his very self,

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

(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts

Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,

Too lifted up in heart because of it)

"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub

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

"Who, were he set to plan and execute

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

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

Andrea del Sarto continues to speak to his wife, Lucrezia, imploring her to understand the daily trauma he goes through as he thinks about his place amongst the great artists.

He imagines a conversation between the two great Renaissance masters, Raphael and Michelangelo. He likes to think of Michelangelo saying to Raphael, as he paints in Rome, that there is another artist that works in "our Florence" and is not acknowledged. This man, if he were to be given the same commissions that "you," meaning Raphael, were given, then he would give you serious competition. To retain his place as one of the greatest painters of all time, Raphael would have "sweat" on his "brow."

This is of course a completely imagined conversation that del Sarto thinks up as he dreams of what he wishes people thought of him.

Lines 194- 204:

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

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

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

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

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

(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?

Do you forget already words like those?)

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

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

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

This hour has been an hour! Another smile?

In a torrent of emotion, contrary to how he portrayed himself previously, del Sarto turns to the Raphael copy that Vasari gave him and begins to make adjustments. He makes lines here and there, hoping to fix the arm, but then backtracks. He does not want to destroy the "soul" of the painting. "He's Rafael!" Anything that del Sarto does to the painting will seem trite in comparison.

The speaker, now relaxed again, thinks once more about this imagined opportunity to have the same type of commissions that Raphael received.

He dreams if only "really there was such a chance." He hopes that if this had been the case, Lucrezia would have been proud of him. Already an hour has passed during this conversation and he sees it as being a productive one.

Lines 205- 213:

If you would sit thus by me every night

I should work better, do you comprehend?

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

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

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

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

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

Inside the melancholy little house

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

He tells her that if only she would take the time to sit with him every night, that he would work "better." He would create better work, but he would also be able to take better care of her and give her more.

The sun has set and it has "settled dusk now." There is a star in the sky and the owls are hooting around them. He tells her to come away from the window and deeper into their "melancholy little house."

Lines 214-223:

King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights

When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,

The walls become illumined, brick from brick

Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,

That gold of his I did cement them with!

Let us but love each other. Must you go?

That Cousin here again? he waits outside?

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

More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?

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

As the speaker is pondering how the king of France now regards him, he is staring around the room imagining the house transformed into a palace. His daydream is interrupted by the appearance of his wife's "Cousin" who is waiting for her outside. He does not want her to go, especially since the cousin is demanding money to pay off his gambling debts.

He believes that she treated him kindly over the last hour in an attempt to get the money that her cousin needs.

Lines 224-234:

While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The grey remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.

Del Sarto feels a new pang of loss as his wife is leaving him that night. He knows that he still has his work and "some of a heart," left but "what," he asks, is "it worth?"

He agrees to pay the money but only if he can be let alone brood through the rest of the evening. He thinks that if he could only paint one more picture, it would depict the "Virgin's face," and not this time modeled after Lucrezia. He wants her there beside him, not in the picture. He wants to prove himself and have her hear all the wonderful things that the others will say about him.

But this is all tomorrow. For now, he tells her she can, "satisfy" her friend.

Lines 235- 243:

I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

In this stanza, it becomes clear that the relationship between the cousin and Lucrezia might be romantic. The speaker seems to understand this but

knows that he cannot do anything to stop her. He gives her the "thirteen scudi" to pass on to the man, or "ruff" as he calls him.

He asks if this amount pleases her and then asks what exactly the "cousin" does to please her more. He does not expect an answer to this question.

Lines 244-252:

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.

I regret little, I would change still less.

Since there my past life lies, why alter it?

The very wrong to Francis!—it is true

I took his coin, was tempted and complied,

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

My father and my mother died of want.

Well, had I riches of my own? you see

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

The last section of the poem breaks into one more long stanza. At the end of this night as he is looking back on his life he claims to "regret little," and desire to "change still less." It is hard to believe this assertion as he has spent the entire poem talking about how he wishes his life had been different.

He does know though that there is no way that he can alter his "past life." He declares that the time he spent in France with King Francis was wrong. That he never should have taken "his coin." He may have been able to amass a bit of money off the king's patronage, but he still was never happy.

Lines 253-267:

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

And I have laboured somewhat in my time

And not been paid profusely. Some good son

Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!

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

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

This must suffice me here. What would one have?

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

Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,

Meted on each side by the angel's reed,

For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me

To cover—the three first without a wife,

While I have mine! So—still they overcome

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

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

The last section of the poem concludes on a very solemn and self-pitying note with the speaker relating his own life to that of his parents. They were "born poor, lived poor, and poor they died."

The speaker knows that he has "laboured" in his days on the earth and that he has not been paid well for it. He questions whether he has been a good son to his parents and knows that other "good sons" would not have been able to paint the "two hundred pictures" that he did.

Once more he turns to Lucrezia and tells her that, yes, "You loved me quite enough," tonight. He must be happy with what he has received from her, and from life itself. He thinks that maybe he will have a new chance at success in heaven, but still, he will have his wife. When Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael get to heaven, they will not be married, but he will. He concludes the poem with this reiteration, and misdirection of blame onto his wife. He tells her afterward that now she may go as her "Cousin" is whistling at her.

2.5 QUESTIONS

1. In "The Lady of Shalott," what is the allegory and how does it relate to humanity?
2. In "The Lady of Shalott," how did the curse fall upon her? What did she do once she was under its spell? Discuss
3. How can "The Lady of Shalott" be read at a symbolic level as a text that speaks of the artist's relationship to the world? Discuss.
4. How are the ideas present in "The Lady of Shalott" applicable to today's society? Explain.
5. What do you like or dislike about "The Lady of Shalott"? Refer closely to the text in support of your answers.
6. Based on the poem Andrea Del Sarto, what do you think Browning's attitude is toward organized religion?
7. What is the effect of Browning's dramatic monologue form? What does it help him accomplish? Use examples from Andrea Del Sarto
8. Attempt a character analysis of Andrea Del Sarto
9. Discuss Andrea Del Sarto as a dramatic monologue

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8

CRITICAL STUDY OF D.G. ROSETTI'S "THE BLESSED DAMOZEL" AND SWINBURNE'S "THE FORSAKEN GARDEN"

Unit structure

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- To familiarize the students with the major representative poets of every age and movements therein.
- To help them study different genres of poetry in the context of socio-cultural background of the age

With this knowledge the students will be equipped with comprehensive understanding of the major representative poets of every age and especially from Chaucer to the present. Students will acquire the discipline to become reflective and imaginative thinkers through a close, critical and analytical reading of the prescribed texts.

8.1 D.G. ROSSETTI-THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

8.1.1 About Dante Gabriel Rossetti:

Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti generally known by the name Dante Gabriel Rossetti Dante Gabriel Rossetti was born in London in 1828. He was an English poet, illustrator, painter, and translator. Rossetti was the eldest son of a family of Italian expatriates. When he was young, he wanted to be a painter. He delineated literary subjects in his early drawings. Rossetti went on to form the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848 with William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais. which sought to introduce a new type of collaboration among different kinds of artists, bringing poetic vision, attention and concentration to detail, and serious themes of their works into British contemporary art. Rossetti also largely and widely read, American writer, poet and literary critic Edgar Allen Poe's poetry. His work also influenced the European Symbolists. He was also an important and leading predecessor of the Aesthetic movement. His art was also represented and defined by its sensuality and its medieval revivalism.

Rossetti's early poetry was influenced by John Keats and William Blake. Whereas, his later poetry was defined by the intricate interlinking of thought and feeling, specifically, in his sonnet sequence, 'The House of Life'. Both poetry and image are intimately entwined in Rossetti's work. Rossetti frequently wrote sonnets. Rossetti's personal life was closely associated to his work, especially his relationships with his models and muses such as Elizabeth Siddal (to whom he married), Fanny Cornforth and Jane Morris.

8.1.2 Summary of The Blessed Damozel:

The ballad, 'The Blessed Damozel' by Dante Rosetti begins with the speaker characterizing a woman who, leaning out from heaven, can be seen holding lilies in her hands. The woman is breathtakingly splendid and beautiful yet she is also sad and mournful. And eventually in the very few stanzas of the ballad, it becomes clear that she left someone on Earth. That someone is her lover, who's lines are written in the first person and contained within parenthesis, which is sorrowful and melancholy by her departure. They crave and pine for each another across the extraordinarily tremendous expanse between the Earth and the "ramparts" of "God's house," on which she is leaning.

The damsel, which sounds like bird song, speaks out loud for all to hear. The woman delineates the love that the two share among them and how soon, for the reason that, they have both prayed for it, that despite all the circumstances they will be reunited and one day God will bring them together. She thinks that, once her beloved arrives in heaven, she will show him everything which is the in the heaven to see. She further says that, they both will meet the Virgin Mary and Mary will introduce them to Christ who will bestow blessings for their love. Furthermore, the woman thinks that they both will finally be able to live in the peace, harmony and

solitude which they did not get to experience on Earth. But sadly, and lamentably, this is just a dream and after returning to reality, the damsel breaks down and starts crying once more at their separation.

8.1.3 Analysis of The Blessed Damozel:

"The Blessed Damozel" by Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti, was first published in the year 1850 in the Pre-Raphaelite journal named The Germ. It is a dramatic lyric poem which consists of 24 stanzas of six lines each. The tone of the poem is romantic yet depressing and distressing. Dante Rossetti conceived the idea for this very long poem after reading American writer Edgar Allen Poe's narrative poem "The Raven", which was about a person who mourns the passing of his beloved, a woman named Lenore, and going through Dante's "Divine Comedy" in which the writer's first romantic attempt and effort takes him all through purgatory and also heaven during his imaginary course through the sphere.

The theme of the poem 'The Blessed Damozel' is undying unending love. Despite the fact, the death of one woman has separated and detached her from the man she loves, the unending love between them as well as the hope that one day they will reunite in heaven lives on. The word "Damozel" is an archaic word, and the poetic version of "damsel" refers and indicates to a young unmarried lady.

The woman in the poem 'The Blessed Damozel' by Rossetti feels that though she cannot reach her lover, her lover needs to reach her. The woman further says that, she has prayed for the union with her lover and then stops for a while and worries that her lover has not prayed yet. She then asks God and wants to know that, whether it is true that the strength and fortitude of two lovers is perfect or not. Furthermore, she says that, if it is true, then she feels anxious and fearful that something horrendous and awful has happened to her lover, or if this is not the reason that her lover has forgotten her or is no longer in love with her.

8.1.4 Character list:

The Blessed Damozel:

The titular character of the poem, "The Blessed Damozel" by Gabriel Rosetti is a woman who died 10 years ago on Earth and was ascended to Heaven. In Heaven, the damozel eternally and endlessly waits for her lover on Earth to join her. Rossetti's choice to refer to this young woman as a "damozel" suggests that she was a young woman when she died and that she and the speaker, although they were lovers, were unmarried. In the first two stanzas of the poem, we get the depiction and portrayl of the damozel; "Her eyes were deeper than the depth / of waters still'd at even; / She had three lilies in her hand, / And the stars in her hair were seven" (3-6). The speaker of the poem delineates the damozel as breathtakingly beautiful, with long blonde hair, deep eyes, and an sweet, ethereal and heavenly voice: "Her voice was like the voice the stars / Had when they sang together" (59-60).

The Damozel's Lover:

In 'The Blessed Damozel" by Rosetti, the damozel's lover, who is still alive on Earth, appears five times throughout the poem. We come across his voice in Stanzas IV, X, XVI, and XXIII. Every time when the damozel's lover appears, his words are separated from the rest of the poem with parentheses. Despite the fact, 10 years have passed since the damozel's death, her lover is still mourning and lamenting for her. He misses her so much that he imagines that he can feel her presence with him on Earth. For instance, in the eleventh stanza of the poem, we can see he confuses birdsong for the damozel's voice: "Ah-sweet! Even now, in that bird's song, / Strove not her accents there, / Fain to be harken'd? When those bells" (61-3).

Mary:

In the poem 'The Blessed Damozel', we first see Mary in the second stanza through the depiction of the damozel as she says, she is wearing a white rose given to her from Mary for being a faithful servant. This mention of Mary establishes her as an esteemed and admired character within Dante Gabriel Rossetti's imagined Heaven and hints at her generosity, goodness, kindness and support. Henceforth, the damozel refers to Mary as "the dear mother" (119). By portraying the character of Mary, Rosetti's reference is to the biblical Mary, mother of Jesus. In Stanza XVIII of the poem, Mary is mentioned again, and this time, in depth. The damozel delineates how Mary lives in the "groves" (103) in Heaven, which is surrounded by 5 beautiful and splendid servants, named "Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen, Margaret, and Rosalys" (107-8).

The Speaker:

In the poem "The Blessed Damozel" by Rosetti, the speaker is an omniscient, he is the single character who can see the damozel as well as her lover on Earth. He delineates the damozel very beautifully in the first few stanzas, emphasizing on her embellishments and adornments instead on her sensual beauty.

8.1.5 Themes:

Love:

Love is a significant and powerful theme in many of Dante Rossetti's poems, and it can especially be seen in "The Blessed Damozel." Both the damozel and her lover in this poem are in a terrible situation. The poem describes and portrays the intense and profound yearning of two young lovers for each other. Their love in unending and undying. Heaven convolutes the love that the damozel and her lover share for each other. In the poem "The Blessed Damozel," by Gabriel Dante, love allows the damozel and her lover to connect with each other in ways that defy the laws of physics, space, and time.

Hope:

Unlike love, hope is another central theme in "The Blessed Damozel" by Gabriel Rosetti. It is the damozel's hope that keeps her pacing at the outskirt of Heaven, eagerly and desperately waiting for her lover to join her in the skies. Damozel is hopeful for her lover, for the most of the poem and makes plans as to what she will do with her lover when he finally arrives. However, as the poem proceeds further, we see that damozel comes to the realization that she may never see her lover again, and hence, her hope to meet her lover turns into misery, pain and despair.

Christianity:

Christianity in the poem 'The Blessed Damozel' by Gabriel Rosetti provides the basis for the characters, moral code, logic, and setting. The poem chiefly, for the most part, is intensely embroiled in Christianity, even including references to Bible verses and the Bible's most well-known and notable figures; Mary and Jesus Christ.

Virginity:

An underlying theme throughout the poem "The Blessed Damozel" by Gabriel Rosetti is that of virginity. The damozel herself is a virgin—we are aware of this because throughout the poem, she is called by the name 'damozel', which is an archaic spelling of "damsel," which means unmarried woman. Mary gave the damozel a white flower when she got to Heaven to commemorate and honour her virginity, and her continued faith, devotion and loyalty to the Virgin Mary; "Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem, / No wrought flowers did adorn, / But a white rose of Mary's gift, / For service meetly worn" (7-10).

8.1.6 Symbols and Motifs:

The Gold Bar of Heaven (Symbol):

In the poem by Dante Rossetti, 'The Blessed Damozel', damozel is standing at the edge of Heaven as it droops over the cosmos, looking down on Earth. The damsel is delineated as leaning over the bar in the very first stanza of the poem; "The blessed damozel lean'd out / From the gold bar of Heaven" (1-2). The bar is mentioned again in the middle stanza of them poem, as the speaker muses that the woman must have made the gold bar warm from her body heat as he writes; "Until her bosom must have made / The bar she lean'd on warm" (45-6). The use of the word gold bar appears again at the end of the poem; "And then she cast her arms along / The golden barriers, / And laid her face between her hands, / And wept" (141-4). The damozel leans against the "gold bar" for the reason that, she wants nothing else but just to be closer to her lover on Earth.

The Colour White (Symbol):

From the second stanza of the poem, we perceive that, the damozel is wearing a white rose that was given to her by the Virgin Mary, and the scene with the Virgin Mary suggests that everyone else in Heaven wears

white, too. The damozel delineates the Virgin's process of making clothing with her handmaidens: "Circlewise sit they, with bound locks / And foreheads garlanded; / Into the fine cloth white like flame / Weaving the golden thread" (109-112).

Stars (Symbol):

Stars appear frequently in the poem "The Blessed Damozel," by Dante Rossetti. It is always connected and associated to the damozel herself. In the very first stanza of the poem, damozel is wearing exactly seven stars in her hair, while in the stanza IX her voice is likened to the sound of the moving stars, which is repeated again in Stanza X. The stars, hence, are symbolic for what the damozel has become for her lover on Earth—a star that he knows is always there, and watching over him

Fire (Symbol):

In the poem 'The Blessed Damozel', by Dante Rosetti, fire appears in distinctive shapes and forms, some fairly subtle, others very obvious and apparent; nevertheless, the underlying and fundamental symbolic value that fire has, stays the same throughout the poem, specifically, as the only pain that can be felt in Heaven.

Music (Motif):

Music which is seen as a symbol for God is of utmost importance in the poem "The Blessed Damozel," by Dante. Music is so much important that its symbolic power runs throughout the entire poem. The symbolic power of music begins in Stanza III of the poem, when the speaker refers to the damozel as one of "God's choristers" (14)—one who sings his songs. In the poem 'The Blessed Damozel', music, for the most part, is symbolic for the peace harmony and solitude in Heaven. Music is so much important that, everything in the poem is centered around music; every ceremonial rite that the damozel lists, goes back to it in some sense (even the Tree of Life is singing for the dove it contains).

8.1.7 Conclusion:

"The Blessed Damozel" by the English poet, illustrator, painter and translator, Dante Gabriel Rossetti's is about a woman looking down upon her lover from heaven. The woman wants to be with her lover forever but she knows that it can never happen. The feels that if the two of them will unite one day. The 'Blessed Damozel' is one of the most fascinating and alluring poems written by Dante Rossetti. The manner in which Dante Rossetti turns to heaven and to a spiritual after life would convey and suggest to the readers that this is a religious poetry. And as a matter of fact, by reading the title of the poem 'The Blessed Damozel' brings to mind to think of the Virgin Mary. However, Dante Rossetti's motive and purpose was never to write for religious purposes. The idea Dante Gabriel Rossetti presents in the poem 'The Blessed Damozel' is that earthy love survives in heaven. Being a poet, illustrator, painter and translator, Dante Gabriel Rossetti in his poem The Blessed Damozel, brought his painter's

sensibilities, responsiveness, and emotions to bear on the images he used in the long poem which consists of 24 stanzas of six lines each. Dante Rossetti's magnificent and splendid use of nature imagery and religious symbolism allineates with his Pre-Raphaelite sensibilities and exhibits an artist's eye for form and movement.

8.2 LET'S SUM UP

The unit extensively discusses about the poem The Blessed Damozel by D.G. Rossetti. The poem describes and portrays the intense and profound yearning of two young lovers for each other. They both were separated by death. The lady was dead and was taken to heaven. But the man lived on the earth below. From heaven, the lady, however, pined for her earthly lover. Both a painter and poet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti brought his painter's sensibilities to bear on the images he used in the poem The Blessed Damozel. Rossetti's sumptuous and splendid use of nature imagery and religious symbolism aligns with his Pre-Raphaelite sensibilities and shows an artist's eye for form and movement.

8.3 QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe the setting of The Blessed Damozel?
2. What is the main theme of the poem The Blessed Damozel?
3. What do you understand about The Blessed Damozel?
4. Which character is depicted in The Blessed Damozel?
5. Write a detailed summary of The Blessed Damozel by D.G. Rosesetti.
6. What is the importance of Christianity to this poem?
7. Is this poem The Blessed Damozel a hopeful or hopeless one? Explain in detail.
8. Why is the Damozel unhappy?
9. Write a detailed note on the characters of The Blessed Damozel.

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8.4 SWINBURNE: A FORSAKEN GARDEN

8.4.1 About Algernon Charles Swinburne:

English poet, playwright, novelist and critic Algernon Charles Swinburne

born into a wealthy Northumbrian family in London, England and lived from 1837 to 1909 and was also considered as one of the most technically skilled poets of the Victorian age. Swinburne wrote several novels and collections of poetry such as Poems and Ballads. In a time dominated and influenced by Christian values, Charles Swinburne wrote about non-Christian subjects such as sexuality and paganism. His poetry is marked by its robust use of rhythm, alliteration, musicality, and erroneous imagery. Swinburne's poetry centres on simple notion, ideas and features nature as a common topic.

One of Swinburne's excellent, exquisite and best-known poem "A Match" written in 1866, is about desire and longing despite the fact, it remains enticing and elusive. The topic of the poem is simple to understand and the form is rhythmic, plodding, and straightforward. In this poem, Nature can be seen as a dominant image, as Swinburn depicts love through visual imagery of flowers, birds, and weather. During Charles Swinburne's lifetime, critics considered 'Poems and Ballads' his excellent, admirable as well as his most distinctive poetic achievement, whereas, his subsequent poetry and work in other genres was often disregarded by them.

8.4.2 Summary of 'A Forsaken Garden':

Algernon Charles Swinburne's long poem "A Forsaken Garden" written in the year 1876 depicts a dead garden in the rocks by the sea. The speaker of Swinburne's poem "A Forsaken Garden" imagines what the garden was, how the garden was, and how it used to be and what kind of lovers may have visited the garden. The speaker in the closing lines speculates that the lovers died just like the garden but that love does not transcend death.

Swinburne in this poem portrays possible scenarios in which these lovers feature. One of the lovers says to other that the sea flowers of foam will outlive the roses that wither. The lover further says that the men that don't love deeply and passionately might die, although suggests that they are different. Moreover, the poet then delineates how the same wind was present at that time and furthermore suggests that their love died, or possibly continued throughout their lives. The poet further compares love to a rose that must die and asserts that it never continues beyond the grave. The poet then says that the roses and lovers are the same now in death, and that just as they are forgotten, so in the same way, we too shall be. This garden by the poet is delineated as the place where death died.

The poet further asserts that still, not even death can stay dead forever, for the reason life is cyclical in nature. He then finally closes his inner monologue with the lines, "As a god self-slain on his own strange altar, / Death lies dead."

8.4.3 Analysis of 'A Forsaken Garden':

Algernon Charles Swinburne's "A Forsaken Garden" is a contemplative look at the cyclical nature of life and love. The speaker from the long poem stands and overlooks a forsaken garden by the sea. The garden is

bedraggled and unkempt, and even the "weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses / Now lie dead." While the speaker of ‘A Forsaken Garden’ stands and muses over the abandoned and the deserted garden, his thoughts turn to what the garden and how the garden must have been like years ago, and the happy and the cheerful lovers that must have visited it.

This jump in topic of Swinburne’s ‘A Forsaken Garden’ feels natural in the human thought process, where one thing triggers or brings about a memory or a thought pattern of another. The speaker of the poem muses on the types of lovers in the garden and eventually realizes that love cannot transcend death. The speaker further asserts that, "What love was ever as deep as a grave? / They are loveless now as the grass above them / Or the wave."

Algernon Charles Swinburne’s long poem "A Forsaken Garden" contemplates and scrutinizes the finality of death and abandonment through the lens of a forsaken garden by the sea. In this poem he writes about a person's connection and relation with nature in a very tragic way. Swinburne’s poetry is generally described by sad love, dishonesty and betrayal, and his heroes are left suffering.

Even though time has taken life from the garden, it has merely heralded in a new beginning. The time of a particular rose or a particular pair of lovers has passed, their lives united and leveled in death, by leaving a trace not in the landscape, but in the imagination of the speaker. The poet however, says that just as they died and their breath no longer "sweeten[s] the seasons hereafter" so "we shall sleep." By this the poet endeavours to say that, time triumphs over one age, and only to have the destruction and annihilation that he caused gives rise to a new one.

8.4.4 Theme of Love and Worship of Nature:

The poem ‘A Forsaken Garden’ by Algernon Charles Swinburne, belongs to "Poems and Ballads, second series" of the year 1878. This is a long poem, and is composed of 10 stanzas of 8 lines each one. The central theme of the poem is the barrenness of nature, a desolate, bleak and dispe landscape, where the sea, the wind and the sun are the only "inhabitants". In the very first stanza of the poem, the poet places and bestows the garden, he begins from a big and substantial outlook to arrive at the "ghost of a garden"; it means that, there was a time when this garden was there in reality, but now it is only the imagination of the poet that can reconstruct what was there, for the reason that, now everything is dead.

The garden is surrounded and encompassed by rocks, thorns and weed, and the use of these words itself suggest and implies a desolate, barren and ghostly landscape. It seems to be a small garden towards the majesty and grandeur of the sea, that surrounds it. However, in the second stanza of the poem we come across the words such as "fields" and "long lone land" that can simply suggest a bigger landscape.

In the second stanza of the poem, we can feel the appearance of human being, by reading the third line "step should sound or a word be spoken",

however, on the contrary, the use of a hypothetical sentence suggests that anyone has gone in this garden, for the reason that in the very next line the poet writes "Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?", thus, it is impossible a human presence in this lifeless place, there are only the wind and the sea.

In the third stanza of the poem, the poet seems to disclose the reason of this bleakness and bareness, and says that it was the Time that ruined and demolished everything, except the thorns, the rocks, the wind and the weeds which live through the destroying and wrecking consequence of the time.

The poet in the fourth stanza says that, life is impossible; the comparison of the heart of a dead man with the dried seed-plots also makes clear and describes that why neither the nightingale can sing, for the reason that, like a dead man is the garden, so any type of life is possible, just like the sun and the rain inhabit this bleak landscape "all year long".

In the fifth stanza the poet increases the kind of negative adjectives by using the words such as 'gaunt, bleak and barren, conducive to emphasis the bleakness and bareness of this garden and eventually he asserts that "In a round where life seems barren as death", and he endeavours to imagine how could be this place if there was life, lovers, and men who laughed and wept, however, now there is only the wind.

The sixth stanza is merely about the sea and the wind, the only inhabitants of this landscape. They talk about how everything dies, and thereupon love that enlightened everything, dies. He further says that, the death of flowers erases love, and the death doesn't care of the other dead, and although love is deep like the sea, and ultimately it has to die.

In the last three stanzas of the poem, we can see there is a change, like a rebirth, a breath and gasp of summer arrives and wakes up everything, men and flowers and now they laugh, live and weep, and the wind and the sea can sleep, death disappears and vanishes, "from the graves they have made they shall rise up never", while, the sun and the rain take the place of the wind and the sea, and everything lives, the sea eradicates the death as a "god self-slain" and death can only die.

Hence, the poem 'A Forsaken Garden' by Algernon Charles Swinburne is about the cyclical time, of the seasons and nature, and all this dead is unavoidable. The poet further proclaims that, however, just as they died and their breath no longer "sweeten[s] the seasons hereafter" so "we shall sleep." Time triumphs over one age, and only to have the devastation he caused give rise to a new one. Even though the weeds and love are dead, the cyclical nature of time means that death never has the last word. It, too, dies, as life springs from it, clearing the landscape for a new age.

8.4.5 Conclusion:

Time leaves a ghost of a garden in Swinburne's long "A Forsaken Garden." The landscape poem by Swinburne depicts a desolate garden

where only the wind and the sea surrounding it stir. Algernon Charles Swinburne delineates the bleak setting by what used to be there. His garden is not so much dead, but moderately, absent of life. Thorns and rocks are all that remain of the blossoms and grasslands, and the silence is the consequence of the lovers that cry, break down and laugh no more. Time has besieged the life of the garden, just as the natural forces of sea, rain, and wind besiege the land. Eventually, the consequence is not death, nor is it permanent, for the ghost of what was is still present in the garden. This ghost in 'The Forsaken Garden' that remains, appears to be a pause between death and life, evidence of what was and promise of what will be, and suggests a cyclical pattern of time of the season and nature.

8.5 LET'S SUM UP

The unit extensively discusses about Algernon Charles Swinburn's poetry 'The Forsaken Garden'. Eventually, the long poem "A Forsaken Garden" is Algernon Charles Swinburne's message of his religious and scientific beliefs, delineating the shift from spiritual law to natural law evidenced in the references to time, creation, end and demise as manifested in the idea and notion of time and the ever-present sea.

8.6 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss about the central theme of the poem 'The Forsaken Garden'
2. The rhyme scheme, the prevailing alliteration, the repeated imagery, and the three syllables comprising the last line of each stanza make the poem balanced and cohesive. How do Algernon Charles Swinburne's choices here help convey the mood and meaning of the poem?
3. Write a detailed analysis of the poem 'The Forsaken Garden'
4. How is the sea of the poem 'The Forsaken Garden' is related to the seas in "Hymn to Proserpine" and "By the North Sea?"
5. Does the title of the poem have religious implications? Given the "god self-slain" metaphor in the last stanza, does Swinburne imply anything about the nature of religion?
6. How Algernon Charles Swinburne as a poet?

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MODULE - IV

9

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF T. S. ELIOT'S "THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK" AND W. B. YEATS' "A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER"

Unit Structure

9.0 OBJECTIVES

To introduce the students to the poets W.B. Yeats and T.S Eliot:

- To make them aware of their contribution to literature
- To make the students understand the summary and analysis of A Prayer For My Daughter and The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock

9.1 INTRODUCTION TO W.B. YEATS

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was born in Dublin. His father was a lawyer and a well-known portrait painter. Yeats was educated in London and in Dublin, but he spent his summers in the west of Ireland in the family's summer house at Connaught. The young Yeats was very much part of the fin de siècle in London; at the same time he was active in societies that attempted an Irish literary revival. His first volume of verse appeared in 1887, but in his earlier period his dramatic production outweighed his poetry both in bulk and in import. Together with Lady Gregory he founded the Irish Theatre, which was to become the Abbey Theatre, and served as its chief playwright until the movement was joined by John Synge. His plays usually treat Irish legends; they also reflect his fascination with mysticism and spiritualism. The Countess Cathleen (1892), The Land of Heart's Desire (1894), Cathleen ni Houlihan (1902), The King's Threshold (1904), and Deirdre (1907) are among the best known.

After 1910, Yeats's dramatic art took a sharp turn toward a highly

poetical, static, and esoteric style. His later plays were written for small audiences; they experiment with masks, dance, and music, and were profoundly influenced by the Japanese Noh plays. Although a convinced patriot, Yeats deplored the hatred and the bigotry of the Nationalist movement, and his poetry is full of moving protests against it. He was appointed to the Irish Senate in 1922. Yeats is one of the few writers whose greatest works were written after the award of the Nobel Prize. Whereas he received the Prize chiefly for his dramatic works, his significance today rests on his lyric achievement. His poetry, especially the volumes The Wild Swans at Coole (1919), Michael Robartes and the Dancer (1921), The Tower (1928), The Winding Stair and Other Poems (1933), and Last Poems and Plays (1940), made him one of the outstanding and most influential twentieth-century poets writing in English. His recurrent themes are the contrast of art and life, masks, cyclical theories of life (the symbol of the winding stairs), and the ideal of beauty and ceremony contrasting with the hubbub of modern life.

Yeats wanted poetry to engage the full complexity of life, but only insofar as the individual poet's imagination had direct access to experience or thought and only insofar as those materials were transformed by the energy of artistic articulation. He was, from first to last, a poet who tried to transform the local concerns of his own life by embodying them in the resonantly universal language of his poems. His brilliant rhetorical accomplishments, strengthened by his considerable powers of rhythm and poetic phrase, have earned wide praise from readers and, especially, from fellow poets, including W.H. Auden (who praised Yeats as the savior of English lyric poetry), Stephen Spender, Theodore Roethke, and Philip Larkin. It is not likely that time will diminish his achievements.

W. B. Yeats in his ten-stanza poem, 'A Prayer for my Daughter' questions how best to raise his daughter. Though by 1919, the war was over, in Ireland it yet turned normal. So, he ponders how she will survive the difficult times ahead, in the politically turbulent times. The poem not only expresses the helplessness of Yeats as a father but all fathers who had to walk through this situation. He wants to give his daughter a life of beauty and innocence, safety, and security. He further wants her to be well-mannered and full of humility free from intellectual hatred and being strongly opinionated. Finally, he wants her to get married into an aristocratic family which is rooted in spirituality and traditional values.

9.2 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER

Stanza One:

Once more the storm is howling, and half hid

Under this cradle-hood and coverlid

My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle

But Gregory's wood and one bare hill

Whereby the haystack- and roof-levelling wind,

Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;

And for an hour I have walked and prayed

Because of the great gloom that is in my mind.

The poem 'A Prayer for My Daughter' opens with the image of the child sleeping in a cradle half hidden by its hood. The child sleeps innocently amidst the "howling storm" outside, but Yeats couldn't settle down due to the storm inside. The storm howling symbolizes destruction mentioned by the poet in his 'The Second Coming'. The wind bred in the Atlantic has no obstacles except the estate of Lady Gregory, referring to the poet's patroness, and a bare hill. The direct impact of the wind, meaning the force of the outside world, especially on his daughter, worries the poet. Because of this great gloom he walked and prayed for his daughter to be protected from the physical storm outside and the political storm brewing across Ireland.

Stanza Two:

I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour

And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,

And under the arches of the bridge, and scream

In the elms above the flooded stream;

Imagining in excited reverie

That the future years had come,

Dancing to a frenzied drum,

Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.

In the second stanza of 'A Prayer for My Daughter', Yeats's worries about the future are further explained. He hears the sea screaming upon the tower, under the bridge, and elms above the flooded stream. The onomatopoeia word "Scream" and the "flooded stream" symbolize the poet's overwhelming anxiety for his daughter. Also, it refers to the great flood in the Bible. Due to his haunting fear, he imagines the future coming out of the sea and dances to the frenzied drum, referring to war and bloodshed. In the last line, the poet employs the paradox "murderous innocence" to contrast the world and his daughter, which also recalls the images of "blood-dimmed tide" in 'The Second Coming'.

Stanza Three:

May she be granted beauty and yet not

Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught,

Or hers before a looking-glass, for such,

Being made beautiful overmuch,

Consider beauty a sufficient end,

Lose natural kindness and maybe

The heart-revealing intimacy

That chooses right, and never find a friend.

In the third stanza of 'A Prayer for My Daughter', Yeats prays for his daughter to be gifted with beauty. At the same time, he doesn't want her beauty to distraught or makes her dependent on her beauty for everything. Further, he doesn't want her to become proud or vain that she spends all day staring at the mirror and fails to have natural companionships. The poet implies that too much beauty is a dangerous one and that he wants her to be beautiful enough to secure a husband.

Stanza Four:

Helen being chosen found life flat and dull

And later had much trouble from a fool,

While that great Queen, that rose out of the spray,

Being fatherless could have her way

Yet chose a bandy-leggèd smith for man.

It's certain that fine women eat

A crazy salad with their meat

Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.

In stanza four of 'A Prayer for My Daughter', Yeats substantiates his view on how excessive beauty has always been a source of trouble and destruction. He turns to Helen in Greek mythology, considered to be the most beautiful woman on earth, brought the doom upon her, and many others. The image of Helen evokes another figure Aphrodite, who rose out of the spray. The union of Aphrodite with Hephaestus bandy-legged Smith brings to mind the Maud Gonne-McBride episode. It makes the poet wonder if the beautiful women eat something stupid for salad, that they make a stupid decision which brings misery forever. "The rich Horn of Plenty" is suggestive of courtesy, aristocracy, and ceremony, that is lost by those women who make stupid decisions.

Stanza Five:

In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;

Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned

By those that are not entirely beautiful;

Yet many, that have played the fool

For beauty's very self, has charm made wise,

And many a poor man that has roved,

Loved and thought himself beloved,

From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.

In stanza five of 'A Prayer for My Daughter', the poet continues with what he wants his daughter to possess more than mere beauty. He wants his daughter to learn to be compassionate and kind. Many times, men who believed to love and loved by the beautiful women faced disappointment compared to those found love in the modest yet compassionate women. Moreover, he says modest and courteous people attract hearts than those with beauty, referring to his own marriage. Ultimately, he makes it clear that he wants his daughter to be an agreeable young woman than an arrogant beauty.

Stanza Six:

May she become a flourishing hidden tree

That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,

And have no business but dispensing round

Their magnanimities of sound,

Nor but in merriment begin a chase,

Nor but in merriment a quarrel.

O may she live like some green laurel

Rooted in one dear perpetual place.

In stanza six of 'A Prayer for My Daughter', Yeats continues to talk about his hopes and expectations for his daughter. As she grew up, he wants her to be happy and content. He wants her to become "a flourishing hidden tree" and her thoughts like a "linnet" referring to its innocence and cheerfulness. Like a linnet, he wants her to be satisfied with herself, and infect others with her happiness. Further, he wants her to live like a "laurel" rooted in a particular place. The poet reveals his wish for his daughter to be rooted in the tradition.

Stanza Seven:

My mind, because the minds that I have loved,

The sort of beauty that I have approved,

Prosper but little, has dried up of late,

Yet knows that to be choked with hate

May well be of all evil chances chief.

If there's no hatred in a mind

Assault and battery of the wind

Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.

Yeats continues to talk about self-contentment women in stanza seven of 'A prayer for my daughter'. He believes that kind, self-contained, traditionally rooted women are incorruptible. The poet considers hatred to be the cause of all evil and prays that her to be left off that evil. Further, he believes that a soul free from hatred will preserve its innocence and

hatred. Just as the storm outside can't tear leaves from sturdy trees, turmoil and war can't break a strong woman.

Stanza Eight:

An intellectual hatred is the worst,

So let her think opinions are accursed.

Have I not seen the loveliest woman born

Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn,

Because of her opinionated mind

Barter that horn and every good

By quiet natures understood

For an old bellows full of angry wind?

In stanza eight of 'A prayer for my daughter', the poet implores his daughter to shun passion and wild feelings that he considered as the weakness of beautiful women. She must be temperate because people who love deeply, could hate deeply too. Hate destroys people and makes them do cruel things, especially intellectual hatred which is the worst of all kinds. The poet reflects upon his emotional state when Maud Gonne rejected him to marry John Macbride. He wants his daughter to experience neither disappointment nor hatred.

Stanza Nine:

Considering that, all hatred driven hence,

The soul recovers radical innocence

And learns at last that it is self-delighting,

Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,

And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;

She can, though every face should scowl

And every windy quarter howl

Or every bellows burst, be happy still.

The ninth stanza continues to describe the impact of hatred and the benefit of staying away from hatred. Once hatred is driven out, the soul could recover its innocence. Then the soul would be free to explore and find that it is "self-delighting", "Self-appeasing" and "self-affrighting". According to the poet, the ideal woman makes everyone happy and comfortable, despite all storms of misfortunes that come in her way. She is a stronghold for people around her and her will would be that of heavens, for she has a clear mind.

Stanza Ten:

And may her bridegroom bring her to a house

Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;

For arrogance and hatred are the wares

Peddled in the thoroughfares.

How but in custom and in ceremony

Are innocence and beauty born?

Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,

And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

In the last stanza of 'A Prayer for my Daughter', the poet expresses his final wish. He prays that his daughter to be married to a good husband who takes her to a home with aristocratic values and traditions. There, he believes that neither arrogance nor hatred of common folks could be found, but morality and purity. Further, the poet does not want her to live a decadent life. He concludes by stating that his daughter would be rooted in spiritual values like a 'laurel tree'.

Theme and Settings:

The poem 'A Prayer for My Daughter' is written in the lyric form containing ten eight-line stanzas. The stanza form is the same as employed by him in 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory'. Each stanza follows a regular rhyme scheme of "AABBCDDC". The poem follows a metrical structure that alternates between "iambic pentameter" and "trochaic pentameter". The poem is structured as a poet's appeal to God and to his daughter on how he wants her to be like, as she grows up.

The poem 'A Prayer for my Daughter' portrays the theme of love and anxiety of a father, who has been blessed with a daughter. It also presents the poet's hopes for his daughter and his expectation of her becoming a very beautiful woman, blessed with the attributes of a virtuous soul. The setting of the poem is uncertain for the poem is conceived in the mind of the poet. The speaker is the poet himself talking to his daughter. The poem is conversational and didactic in tone with varying emotions of gloom, uncertainty, hope, and fear.

9.3 INTRODUCTION TO T.S. ELIOT

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born in St. Louis on September 26, 1888 and lived there during the first eighteen years of his life. He attended Harvard University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in three years and contributed several poems to the Harvard Advocate. From 1910–11, he studied at the Sorbonne, then returned to Harvard to pursue a doctorate in philosophy. After graduating, he moved back to Europe and settled in England in 1914. The following year, he married Vivienne Haigh-Wood and began working in London, first as a teacher, and later for Lloyd's Bank.

It was in London that Eliot came under the influence of his contemporary Ezra Pound, who recognized his poetic genius at once, and assisted in the

publication of his work in a number of magazines, most notably "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," which appeared in Poetry magazine in 1915. Eliot's first book of poems, Prufrock and Other Observations, was published in London in 1917 by The Egoist, and immediately established him as a leading poet of the avant-garde. With the publication of The Waste Land (Boni & Liveright) in 1922, now considered by many to be the single most influential poetic work of the twentieth century, Eliot's reputation began to grow to nearly mythic proportions. By 1930, and for the next thirty years, he was the most dominant figure in poetry and literary criticism in the English-speaking world.

As a poet, Eliot transmuted his affinity for the English metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century (notably, John Donne) and the nineteenth-century French Symbolist poets (including Charles Baudelaire and Jules Laforgue) into radical innovations in poetic technique and subject matter. His poems, in many respects, articulated the disillusionment of a younger post-World War I generation with the values and conventions—both literary and social—of the Victorian era. As a critic, he had an enormous impact on contemporary literary taste, propounding views that, after his conversion to orthodox Christianity in the late 1930s, were increasingly based in social and religious conservatism. His major later poetry publications include Four Quartets (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943) and Ash Wednesday (Faber & Faber, 1930). His books of literary and social criticism include Notes Towards the Definition of Culture (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949); After Strange Gods (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934); The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1933); and The Sacred Wood (Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1920). Eliot was also an important playwright, whose verse dramas include the comedy The Cocktail Party (Faber & Faber, 1950); The Family Reunion (Faber & Faber, 1939), a drama written partly in blank verse and influenced by Greek tragedy; and Murder in the Cathedral (Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1935).

Eliot became a British citizen in 1927. In 1948, he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Long associated with the publishing house of Faber & Faber, he published many younger poets, and eventually became director of the firm. After a notoriously unhappy first marriage, Eliot separated from his first wife in 1933 and married Valerie Fletcher in 1956.T. S. Eliot died in London on January 4, 1965.

Eliot was to pursue four careers: editor, dramatist, literary critic, and philosophical poet. He was probably the most erudite poet of his time in the English language. His undergraduate poems were "literary" and conventional. His first important publication, and the first masterpiece of Modernism in English, was "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915). With the publication in 1922 of his poem The Waste Land, Eliot won an international reputation. The Waste Land expresses with great power the disenchantment, disillusionment, and disgust of the period after World War I. In a series of vignettes, loosely linked by the legend of the search for the Grail, it portrays a sterile world of panicky fears and barren lusts, and of human beings waiting for some sign or promise of

redemption. The poem's style is highly complex, erudite, and allusive, and the poet provided notes and references to explain the work's many quotations and allusions. This scholarly supplement distracted some readers and critics from perceiving the true originality of the poem, which lay rather in its rendering of the universal human predicament of man desiring salvation, and in its manipulation of language, than in its range of literary references.

Eliot's masterpiece is Four Quartets, which was issued as a book in 1943, though each "quartet" is a complete poem. "Burnt Norton" was the first of the quartets; it had appeared in the Collected Poems of 1936. It is a subtle meditation on the nature of time and its relation to eternity. On the model of this, Eliot wrote three more poems—"East Coker" (1940), "The Dry Salvages" (1941), and "Little Gidding" (1942)—in which he explored through images of great beauty and haunting power his own past, the past of the human race, and the meaning of human history. Each of the poems was self-subsistent, but when published together they were seen to make up a single work, in which themes and images recurred and were developed in a musical manner and brought to a final resolution. This work made a deep impression on the reading public, and even those who were unable to accept the poems' Christian beliefs recognized the intellectual integrity with which Eliot pursued his high theme, the originality of the form he had devised, and the technical mastery of his verse. This work led to the award to Eliot, in 1948, of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

9.4 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE LOVE SONG OF J ALFRED PRUFROCK

Line 1-12:

Let us go then, you and I,

When the evening is spread out against the sky

(…)

Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"

Let us go and make our visit.

The opening line of 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,' "Let us go then, you and I," provides the reader with a hint that the poem needs to be read as an internalized, dramatic monologue. It also gives us the idea that the narrator is speaking to another person, and thus what is being said is a reflection of his own personality. In this case, the personality of Alfred J. Prufrock is one that's pedantic, slightly miserable ("like a patient etherized upon a table"), and focused mainly on the negatives ("restless nights in one-night cheap hotels"). Note the emptiness of the world: "oyster-shells," "sawdust restaurants"; everything is impermanent; everything is about to dissolve into nothing. The world is transitory, half-broken, unpopulated, and about to collapse.

The setting that Eliot paints, in his economic language, gives us a half-second glance at a world that seems largely unpopulated. Note that he does not mention anyone else in the poem, lending it an air of post-apocalyptic silence. However, it is left ambiguous whether it is the world that is actually this way or Prufrock's miserable nature that is painting it in such a manner.

However, scholars have been undecided on the true nature of what the first line means. Perrine believes that "you and I" show the division between Prufrock's own nature; Mutlu Konuk Blasing suggests that it is the relationship between Prufrock and Eliot that is represented in the poem. Similarly, the name of 'Prufrock' has been taken to symbolize both everything – Prufrock as an intelligent, farcical character, emasculated by the literary world and its bluestockings – and nothing at all – Prufrock as part of Prufrock-Litton, a furniture store in Missouri, where T.S. Eliot grew up.

Lines 13-14:

In the room the women come and go

Talking of Michelangelo.

Finally, there is a presence in the poem besides the voice of J. Prufrock – the women talking of Michelangelo. Though they are a living presence, the focus on 'Michelangelo' actually serves to deaden them; they exist in the poem as a series of conversations, which Prufrock lumps into one category by calling them 'the women.' It sets the scene at a party and simultaneously sets Prufrock on his own: an island in the sea of academia, floating along on light sophistication and empty conversations. Prufrock is removed from the world of people, seeming almost a spirit, so acute is his distance from society.

Lines 15-22:

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,

The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,

(…)

Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

Critics are divided as to the symbolism of the yellow smog. Michael North wrote, "The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes" appears clearly to every reader as a cat. Still, the cat itself is absent, represented explicitly only in parts — back, muzzle, tongue — and by its actions — licking, slipping, leaping, curling. The metaphor has, in a sense, been hollowed out to be replaced by a series of metonyms, and thus it stands as a rhetorical introduction to what follows." According to Terry Eagleton, Metonym is the sum of parts – in this poem, the 'cat' that is made by the yellow fog is fragmented and ghostly. It is never explicitly stated to be a cat but hinted at.

The fragmentation of the cat could also symbolize the fragmentation of Prufrock's psyche, the very schism that is leading him to have this conversation, his hope of risk, and his terror of risking his interest in women, and his terror of them. Much like the cat, Prufrock is on the outside looking in at a world that has not been prepared for him.

This fragmentation can also be applied to the earlier reference to "the women," which are not really described in any way but are instead considered by the sum of their parts in conversation – they only exist because they are "talking of Michelangelo."

Furthermore, fragmentation is a Modernist technique that had not since been seen before in literature and was probably not very well received by the literary elite's high circle. Modernist poets and writers believed that their artistry should mirror the chaotic world they lived in; seldom is meaning, in the real world, parcelled up and handed over in whole parts. But in pieces. This is why the poem is so significantly argued over the very fragmentation that Eliot wrote, for it is the wealth of a seemingly inexhaustible source of reasonings. One can take almost any approach, any assignation of meaning, to J. Prufrock and his world. One can make their own meaning from the clues that are provided by Eliot's writing.

Lines 23-34:

And indeed there will be time

For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,

Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;

(…)

Before the taking of a toast and tea.

Note again the very same fragmentation process providing a broken-in society, a patchwork view of humanity that only serves to populate the poem with more emptiness. Prufrock's distance from contemporary society reflects itself in this fragmentation; he reduces people to the sum of their parts, and thus by doing so, empties the world of others.

Prufrock's indecisiveness and his stating thereof do not stop the poem but rather increase its pace. By focusing on '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 our plate; time for you and time for me, / and time yet for a hundred indecisions' he actually creates a nervous, hasty, skittering feeling to the poem.

The overuse of the word 'time' both renders it meaningless and lends the reader a state of anxiety, that no matter how much Prufrock focuses on time, he can never quite have enough to achieve his goals. The sense of time, time, time presses upon the reader, and the repetition of the world, in fact, makes the reader more conscious of the passing of the minutes, rather than less. Therefore, it can be read as the hasty rush of daily life, that no matter how much time there is, no matter how one thinks about it, there is always going to be enough.

Lines 35-36:

In the room the women come and go

Talking of Michelangelo.

And in the next stanza, time slows down again: 'In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo.' While it also serves to remind the reader of the setting, this phrase stops the poem in the mire. Even though time is rushing in the last stanza, here time has slowed down; nothing has changed, nothing is quick. Therefore, can it be considered that time is only quickening in Prufrock's head, that his worries are accelerating time in his own head, but not temporally? It could certainly be seen as another idea to the you-I schism.

This line also enforces the idea of keeping the conversation light, airy, and without feeling. Thus, Prufrock alone seems to have feelings and thoughts; Michelangelo is used as a placeholder for meaningless things. It could have been replaced with a hundred other things, and the effect would have still been the same: Prufrock is external to the conversation, external to the world, and the conversation, therefore, is reduced to nothing more than a word.

Lines 37-48:

And indeed there will be time

To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"

Time to turn back and descend the stair,

(…)

In a minute there is time

For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

Prufrock's overwhelming emotions come to a full appearance in this stanza: we can take his insistence that 'there is time' as an attempt to convince himself that there is no need to rush into action (even though, as stated before, the repetition of the word 'time' renders it almost the opposite). Here, we are also shown what Prufrock is doing: he is outside looking in (again, the pervasive symbolism of the fog-cat) and trying to decide whether or not to enter this party where other people are concerned with conversations that do not apply to him ("in the room, the women come and go / talking of Michelangelo").

This is the crux of Prufrock's emotions: emasculation, the terror of the unknown, and indecisiveness to whether or not he should dare. 'Do I dare / Disturb the universe?' asks Prufrock, and then reassures himself again that 'in a minute, there is time,' once more giving his decision a sense of heightened anxiety.

It is interesting to know that Prufrock himself is fragmented: we do not have a complete image of him, but a half-image of his morning coat, and the collar buttoned to his chin, a modest necktie, and thin arms and legs.

The bald patch implies that he's middle-aged, but it is more given as a symbolic measure of his embarrassment and nerves than a physical descriptor.

J. Hillis Miller had an interesting point to make about the temporality of Prufrock and whether or not Prufrock actually manages to make himself go somewhere. He wrote:

In another sense, Prufrock would be unable to go anywhere, however hard he tried. If all space has been assimilated into his mind, then the spatial movement would really be moving in the same place, like a man running in a dream. There is no way to distinguish between actual movement and imaginary movement.

We can see his point in this poem: there is no indication that Prufrock ever leaves whatever view he has of the party. He could be anywhere. We are not told where he is. We are told only that there is time.'

Lines 49-54:

For I have known them all already, known them all:

Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,

(…)

So how should I presume?

Once more, evidence of the passing of time gives us the idea that Prufrock is one of those men who drink about sixteen coffees a day. 'I have measured out my life with coffee spoons,' implies a solitary, workaholic existence, implies that there is no other marker in his life with which to measure, that he is routine and fastidious and not prone to making decisions outside of his comfort zone.

Also, the line 'for I have known them all already, known them all' helps us again to understand the Prufrock is perhaps the most insecure man to ever walk the planet. He convinces himself not to act on what he wants – which, presumably, is to go to the party – but to remain steadfast and distant, looking into a world that he is not part of.

Lines 55-61:

For I have known the eyes already, known them all—

The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,

(…)

And how should I presume?

Mutlu Konuk Blasing wrote: "Prufrock does not know how to presume to begin to speak, both because he knows "all already"—this is the burden of his lament—and because he is already known, formulated."

The phrase 'sprawling on a pin / when I am pinned and wriggling on the

wall' shows the inactivity that currently thwarts Prufrock shows the way he is suspended in animation and in time. Once more, there is the fragmentation of people, the idea that everyone but Prufrock is a ghostly reimagining, the only thing that he allows himself to think of, the only important thing to Prufrock.

Lines 62-69:

And I have known the arms already, known them all—

Arms that are braceleted and white and bare

(…)

And should I then presume?

And how should I begin?

Prufrock's agony over addressing the woman at the center of the poem is evident here: he knows that she exists, he knows who she is, he thinks of her in terms of arms and eyes and bracelets, but he cannot approach her. 'Is it perfume from a dress / That makes me so digress?' Prufrock is self-aware enough to know that his attempt to keep back will not make him happy, but he has no idea where to begin articulating what he means to the woman at the center of his thoughts.

He is terrified to speak to the women he sees because he feels he will not articulate his feelings well enough. He does not think that they will be interested in him. His crippling shyness and insecurity, therefore, keep him back.

Lines 70-72:

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

(…)

Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? …

'Lonely men' could very well symbolize Prufrock's own situation in a very overt way.

Also, the world's description is characteristically bleak, existing only in dusk and smoke.

Lines 73-74:

I should have been a pair of ragged claws

Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

Prufrock reduces himself to an animal, lived-in and alone, sheltered at the bottom of the dark ocean. An astute reader might point out that his existence, as it is expressed in the poem, is not much different, but for one thing: Prufrock's awareness of his own loneliness is what is causing him torment. An animal at the bottom of the ocean – an inanimate object like a

pair of ragged claws' would not be aware, and therefore would not be insecure and would not be shy.

Lines 75-86:

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!

Smoothed by long fingers,

Asleep … tired … or it malingers,

(…)

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

And in short, I was afraid.

Prufrock's skill with language is perhaps brought best to the forefront here. We can see that he knows very well how to speak – in his own mind. It is just the trauma of voicing these thoughts that are stopping him.

Lines 87-98:

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,

(…)

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

That is not it, at all."

Paired back to one of the earlier stanzas, here is another set of almost violent words: 'to have bitten off the matter with a smile / to have squeezed the universe into a ball.' Here, Prufrock fantasizes that he has had a change of heart and gone to speak to the woman at the center of the poem, picturing himself as Lazarus (thus showing both academic and biblical learning) come back from the dead, i.e.,,, Prufrock overcoming his crippling shyness.

David Spurr wrote, on these lines in particular: "To have "bitten off" the matter, in addition to its hint of blunt force, would constitute a positive reaction against endlessly idle talk; squeezing the universe into a ball would counteract the world's tendency to fall apart and to spread itself out like yellow fog; finally, the act of rolling it toward some overwhelming question at least imparts direction to the movement of the universe, even if the actual destination, like the question, remains unclear.

The idea of proclaiming oneself a prophet "come back to tell you all" implies a power of linguistic discourse equal in magnitude to the physical act of squeezing the universe into a ball. Once more, the idea of language joins with images of purpose, only this time in such hyperbolic fashion

that the ultimate failure of discourse strikes one as inevitable: "That is not what I meant at all."

Lines 99-110:

And would it have been worth it, after all,

Would it have been worth while,

After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,

(…)

"That is not it at all,

That is not what I meant, at all."

There is such a romantic overtone to this imagery that it seems almost impossible for Prufrock not to know how to approach the woman at the center of the poem; however, we know very well that there is still no sense of movement in the poem itself. At this point, Prufrock almost seems to have raised his spirits enough to attempt to speak to the women at the center of the poem.

Lines 111-119:

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;

Am an attendant lord, one that will do

(…)

Almost, at times, the Fool.

And then he loses the urge, once more, reduces himself again to the part of the fool, shrinking himself down from the heroic stature that he has built up in the previous two stanzas – that of Lazarus, and Prince Hamlet, romantic and wordy and good at speaking his mind – to a fraction of his former self.

From the same David Spurr: "The speaker's failure to master language–"It is impossible to say just what I mean!"In this case, it leads not to a statement on the inadequacy of words themselves but rather reflects upon the speaker's own impotence. In a poem so obsessed with problems of speech and definition, to have failed with words is to have lost the war on the inarticulate: the speaker as heroic Lazarus or Prince Hamlet is suddenly reduced to the stature of an attendant lord."

Lines 120-131:

I grow old … I grow old …

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?

(…)

Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Prufrock's fire and fury and rage, the most ardent emotions present in the last few stanzas, are reduced now to nothing. Once more, he shrinks away from the challenge of speaking his mind, of speaking to the woman, and continues to destroy his own fledgling self-confidence by creating an image in the reader's mind so absurd that we perhaps start to share in his own view of himself.

Once more, there's the presence of women – unattainable women, in this case, symbolized by the mermaids, with the power to ruin Prufrock's entire world ('till human voices wake us, and we drown'). There is the imagery of Prufrock viewing himself, now miserable and old, white-flannel trousers, reduced to the inactivity that is rendered throughout the poem in such a way that he wonders, 'do I dare to eat a peach?'

9.5 QUESTIONS

1. Comment on Yeats's use of the storm as a symbol in the poem.
2. According to W. B. Yeats in "A Prayer for My Daughter," which kind of hatred is the worst? Why?
3. How does the poem "A Prayer for My Daughter," reveal a father's concern for his daughter? Discuss.
4. In Yeat's "A Prayer for My Daughter," what lessons does the poet learn from his own life's experiences
5. Why does Mr. Prufrock not want to be a hero like Hamlet? Explicate.
6. Explain the Biblical allusions in the The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock?
7. What does the epigraph mean in "Prufrock"?Explain.
8. In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Prufrock is a character caught between desire and decision. Elaborate.

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10

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SIEGFRIED SASOON'S "THE CHILD AT THE WINDOW", W. H. AUDEN'S "1ST SEPTEMBER 1939" AND CRAIG RAINE'S "A MARTIAN SENDS A POSTCARD HOME"

Unit Structure

10.0 OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to post war modern poets whose poems feature the elements of modernism. The unit introduces students to the poets Siegfried Sassoon (war poet), W.H Auden and Craig Raine; and gives an insight into their poems "The child at the window", " September , 1939" and " A Martian sends a Postcard Home". Students would be able to perceive the influence of war in the first two poems and modernist element in the third poem.

10.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE POET- SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Siegfried Sassoon was born on September 8, 1886, in Kent, England. He attended Kent's New Beacon School and Marlborough College before attending Clare College, Cambridge, in 1905. While there, he privately published his first volume of poetry in 1906. He left Cambridge before

receiving a degree and spent several years privately publishing his verse, including a parody of John Masefield called The Daffodil Murderer (John Richmond, 1913).

Sassoon is known for his poems inspired by his experiences in World War I. They were published in three volumes: Picture-Show (Heinemann, 1919), Counter-Attack and Other Poems (Heinemann, 1918), and The Old Huntsman (Heinemann, 1917).

Sassoon enlisted at the beginning of the war, in 1914, but a riding accident delayed his commission. In May 1915 Sassoon was commissioned to the Royal Welch Fusiliers and soon left to fight in France. He returned to England in 1916, to recover from an illness, and in 1917, to recover from a gunshot wound. During these periods he developed ties to several pacifists, including Bertrand Russell. In June 1917 he wrote a statement protesting the war that was read aloud in the House of Commons. The poet Robert Graves helped him avoid a court martial through a diagnosis of neurasthenia, and as a result, he was hospitalized at a War Hospital. While there, he became friends with the poet Wilfred Owen. He returned to France in 1918, where he was wounded by friendly fire.

After World War I, Sassoon published a series of fictionalized autobiographies known collectively as The Memoirs of George Sherston, and he also served as the literary editor of the Daily Herald for several years. Sassoon was gay, and after the war he had a series of relationships with other men before marrying Hester Gatty in 1933. Together they had a son, George Sassoon, before separating in 1945. In 1951 he was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire. He died on September 1, 1967 due to stomach cancer. On November 11, 1985, his name was added to a memorial in Westminter Abbey's Poet's Corner.

10.2 POEM

The Child at the Window:

by Siegfried Sassoon

Remember this, when childhood's far away;

The sunlight of a showery first spring day;

You from your house-top window laughing down,

And I, returned with whip-cracks from a ride,

On the great lawn below you, playing the clown.

Time blots our gladness out. Let this with love abide . . .

The brave March day; and you, not four years old,

Up in your nursery world — all heaven for me.

Remember this — the happiness I hold —

In far off springs I shall not live to see;

The world one map of wastening war unrolled,

And you, unconscious of it, setting my spirit free.

For you must learn, beyond bewildering years,

How little things beloved and held are best.

The windows of the world are blurred with tears,

And troubles come like cloud-banks from the west.

Remember this, some afternoon in spring,

When your own child looks down and makes your sad heart sing.

10.3 SUMMARY

The speaker is addressing his child in this poem and recollecting his child's childhood. Do you remember, when you were a child, during a sunny spring, you were looking down from house top window and laughing looking at me. I had returned from a ride and was in the lawn, playing the clown for you. Time has taken away that moment from us along with the happiness it brought since it is an incident from the past. But let this love bind us together.

Then in a March, when you were hardly four, you were happy in your own world in the nursery. It was a blissful moment for me. Remember the happiness I held during that moment even when I would not be alive. The world was suffering due to the deadly war, but you were unaware of it in your own world. And seeing you happy, made me happy and set my spirit free from the worries of the war.

You must understand in the confusing years which might come to you that the most treasured possessions of a man are his little things that he loved and the memories of them. The world is full of suffering and pain, and problems keep coming in life. Remember the things I told you when someday your child might look at you during a spring afternoon and make you ecstatic.

10.4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The poem "The Child at the Window" by Siegfried Sassoon tries to highlight how we need to cherish the little moments that we get to spend with our loved ones. It is these moments and the memories of these moments that would help us to survive the most difficult of times. Being a war poet, Siegfried Sassoon often writes about the horrors and brutality of the war and its impact on the lives of human beings. He is known for his angry and compassionate poems about World War I.

The following poem does not delve into the horrors of war in detail but instead focuses on the sweet relationship between a father and child. When

the father remembers the time spend by the father with his child, he feels ecstatic as one laugh from the child was enough for the father to forget his worries. He was even ready to act a clown in order to see his child laugh. Even though the world was suffering due to war, just a look at his happy child would make him forget the destruction of war and enjoy the safety and security provided by his family and home. The only knowledge that the father wants to pass on to the child is that when he has children of his own, he must remember that the time spent with his family would be the best time he ever gets and should enjoy it as far as possible.

10.5 INTRODUCTION TO THE POET- W.H.AUDEN

Wystan Hugh Auden was born in York, England, on February 21, 1907. He moved to Birmingham during childhood and was educated at Christ Church, Oxford. During his younger years he was influenced by the poetry of Thomas Hardy and Robert Frost, as well as William Blake, Emily Dickinson, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Old English verse. At Oxford he formed lifelong friendships with two fellow writers, Stephen Spender and Christopher Isherwood.

In 1928, his collection Poems was privately printed, but it wasn't until 1930, when another collection titled Poems (though its contents were different) was published, that Auden was established as the leading voice of a new generation.

Since then, he has been admired for his unsurpassed technical virtuosity and an ability to write poems in nearly every imaginable verse form; the incorporation in his work of popular culture, current events, and vernacular speech; and also for the vast range of his intellect, which drew easily from an extraordinary variety of literatures, art forms, social and political theories, and scientific and technical information. He had remarkable wit. His poetry frequently recounts, literally or metaphorically, a journey or quest, and his travels provided rich material for his verse.

He visited Germany, Iceland, and China, served in the Spanish Civil war, and in 1939 moved to the United States, where he met his lover, Chester Kallman, and became an American citizen. Initially while in England, he was an ardent advocate of socialism and Freudian psychoanalysis, and during his later phase in America, his central preoccupation became Christianity and the theology of modern Protestant theologians. Along with being a prolific writer, Auden was also a noted playwright, librettist, editor, and essayist. Generally considered the greatest English poet of the twentieth century, his work has exerted a major influence on succeeding generations of poets on both sides of the Atlantic.

W. H. Auden served as a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 1954 to 1973. He died in Vienna on September 29, 1973.

10.6 POEM

September 1, 1939:

W. H. Auden

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.
Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.
Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk
To an apathetic grave;
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,

Mismanagement and grief:
We must suffer them all again.
Into this neutral air
Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:
But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream;
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong.
Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.
The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone.

From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow;
"I will be true to the wife,
I'll concentrate more on my work,"
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?
All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.
Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

10.7 SUMMARY

I sit uncertainly and afraid in one of the bars/clubs on Fifty –Second Street as the hopes of a low untruthful decade ends. Now it is the waves of anger and fear that has taken grip of the Earth including the everyday thoughts of people. The terrible implications of death hangs over September like a bad smell.

Scholarship would enable us to trace the origin of horror to Martin Luther which still has an impact on the present generation. Find what happened at Linz (birth of Adolf Hitler) and how the influences on him made him into a psychopathic God. I and everyone else know what schoolchildren learn; to do evil to those who do evil to them.

Exiled Greek general Thucydides knew what speech could reveal about the state of democracy and what elderly dictators did, which was to talk rubbish till they die. In his book he has analysed how the dictators drive away all knowledge and how societies under dictators suffer due to their poor governance. Now we are bound to suffer the same fate again.

In this neutral country, towering skyscrapers use their full might to represent man's unity and each speech tries to do so. But who can live in this euphoric dream for long as when you look in the mirror, the reality behind the pretence becomes visible. We would be able to see imperialism and war.

People in the bar desperately try to cling on to their normal everyday lives by keeping the lights on and keeping the music playing so that this place would give them a feeling of home and safety. If we stop doing that, we would start seeing ourselves as really what we are, lost in the wood, children afraid of night who have never been able to be happy.

The meaningless propaganda championed by so-called Important People is not nearly as indecent as our own desires. What the ballet dancer Nijinsky wrote about his lover Diaghilev is true for everyone. The fundamental human flaw is that we all want what we cannot have: love for ourselves and ourselves only, rather than universal love that benefits everyone.

People come out of their conservative dark into their moral life and promise to themselves that they would remain faithful to their life and would concentrate on their work. The governors keep playing their games. Who can release them now, who can reach the deaf, and who can speak for the dumb?

All I have is a voice to negate the beautiful lies that the authority has told the common man. We need to understand that there is no thing as a State and no one can survive alone. Both police and an ordinary citizen feel hungry the same way. We must learn to love each other or we would all perish.

Our ignorant world lies in a state where it cannot think properly. Even then slight ray of unexpected hope shines wherever those committed to

justice connect with one another. May I, even though I am just another human made of desire and dust, and stricken by the same cynicism and worry support their hope with my own voice.

10.8 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The poem 'September 1, 1939' was first published in New Republic in 1939 and was later reprinted in Another Time in 1940. Later, Auden detested this poem and banned it from appearing in his following collections. The title of the poem is the date that Hitler invaded Poland. The 1930s was a period of fear due to the growth of right wing-power. The poem focuses on the need of a just society based on universal love.

The war began on September 1, 1939 and the poet reflects on the historical, psychological and political meaning of the war. The poem depicts a sense of fear and uncertainty of the on-going period. The fear of death was hanging over everyone's head and had started affecting everyone's private life. The poet criticises the dictators and rulers by pointing out that it's because of them and the deadened rational thinking of citizens that they are suffering now.

The skyscrapers in the country try to proclaim about the strength of collective man but the faces of imperialism and reflection of wrongs done to mankind can be seen on a closer analysis. People try to forget the current situation of war and forge a sense of false security by sitting in bars where lights never go out. The basis of a just society is universal love but due to man's selfishness only selfish love can be seen. Although the poet displays a pessimistic view of war in the initial parts of the poetry, in the end of the poem we find a positive note of hope.

10.9 INTRODUCTION TO THE POET- CRAIG RAINE

Poet and critic Craig Raine was born on 3 December 1944 in Bishop Auckland, England, and read English at Exeter College, Oxford.

He lectured at Exeter College (1971-2), Lincoln College, Oxford, (1974-5), and Christ Church, Oxford, (1976-9), and was books editor for New Review (1977-8), editor of Quarto (1979-80), and poetry editor at the New Statesman (1981). Reviews and articles from this period are collected in Haydn and the Valve Trumpet (1990). He became poetry editor at the London publishers Faber and Faber in 1981, and became a fellow of New College, Oxford, in 1991. He gained a Cholmondeley Award in 1983 and the Sunday Times Writer of the Year Award in 1998. He is founder and editor of the literary magazine Areté.

10.10 POEM

A Martian Sends a Postcard Home (1979):

Craig Raine

Caxtons are mechanical birds with many wings

and some are treasured for their markings –
they cause the eyes to melt
or the body to shriek without pain.
I have never seen one fly, but
sometimes they perch on the hand.
Mist is when the sky is tired of flight
and rests its soft machine on ground:
then the world is dim and bookish
like engravings under tissue paper.
Rain is when the earth is television.
It has the property of making colours darker.
Model T is a room with the lock inside –
a key is turned to free the world
for movement, so quick there is a film
to watch for anything missed.
But time is tied to the wrist
or kept in a box, ticking with impatience.
In homes, a haunted apparatus sleeps,
that snores when you pick it up.
If the ghost cries, they carry it
to their lips and soothe it to sleep
with sounds. And yet, they wake it up
deliberately, by tickling with a finger.
Only the young are allowed to suffer
openly. Adults go to a punishment room
with water but nothing to eat.
They lock the door and suffer the noises
alone. No one is exempt
and everyone's pain has a different smell.
At night, when all the colours die,
they hide in pairs
and read about themselves –
in colour, with their eyelids shut.

10.11 SUMMARY

The speaker in this poem is an alien from Mars who is trying to describe whatever he sees on Earth. The Martian sees books (which were first printed by William Caxton) and thinks that they are shaped like birds and have many wings (pages). The words written on the book are so powerful that it causes reader to cry or exclaim aloud. Like normal birds, the Martian has never seen them fly but like birds perch on trees, they can be seen perched on the hands of readers.

Mist looks like the sky is tired of its flight and wants to rest on the ground. It makes the world around look dull like the atmosphere in a library similar to the engravings under a tissue paper. When it rains, Earth looks like a television since it has the property of making everything look darker.

Cars are rooms which you lock when you get inside and it starts moving. The view outside the window moves quite quickly and feels like watching a movie.

Time is tied to the wrist (watches) or kept in a box (clocks) where it ticks impatiently.

In home there is an apparatus (phone) which snores when you pick it up. If it makes noises like a ghost, the noise can be stopped by just picking it up and bringing it closer to the lips (picking up a call). It can also be woken deliberately by tickling it with fingers (dialling number).

Children can cry or relieve themselves openly but adults are not allowed to do that. For doing that adults go to a room with only water and nothing to eat (the washroom). After going inside that room, they lock themselves in and suffer. Every person does this and every person's pain has a different smell coming out of that room.

At night, they sleep in pairs with their eyes shut. It appears as though they are reading a story about themselves. The stories are in colour even though their eyes are closed.

10.12 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

"A Martian Sends a Postcard Home" was collected in Raine's 1980 volume of the same title. It is an example of "Martian poetry". It appears in the poem as if a Martian has visited Earth and he is describing his observations about Earth back to his people by writing a postcard. The poet has added novelty for the readers as he describes everyday normal activities in a new light. It gave an alien perspective to everything making everyday phenomenon seem strange. To the Martian, even the most normal and mundane aspects of everyday human life seemed weird. The Martian uses imaginative metaphors for rain, books, mist and dreaming encouraging the readers to appreciate the mundane things of life. Seeing the world through a fresh lens brings about a novel experience.

The Martian seems confused about bodily functions as he describes crying as eyes "melting" and calling the bathroom as "punishment room" where adults go to suffer.

The poet appears to be advocating the readers to approach all cultures with an open mind as what might seem weird to one, might be normal in some other culture. He proves this point by depicting how normal, mundane things of everyday human life are weird from the perspective of an alien. So we must learn to accept our differences and approach everyone with an open mind.

The primary literary device used in this poem is metaphor. The use of imagery can be seen in the phrase "the eyes to melt". The poet makes use of metonymy when he uses the word "Caxton" to refer to "books" and the word "Model T" to refer to car (In metonymy, something is referred by referring to a word closely associated with it).The poem is written in seventeen couplets and the poet does not make use of a rhyme scheme.

10.13 CONCLUSION

The era post world war in literature is represented by innovations in literature. The traditional form of writing was abandoned. There was a shift in themes chosen for writing poems. In poems after World War, influence of war could be clearly seen. The poems "The child at the window" and "September 1, 1939" clearly show the impact of war on the poets. In the poem 'A martian sends a postcard Home", the poet makes use of the defamiliarization technique.

10.14 QUESTIONS

1. What is the significance of the time spent with one's loved ones as per the father in the poem "The child at the window"?

2. How does Auden represent the impact of war on people in his poem "September 1, 1939"?

3. How does Auden criticise the rulers and the authority in his poem "September 1,1939"?

4. How does the Martian describe normal, mundane things and activities in his postcard?

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11

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DYLAN THOMAS'S "FERN HILL" AND PHILIP LARKIN'S "THE WHITSUN WEDDINGS"

Unit Structure

11.0 OBJECTIVES

To introduce students to the modernist poets Dylan Thomas and Philip Larkin and enable them to identify the modernist elements in the poems "Fern Hill" and "The Whitsun Weddings".

11.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE POET- DYLAN THOMAS

Dylan Marlais Thomas, born in October 27, 1914, Swansea, Glamorgan , Wales was a Welsh poet and prose writer whose work is known for its comic exuberance, rhapsodic lilt, and pathos. Thomas spent his childhood in southwestern Wales. His father taught English at the Swansea grammar school, which in due course the boy attended. Because Dylan's mother was a farmer's daughter, he had a country home he could go to when on holiday. His poem "Fern Hill" (1946) describes its joys.

Thomas had edited the school magazine, contributing poetry and prose to it. He had begun writing poems at a very early age. At age 16 he left school to work as a reporter on the South Wales Evening Post.

Thomas's first book, 18 Poems, appeared in 1934, and it announced a strikingly new and individual voice in English poetry. His original style was further developed in Twenty-Five Poems (1936) and The Map of Love (1939). His poetry was marked from the start by the characteristics that would make Thomas world famous: a talent for sonorous rhymes and musical repetitions, a creative (and at times baffling) use of words chosen

for their sound more than their sense, and vivid, deeply symbolic imagery. And Death Shall Have No Dominion, one of the most famous poems of this period, is also one of Thomas' most influential, and a beautiful example of his characteristic voice.

In 1937 he married Caitlin Macnamara,. His attempts to make money with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and as a film scriptwriter were not sufficiently remunerative, and the family was very poor. He fell badly behind with his income tax returns, and what money he managed to make was taken from him, at source, by the British Exchequer. He took to drinking more heavily and to borrowing from richer friends.

The poems collected in Deaths and Entrances (1946) show a greater lucidity and confirm Thomas as a religious poet. This book reveals an advance in sympathy and understanding due, in part, to the impact of World War II and to the deepening harmony between the poet and his Welsh environment, for he writes generally in a mood of reconciliation and acceptance. He often adopts a bardic tone and is a true romantic in claiming a high, almost priest like function for the poet. He also makes extensive use of Christian myth and symbolism and often sounds a note of formal ritual and incantation in his poems. The re-creation of childhood experience produces a visionary, mystical poetry in which the landscapes of youth and infancy assume the holiness of the first Eden ("Poem in October," "Fern Hill"); for Thomas, childhood, with its intimations of immortality, is a state of innocence and grace. But the rhapsodic lilt and music of the later verse derives from a complex technical discipline, so that Thomas' absorption in his craft produces verbal harmonies that are unique in English poetry.

In 1952 Thomas published his Collected Poems, which exhibited the deeper insight and superb craftsmanship of a major 20th-century English poet. The volume was an immediate success on both sides of the Atlantic. But, because of the insistence of the Inland Revenue, his monetary difficulties persisted. He coped with his exhausting American tours by indulging in reckless drinking bouts. At last, while in New York City he died.

11.2 POEM

Fern Hill:

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
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into the dark.
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,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows

In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
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
I should hear him fly with the high fields
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.

11.3 SUMMARY

This poem has certain autobiographical elements. It is based on the childhood experiences of the poet at his aunt's farm in Wales. The poem begins with a description of the poet's idyllic childhood on farm and depicts the movement from the world of innocence to the world of experience.

When I was young and relaxed under the apple boughs which surrounded the happy house, the grasses were green and the night was starry, time itself let me climb and flourish by living the best days of my life. I was highly honoured among the wagons and was the prince of towns with apples. I was like a king who made trees and leaves spread trails of daisy flowers and barley where apples blown down by the wind looked like a river of light.

I was young and carefree and famous among the barns in the yard and kept singing throughout the farm. Under the sun which is young only once, time allowed me to play and feel golden as far as his mercy and resources allowed. Young and golden, I was both the hunter and the shepherd. Calves sang back to me when they heard my trumpet and foxes barked. The Sabbath(holy day) rang out slowly from the pebbles in the stream. The sound of the river flowing over the pebbles reminded him of the church bell ringing for people to worship God.

All the day long I kept playing and running. The hay fields were as high as the house, the air coming out of the chimney appeared as if it was singing. Playing was lovely and watery and the fire was as green as grass. As I slept under the stars, I felt that the owls were carrying away the farm and throughout the night I heard the sound of the nightjars flying over the stacks of hay and the horses in the stable.

When I woke up, the farm seemed like a person who is shining with morning dew and has returned after wandering with a rooster on his shoulder. The farm seemed as fresh and new as when God created Eden for Adam and Eve. The sun starts appearing brighter. The horses mesmerised by what happened, neighed and went out of the stables to the fields singing the praises of God.

I was also a celebrity among the foxes and the pheasants near the happy house under the newly-formed clouds. My heart was filled with happiness every day. I ran without a care, all my desires running with me between the tall stacks of hay. And I didn't care at all—as I went about my tasks, which were blue as the sky—that time, with all his beautiful music, doesn't allow people to have very many songs of childhood. Soon, children, inexperienced and full of joy, have to follow time out of their innocence.

During those days I didn't care that time would lead me to an attic full of swallows in the light of the moon which keeps rising and rising. I also didn't care that while I was sleep, time would fly over the fields and when the morning came, there won't be any children in the field. As an adult, time has enslaved him to various problem of life and he lost the beauty of carefree childhood days. Still he loves life with all its sorrow and pain. He says that he will sing even in chains till he breathes his last.

11.4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

"Fern Hill" was first published in October 1945 edition of Horizon Magazine and later in 1946 as a part of the volume, Deaths and Entrances. It is considered to be an autobiographical poem where Dylan Thomas has tried to show his idyllic childhood on a farm. Thomas's aunt and uncle owned Fernhill, a house in Carmarthenshire. The poem is based on his experience over there.

The first three stanzas of the poem represent poet's experience as a child when he used to spend his holidays in his uncle's farm. The last three stanzas signify the loss of the world of innocence. During the period of innocence the child is in complete union with nature. It is a world of fantasy offering Edenic bliss to the child where the world is timeless. Slowly there is a transition from the world of innocence to the world of experience. In this world of experience, there is a loss of innocence and freedom. In the last part of the poem, the poet is nostalgic and the awareness of loss becomes dominant. The poet is aware that he is bound down by chains.

11.5 INTRODUCTION TO THE POET- PHILIP LARKIN

Philip Arthur Larkin was born on August 9, 1922, in Coventry. He was the second child, and only son, of Sydney and Eva Larkin. He attended the City's King Henry VIII School between 1930 and 1940, and made regular contributions to the school magazine and also helped edit it.

After leaving King Henry VIII, he went to St. John's College, Oxford, and despite the war (Larkin had failed his army medical because of his poor eyesight), was able to complete his degree without interruption, graduating in 1943 with First Class Honours in English. 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 were published in Oxford Poetry (1942-43). These were 'A Stone Church Damaged By A Bomb', 'Mythological Introduction', and 'I dreamed of an out-thrust arm of land'.

After graduating, Larkin lived with his parents for a while, before being appointed Librarian at Wellington, Shropshire, in November of 1943. Here, he studied to qualify as a professional librarian, but continued to write and publish. In 1945, ten of his poems, which later that year would be included in The North Ship, appeared in Poetry from Oxford in Wartime.

He published two novels, Jill and A Girl in Winter in 1946 and 1947.

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. It was in Belfast that he applied fresh vigour to his poetry activities, and, in 1951, had a small collection, XX Poems, privately printed in an edition of 100 copies. Also, in 1954, the Fantasy Press published a pamphlet containing five of his poems. The Marvell Press, based in Hessle, near Hull, published 'Toads' and 'Poetry of departures' in Listen. It would be the Marvell Press that published his next collection The Less Deceived.

Larkin took up the position of Librarian at the University of Hull on March 21, 1955, and it was in October of that year that The Less Deceived was published. It was this collection that would be the foundation of his reputation as one of the foremost figures in 20th Century poetry.

His collection, The Whitsun Weddings was published in 1964 and it was well received. Next year, Larkin was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry.

Larkon edited the Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse, which was published in 1973.His last collection High Windows was published in 1974. A collection of his essays and reviews was published in November 1983 as Required Writing: miscellaneous pieces 1955-1982, and won the W.H. Smith Literary Award for 1984.

Larkin received many awards in recognition of his writing, especially in his later years. 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 declined, being 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 in his throat, and on June 11 an operation was carried out to remove his oesophagus. His health was deteriorating, and when he was awarded the much prized Order of the Companion of Honour he was unable, because of ill health, to attend the investiture, which was due to take place at Buckingham Palace on November 25. He received the official notification courtesy of the Royal Mail.

Philip Larkin died of cancer on December 2 1985.

11.6 POEM

The Whitsun Weddings:

That Whitsun, I was late getting away:

Not till about
One-twenty on the sunlit Saturday
Did my three-quarters-empty train pull out,
All windows down, all cushions hot, all sense
Of being in a hurry gone. We ran
Behind the backs of houses, crossed a street
Of blinding windscreens, smelt the fish-dock; thence
The river's level drifting breadth began,
Where sky and Lincolnshire and water meet.

All afternoon, through the tall heat that slept
For miles inland,
A slow and stopping curve southwards we kept.
Wide farms went by, short-shadowed cattle, and
Canals with floatings of industrial froth;
A hothouse flashed uniquely: hedges dipped
And rose: and now and then a smell of grass
Displaced the reek of buttoned carriage-cloth
Until the next town, new and nondescript,
Approached with acres of dismantled cars.

At first, I didn't notice what a noise
The weddings made
Each station that we stopped at: sun destroys

The interest of what's happening in the shade,
And down the long cool platforms whoops and skirls
I took for porters larking with the mails,
And went on reading. Once we started, though,
We passed them, grinning and pomaded, girls
In parodies of fashion, heels and veils,
All posed irresolutely, watching us go,

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,
The nylon gloves and jewellery-substitutes,
The lemons, mauves, and olive-ochres that

Marked off the girls unreally from the rest.
Yes, from cafés
And banquet-halls up yards, and bunting-dressed
Coach-party annexes, the wedding-days
Were coming to an end. All down the line
Fresh couples climbed aboard: the rest stood round;
The last confetti and advice were thrown,
And, as we moved, each face seemed to define
Just what it saw departing: children frowned
At something dull; fathers had never known

Success so huge and wholly farcical;
The women shared
The secret like a happy funeral;
While girls, gripping their handbags tighter, stared
At a religious wounding. Free at last,

And loaded with the sum of all they saw,
We hurried towards London, shuffling gouts of steam.
Now fields were building-plots, and poplars cast
Long shadows over major roads, and for
Some fifty minutes, that in time would seem

Just long enough to settle hats and say
I nearly died,
A dozen marriages got under way.
They watched the landscape, sitting side by side
—An Odeon went past, a cooling tower,
And someone running up to bowl—and none
Thought of the others they would never meet
Or how their lives would all contain this hour.
I thought of London spread out in the sun,
Its postal districts packed like squares of wheat:

There we were aimed. And as we raced across
Bright knots of rail
Past standing Pullmans, walls of blackened moss
Came close, and it was nearly done, this frail
Travelling coincidence; and what it held
Stood ready to be loosed with all the power
That being changed can give. We slowed again,
And as the tightened brakes took hold, there swelled
A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower
Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain.

11.7 SUMMARY

This poem describes the speaker's observation and thoughts during a train journey. That Whitsun I was late getting away and only at about one twenty in the afternoon of a sunny Saturday that my almost empty train started to move. All windows were down and due to the heat all the cushions had become hot. Due to the condition, all sense of hurry was gone. While the train was moving, out of the window, backs of houses, street of blinding windscreens could be seen; fish dock could be smelt. After a while, the train rode beside the flat, slow river, zooming trough the Lincolnshire countryside.

All through the hot afternoon, the train kept its course steady towards the inland. Through the window, farms, cattle with short shadow, canals frothing with industrial waste could be seen. In between a hothouse, hedges dipping and rising could also be seen. At times, the reek of buttoned carriage cloth was displaced by the smell of tall grass until the train reached another town where only acres of dismantled cars could be seen.

At first I didn't notice the noise that the weddings made at each station that we stopped as due to the heat of the sun it was difficult to see what was happening in the shade. Although I could hear the commotion at each station, I thought that to be the noise created by the porters and went back to my reading. Later I started noticing what was going on, and saw that we passed girls on platform who were smiling and had their hair pomaded and were wearing heels and veils. They all pose uncertainly while seeing the train go.

It looked as though they were out on the end of an event and were waving goodbye to something that survived it. Curious, the next time onwards I started watching these things more attentively and saw the same things happening in different ways. The fathers on the platform were sweating. The mothers were loud and fat. Uncles were being rude and the girls could be seen wearing nylon gloves and jewellery substitutes which marked them different from others.

All the people were coming after having attended the wedding in a café, banquet halls or coach party annexes. At each platform, fresh couples boarded the train and rest of the company stood around them. The last confetti was thrown and advices were given to the new couple. As the train moved, children seemed bored, fathers seemed happy as if they have accomplished something great, the women shared a happy secret and the girls held tighter to their handbags. The train started moving towards London and the fields were being replaced by building plots and the shadows of poplars could be seen on the roads.

In fifty minutes or so which was enough to get settled, a dozen marriages had started. The couples sat side by side and watched the scenes outside. None of them thought about the people they would never meet or how everything would change from that point onwards. I thought of our destination-London in the sun.

The train moved past Pullmans and came close to the walls of blackened mosses; the journey had almost come to its end along with its frail travelling coincidence(the couples travelling in the same train and sharing the same time and space as each other before they alight at their destination). The collective power of the newlyweds was ready to be unleashed. The train started to stop and there was a sense of falling like an arrow shower sent out of sight somewhere becoming rain (couples being ready to reproduce in future).

11.8 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The poem was first published in his collection titled The Whitsun Weddings in 1967. The poem mentions the speaker's observations and thoughts while on a train journey to London. Initially, the speaker focuses on the sights he gets to see outside his window. Everything he looks at seem dull and in a process of decay. He mentions the canals floating with industrial froth, smelly fish docks and the reek of buttoned carriage cloth. The speakers train journey is interrupted by the commotion created by the wedding parties. . This incident shifts his thoughts towards weddings. A number of couples got married on the Whitsun Saturday as it was a popular choice for wedding due to certain tax breaks. The speaker starts thinking about what it means to be married and the changes that it brings in the life of people involved.

The poet contrasts the young couples with the balding fathers and loud and fat mother as a way of predicting the future of the newly married couples. He also highlights the pomp of big day as temporary illusion when he describes the girls wearing gaudy artificial ornaments. That is why the wedding day is also described as "wholly farcical". The position of the poet towards marriage appears to be a bit ambiguous as at one end he seems to observe the gaudiness of the whole affair. He does not romanticize the idea of marriage as it is done on a Whitsun Saturday due to practical reasons and elaborates on his observations regarding the wedding party. But on the other hand, he also mentions that the train is about to unleash a power when the newlyweds would get down the train and later on reproduce. Rain at the end of the poem can be taken as a symbol of fertility.

The poem begins in a casual tone and the language of the poem is prosaic. The poem is of eight verses having ten lines each and the rhyme scheme is ababcdecdea

11.9 CONCLUSION

The autobiographical poem "Fern Hill" is a poem of nostalgia where the poet recounts his idyllic childhood spent in his aunts farm and when life used to be simple and full of blessings. The poet uses dreamlike pastoral metaphors and allusion to Eden to expand upon the idyllic scene. The poem ends with the recognition of the poet of his transition from the world of innocence to the world of experience. The theme of transition of time is an important one discussed in the poem.

The poem "The Whitsun Weddings" by Philip Larkin gives a very realistic portrayal of the life of London and his train journey forces the speaker to contemplate regarding the topic of marriage. The poem moves from depicting a dull noon in the train to one full of life and energy. He carefully observes the wedding party consisting of fathers, mothers, girls and children and their responses to the couple. Although the attitude of the speaker towards weddings is ambivalent, it can be assumed to be cynical by observing the tone he uses throughout the poem. But the end of the

poem can be interpreted as positive since he uses the image of rain which is usually used as a symbol of fertility.

11.10 QUESTIONS

1. How does Dylan Thomas connect the idyllic atmosphere with the world of innocence in his poem "Fern Hill"?
2. Explain the ending of the poem "Fern Hill".
3. What is the attitude of the speaker towards weddings/ wedding parties as represented in "The Whitsun Weddings"?
4. Explain the title of the poem "The Whitsun Weddings".

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