AN INTRODUCTION TO ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN LITERATURE (1757 – 1901)

B.A., (Special English)
Semester – IV, Paper-IV

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BA Special English : 2nd Year –Fourth Semester

AN INTRODUCTION TO ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN LITERATURE (1757 – 1901)

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FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 1976, Acharya Nagarjuna University has been forging ahead in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions. I am extremely happy that by gaining 'A' grade from the NAAC in the year 2016, Acharya Nagarjuna University is offering educational opportunities at the UG, PG levels apart from research degrees to students from over 443 affiliated colleges spread over the two districts of Guntur and Prakasam.

The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education in 2003-04 with the aim of taking higher education to the door step of all the sectors of the society. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even to housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. Acharya Nagarjuna University has started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004 onwards.

To facilitate easier understanding by students studying through the distance mode, these self-instruction materials have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers. The lessons have been drafted with great care and expertise in the stipulated time by these teachers. Constructive ideas and scholarly suggestions are welcome from students and teachers involved respectively. Such ideas will be incorporated for the greater efficacy of this distance mode of education. For clarification of doubts and feedback, weekly classes and contact classes will be arranged at the UG and PG levels respectively.

It is my aim that students getting higher education through the Centre for Distance Education should improve their qualification, have better employment opportunities and in turn be part of country's progress. It is my fond desire that in the years to come, the Centre for Distance Education will go from strength to strength in the form of new courses and by catering to larger number of people. My congratulations to all the Directors, Academic Coordinators, Editors and Lesson-writers of the Centre who have helped in these endeavours.

Prof. P. Raja Sekhar,
Vice-Chancellor,
Acharya Nagarjuna University.

II Year, Semester IV, Course-IV:

An Introduction to Romantic and Victorian Literature (1757-1901)

Course Outcomes:

After going through the course, the learner will

- Relate the features of Romantic and Victorian periods
- Observe the aspects of poetry and the contribution of women as literary artists
- Analysethe characteristics in Poetry, Drama, Prose and Literary Criticism
- Compare and evaluate literature of these periods critically

Unit	Module	Topic	Marks
1	History of English Literature Literary Forms and Terms	Romantic and Victorian Periods Literary terms related to the pieces selected: lyric, ballad, dramatic monologue, sentimental novel, sentimental comedy Other terms: ode, historical novel, gothic novel, regional novel, flat character, round character, protagonist	15 marks
2	Poetry	Wordsworth: Tintern Abbey Keats: La Belle Dame Sans Merci Robert Browning: My Last Duchess	15 marks
3	Drama	Oliver Goldsmith: She Stoops to Conquer	15 marks
4	Fiction	Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice	15 marks
5	Literary Criticism	Matthew Arnold: The Study of Poetry	15 marks
Internals : 25			Total marks:100

MODEL QUESTION PAPER (411SENG21)

B. A. Degree Examination

Second Year – Fourth Semester

Part – II : Special English

Paper – IV : AN INTRODUCTION TO ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN LITERATURE (1757 – 1901)

Time : Three hours **Maximum Marks : 70**

SECTION – A (14 Marks)

1. Answer ALL questions. Each answer carries 1 mark. (1 x 6 = 6)

(a) The "Touchstone method" was propagated by

(i) Arnold

(ii) Keats

(iii) Wordsworth

(iv) Browning

(b) What feature initially attracts Darcy to Elizabeth?

(i) Her smile

(ii) Her intelligence

(iii) Her cheerful

(iv) Her Eyes

(c) Which of the following is a theme in she stoops to conquer?

(i) Country vs. City

(ii) Social class and Snobbery

(iii) Generational conflict

(iv) All the above

(d) Where is the painting in My Last Duchess by Browning?

(i) On a wall for all force

(ii) Behind a curtain

(iii) In a cupboard

(iv) In an art folder

(e) In the poem "Tin tern Abbey" , dearest friend refers to

(i) Nature

(ii) Dorothy

(iii) Coleridge

(iv) Wye

(f) "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is an example of which Poetic Genre

(i) Ballad

(ii) Epic

(iii) Ode

(iv) Sestina

2. Answer any FOUR of the following : (4 x 2 = 8)

(a) Dramatic Monologue

(b) Ballad

(c) Ode

(d) Gothic novel

(e) Sentimental comedy

(f) Lyric

(g) Flat character

(h) Protagonist

SECTION – B

3. Answer any ONE of the following : (1 x 4 = 4)
   (a) Sketch the character of the Lady in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci".
   (b) Bring out the title significance of My Last Duchess by Robert Browning.

4. Answer any ONE of the following : (1 x 10 = 10)
   (a) Discuss the plot summary of the poem My Last Duchess by Browning.
   (b) Explain the three stages of poets development of attitude towards nature in detail.

SECTION – C

5. Answer any ONE of the following : (1 x 4 = 4)
   (a) Bring out Tony's comments on Neville in "She Stoops to Conquer".
   (b) Bring out the significance of the subplot.

6. Answer any ONE of the following : (1 x 10 = 10)
   (a) Explain the meaning and significance of the title "She Stoops to Conquer".
   (b) In what way is Tony Lumpkin a hero in the play? Explain why this Heroism is unconventional.

SECTION – D

7. Answer any ONE of the following : (1 x 4 = 4)
   (a) Why does Lizzy reject Darcy's first proposal to her?
   (b) What is the main theme of the Fiction Pride and Prejudice?

8. Answer any ONE of the following : (1 x 10 = 10)
   (a) "Pride and Prejudice is a domestic novel" . Give some points from the novel to prove this.

(b) Discuss the plot summary of the Nobel Pride and Prejudice.

SECTION – E

9. Answer any ONE of the following : (1 x 4 = 4)

   (a) Justify the statement "Poetry is the criticism of Life".

   (b) According to Arnold, what are the functions and qualifications of critic?

10. Answer any ONE of the following : (1 x 10 = 10)

   (a) Discuss the main concepts in Matthew Arnold's "Study of Poetry".

   (b) Analyse the summary of Arnolds "The Study of poetry".

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1	Romantic Period and Victorian Period	1.1 - 1.10
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4	John Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"	4.1 - 4.10
5	My Last Duchess	5.1 - 5.9
6	She Stoops to Conquer	6.1 - 6.8
7	Pride and Prejudice	7.1 - 7.9
8	The Study of Poetry	8.1 - 8.10

LESSON – 1

ROMANTIC PERIOD AND VICTORIAN PERIOD

Objectives :

- To provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the Romantic and Victorian periods in English literature.
- To introduce students to the key characteristics, themes, and literary genres of each period.
- To encourage students to critically analyse and interpret works of Romantic and Victorian literature.
- To develop students' critical thinking and writing skills through engagement with literary analysis.
- To foster an appreciation for the enduring impact of Romanticism and Victorianism on English literature and culture.

Structure of the lesson :

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Romantic period

1.3 Victorian period

1.4 Key words

1.5 Self Assessment Questions

1.6 Suggested Readings

1.1 INTRODUCTION :

Romantic period and Victorian period are two notable periods in literature. The romantic period was an artistic and literary movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the 18th century. Victorian period is the period during the reign of Queen Victoria.

The Romantic Period began roughly around 1798 and lasted until 1837. The political and economic atmosphere at the time heavily influenced this period, with many writers finding inspiration from the French Revolution. The name "romantic" itself comes from the term "romance" which is a prose or poetic heroic narrative originating in the medieval. The ideals of the French Revolution influenced the Romantic movement in other ways. As a term to cover the most distinctive writers who flourished in the last years of the 18th century and the first decades of the 19th, “Romantic” is indispensable but also a little misleading: there was no self-styled “Romantic movement” at the time, and the great writers of the period did not call themselves Romantics. Not until August Wilhelm von Schlegel’s Vienna

lectures of 1808–09 was a clear distinction established between the "organic," "plastic" qualities of Romantic art and the "mechanical" character of Classicism.

Many of the age's foremost writers thought that something new was happening in the world's affairs, nevertheless. William Blake's affirmation in 1793 that "a new heaven is begun" was matched a generation later by Percy Bysshe Shelley's "The world's great age begins anew." "These, these will give the world another heart, / And other pulses," wrote John Keats, referring to Leigh Hunt and William Wordsworth. Fresh ideals came to the fore; in particular, the ideal of freedom, long cherished in England, was being extended to every range of human endeavour. As that ideal swept through Europe, it became natural to believe that the age of tyrants might soon end.

The most notable feature of the poetry of the time is the new role of individual thought and personal feeling. Where the main trend of 18th-century poetics had been to praise the general, to see the poet as a spokesman of society addressing a cultivated and homogeneous audience and having as his end the conveyance of "truth," the Romantics found the source of poetry in the particular, unique experience.

Blake's marginal comment on Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses* expresses the position with characteristic vehemence: "To Generalize is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is the alone Distinctionof Merit." The poet was seen as an individual distinguished from his fellows by the intensity of his perceptions, taking as his basic subject matter the workings of his own mind. Poetry was regarded as conveying its own truth; sincerity was the criterion by which it was to be judged.

1.2 ROMANTIC PERIOD :

The Romantic Period began roughly around 1798 and lasted until 1837. The political and economic atmosphere at the time heavily influenced this period, with many writers finding inspiration fromthe French Revolution. There was a lot of social change during this period. Calls for the abolitionof slavery became louder during this time, with more writing openly about their objections. Afterthe Agricultural Revolution people moved away from the countryside and farmland and into the cities, where the Industrial Revolution provided jobs and technological innovations, something that would spread to the United States in the 19th century. Romanticism was a reaction against thisspread of industrialism, as well as a criticism of the aristocratic social and political norms and a call for more attention to nature. Although writers of this time did not think of themselves as Romantics, Victorian writers later classified them in this way because of their ability to capture the emotion and tenderness of man.

The beginning of Romanticism :

Robert Burns is considered the pioneer of the Romantic Movement. Although his death in 1796 precedes what many consider the start of Romanticism, his lyricism and sincerity mark him as an early Romantic writer. His most notable works are "Auld Lang Syne" (1788) and "Tam o' Shanter" (1791). Burns inspired many of the writers during the Romantic Period.

William Blake was one of the earliest Romantic Period writers. Blake believed in spiritual and political freedom and often wrote about these themes in his works. Although some of his poetry was published before the official start to the era, Blake can be seen as one of the founders of this movement. His works, *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794), are two of his most significant. These collections of poetry are some of the first to romanticize children, and in these works, Blake pits the innocence and imagination of childhood against the harsh corruption of adulthood, especially within the city of London. He was also known for his beautiful drawings, which accompanied each of these poems.

The first generation of Romantic poets (1798) were primarily Coleridge, William Blake and Wordsworth. The second generation was at its culmination in the 1820s, with poets such as Shelley, Byron and Keats. The movement showed an interest in the Gothic, Medieval art, and nature.

Poetry :

Scholars say that the Romantic Period began with the publishing of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. This was one of the first collections of poems that strayed from the more formal poetic diction of the Neoclassical Period. Poets of the period instead used everyday words that the average person could understand. This also aided in expressing human emotion. Wordsworth primarily wrote about nature. He felt it could provide a source of mental cleanliness and spiritual understanding. One of Wordsworth's well-known works is "The Solitary Reaper" (1807). This poem praises the beauty of music and shows the outpouring of expression and emotion that Wordsworth felt was necessary in poetry. His greatest piece is *The Prelude* (1850), a semi-autobiographical, conversation poem that chronicles Wordsworth's entire life. Conversational poetry was the literary genre most commonly used by Wordsworth and Coleridge, with the latter writing a series of eight poems following the genre structure of conversational verse and examining higher ideas of nature, man, and morality. This poetry is written in blank verse and is extremely personal and intimate in nature, with much of the content based on the author's life.

Coleridge and Wordsworth were very good friends and the two often influenced each other. While Wordsworth was meditative and calm, Coleridge was the opposite and lived a more uncontrolled life. Of his three major poems only one is complete: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798). This poem tells the story of a sailor's journey and his experiences on the ship. The sailor is cursed by supernatural powers and is only able to return home when he appreciates the animals and nature around him. He is forced to wander the Earth sharing his story due to his earlier mistakes. His two other long form poems are *Kubla Khan* (1816) and *Christabel* (1816). According to Coleridge, his poem *Kubla Khan* came to him in an opium-induced dream after reading a work about Chinese emperor Kublai Khan. He was never able to finish the work. *Christabel* tells the story of the title character meeting a stranger named Geraldine who asks for Christabel's help. Ignoring the supernatural signs, Christabel rescues and takes her home, but it appears that the stranger is not normal. Coleridge was only able to finish two out of his five intended parts to the poem.

The Second Generation of Romantic Poets :

Succeeding Blake, Coleridge, and Wordsworth was a new generation of poets, each following thepattern of Romanticism of those before them. John Keats is still one of the most popular of these poets, with his work continually read and analyzed today. Keats aimed to express extreme emotionin his poetry, using natural imagery to do this. He is well known for his odes, lyrical stanzas that are typically written in praise of, or in dedication to, something or someone that the writer admires.These odes followed the genre of lyrical poetry and focused on intense emotion using personal narrative. Among these odes, "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819) and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819) are most famous. Keats was preoccupied with death and aging throughout his life, which is shown in each of these two odes. "Ode to a Nightingale" discusses the temporary status of life and beauty,but in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," he explores the artistic permanence of the images on the urn.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was seen as a radical thinker for his religious atheism and largely ostracizedby his contemporaries for his political and social views. One of his most famous worksis *Adonais* (1821). This was a pastoral elegy, a poem combining death and rural life, written for John Keats. The poem mourns the death of Keats and his contribution to poetry. Another of his well-known works was *Ode to the West Wind* (1819) where he discusses the force and power of the wild wind and shows the Romantic writer's tendency to connect nature with art.

Lord Byron differed from the writing styles of Keats and Shelley. He was heavily influenced by the satire and wit from the previous period and infused this in his poetry. His satire *Don Juan* (1819-1824) is told in 17 cantos, divisions of long poems, and is based on the traditional legend of Don Juan. Byron changes the original telling of the story and instead of creating a womanizing character, he makes Don Juan someone easily seduced by women. The cantos follow his character's journey as he travels throughout Europe meeting several women and continually trying to escape from trouble. Byron's other notable work is *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812- 1816), another lengthy narrative poem. This poem was largely biographical and discusses many of Byron's personal travels. It describes the reflections of a young man who is seeking new beginnings in foreign countries after experiencing many years of war. This poem is significant because it introduced the Byronic hero, typically a handsome and intelligent man with a tendency to be moody, cynical, and rebellious against social norms.

Novel :

During the Romantic Period the novel grew in popularity and became one of the major sources ofentertainment for middle class citizens. Authors began to tailor their writing to appeal to this audience. Sir Walter Scott gained popularity during this time, both in Britain and around Europe.He mainly wrote within the genre of historical romances and made this a viable form of fiction for later writers. Scott also focused on his home country of Scotland, often writing about its beauty and romanticism. Scott's first major novel was *Waverly* (1814), which is set during the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. The rebellious group sought to restore the Stuart dynasty to Charles Edward Stuart. The hero, Edward Waverly, is commissioned to the

army and sent to Scotland in 1745. While there, he joins the Jacobite groups even though he knows they will fail and is imprisoned; however, he is ultimately freed. The novel ends with a marriage between Waverly and a Baron's daughter, Rose, representing the rational, realistic present of Scotland post-rebellion. While this was his first success, generally *The Antiquary* (1816), *Old Mortality* (1816), and *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) are considered his masterpieces.

Gothic Fiction :

During the second half of the 18th century, gothic fiction began to increase in popularity in Great Britain. This came from a look back to medieval times. Often this genre would combine supernatural and mysterious elements with the castles and dungeons of the past. The gothic novel combines the intense emotions of terror, anguish, fear, and even love. Coleridge and Byron both contributed works to this canon, but John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819)and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) stand out as two of the genre's most enduring pieces. Polidori's work has importance for creating the vampire literary genre. Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, published during the Victorian Period, would continue to generate popularity around vampirism.

Shelley combines elements of love and the supernatural in her gothic novel, *Frankenstein*. Dr. Victor Frankenstein harnesses the power of life and uses it to animate a creature he has built. When the creature is cast away and refused companionship for his hideous physical features, he becomesmurderous and determines to ruin Victor's life.

Women Writers :

The Romantic Period saw more successful women writers, a precursor to their popularity in the Victorian era. The most significant female writer during this period was Jane Austen. Writing toward the end of the period, Austen did not always adhere to the strict Romantic Period guidelines and mocked some of the more extravagant plots of previous writers. Instead, Austen chose to highlight the everyday lives of average people, making a turn toward social realism. Her novels include relatable heroines with adventures that the ordinary reader would likely encounter. Some of her famous novels include *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), and *Northanger Abbey* (1817). *Pride and Prejudice* is still widely read today and tells the story of Elizabeth Bennet, the second eldest daughter among five. When Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy move into the neighborhood, the Bennet family hopes they will wed two of the unmarried daughters. Although Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy clash heads early on in the novel, they eventually fall in love and get married. Austen's novel *Emma* is also very popular and shows the consequences of meddling with love. Emma thinks that she could be a matchmaker,but her efforts ultimately fail and lead to heartbreak along the way. Although in the beginning of the novel she vows never to marry, by the end she realizes she is in love with Mr. Knightly and the two do get married.

The European Romantic Movement reached America in the early 19th century. It encompassed many of the same ideals, genres, and styles as the European Romanticism and appealed to the Americans' revolutionary spirit. The English Romantic Period ended with the

coronation of QueenVictoria in 1837. The Industrial Revolution was beginning to be fully felt by the people of England as the working class became dominant in the culture. Most significant would be the introduction of the steam printing press and the railroads, which would make it possible to easily make and distribute texts.

1.3 VICTORIAN PERIOD :

The Victorian period of literature roughly coincides with the years that Queen Victoria ruled GreatBritain and its Empire (1837-1901). During this era, Britain was transformed from a predominantlyrural, agricultural society into an urban, industrial one. The Victorian, from the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837 until her death in 1901, was an era of numerous disturbing social developments. The literature of the Victorian Age entered a new period after the Romantic Revival.

The literature of Victorian age was preceded by romanticism and was followed by modernism or realism. During this period, the writers were forced to write on the living issues of society. In this way the literature of this Era was directed to issues such as the growth of English democracy, the education of the masses, the progress of industrial enterprise and the rise of materialistic philosophy and the problem of newly industrialized worker. However, during this period there was a lot of radical social change. Many poets of this period did not like the romanticized version of society.

New technologies like railroads and the steam printing press united Britons both physically and intellectually. Although now the period is popularly known as a time of prim, conservative moral values, the Victorians perceived their world as rapidly changing. Religious faith was splintering into evangelical and even atheist beliefs. The working class, women, and people of color were agitating for the right to vote and rule themselves. Reformers fought for safe workplaces, sanitary reforms, and universal education. Victorian literature reflects these values, debates, and cultural concerns. Victorian literature differs from that of the eighteenth century and Romantic period mostsignificantly because it was not aimed at a specialist or elite audience; rather, because the steam printing press made the production of texts much cheaper and because railroads could distribute texts quickly and easily, the Victorian period was a time when new genres appealed to newly massaudiences.

Poetry was one of the most popular genres of the Victorian period. The Romantic poets, particularly William Wordsworth (who lived through the beginning of the period, dying in 1850) were revered and widely quoted. The Victorians experimented with narrative poetry, which tells a story to its audience, including Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856), an entire novel written in verse. The poem tells the story of Aurora Leigh, a woman who seeks a career as a poet after rejecting an inheritance and a male suitor, and so tells, in part, the story of Barrett Browning's own struggles to make her poetic way in the world. Narrative poetry could also be much shorter, like Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" (1862), which recounts how a woman is seduced into eating beautiful fruit sold by goblins and how her sister saves her after she sickens.

Victorian poets also developed a new form called the dramatic monologue, in which a speaker recites the substance of the poem to an audience within the poem itself. Robert

Browning's "My Last Duchess" (1842), in which the Duke of Ferrara describes how he (probably) killed his last wife to the man who is arranging his next marriage, is one of the most famous examples of a dramatic monologue. Alfred, Lord Tennyson also used the form in "Ulysses" (1842), in which Ulysses recounts his reasons for setting out on a last voyage to the men with whom he will sail.

Tennyson also wrote lyric, or non-narrative poetry, including what is perhaps the most famous poem of the Victorian era, *In Memoriam A. H. H.* (1849). Tennyson wrote this book-length sequence of verses to commemorate the death of his close friend Arthur Henry Hallam. The poemcontains some of the most famous lines in literature, including "'Tis better to have loved and lost/Than never to have loved at all," and was widely quoted in the Victorian period.

Poets like Tennyson, the Browning's, and Rossetti frequently wrote poetry in order to create a powerful emotional effect on the reader, but some Victorian poets also wrote simply to entertain. Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear wrote nonsense or light verse, a genre that plays with sounds and rhythm in melodious ways. Famous examples include Carroll's "Jabberwocky" (1871), a poem that uses many invented words to narrate the killing of amonster called the Jabberwock, and Lear's "The Owl and the Pussycat" (1871), which describes the adventures of the title characters.

Although different kinds of realism (see below) dominated the novel in the Victorian period, the eighteenth-century tradition of the Gothic lived on, particularly in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). *Jane Eyre* uses many Gothic conventions: a young, pure female heroine; a sinister house filled with mysteries; and a handsome, brooding older man – but within a Victorian frame.Jane Eyre must make her own way in the world as a governess, and must also pursue what is rightfor her despite Victorian gender and class conventions.

Jane Eyre uses some Gothic tropes, but sensation fiction (so named because its suspenseful plots inspired dangerous "sensations" in readers) more fully embraced the surprise and horror typical ofthe Gothic. Sensation fiction typically centers on deception and bigamy, in which men or womenare lured into fake marriages – and worse. Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859), which tells the story of two women who look strangely alike and are substituted for each other at variouspoints, is perhaps the most famous example. Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), in which a supposedly deranged woman tries to kill her husband after he realizes that she has married another man, also shocked Victorian readers.

One of the aims of sensation fiction was to surprise and trouble readers by challenging social conventions, but another Victorian genre, melodrama, achieved popularity by upholding popular values. Melodramas divide characters starkly into those who are vicious and those who are virtuous. They evoke emotion in readers and viewers by making virtuous characters the subject of vicious plots. These were some of the most popular theatrical productions of the period.

Although poetry and plays were important in Victorian cultural life, the period is known as the great age of the novel. The serial form of publishing, in which installments of a

novel were released at regular intervals, encouraged engaged audiences. Victorian books are also famously long. In part, this was because improvements in papermaking and printing technology made printing books much cheaper. The rise of lending libraries, which would individually lend out volumes of a book (a book like *Jane Eyre* was a "triple decker," or had three volumes) also contributed to the great length of Victorian novels. A three-volume book could be read by three readers at the same time, while a one-volume book could only be read by one. Lending libraries made more money on triple Deckers, and their encouragement helped that form become dominant in the Victorian marketplace.

Realism, which aims to portray realistic events happening to realistic people in a realistic way, was the dominant narrative mode of the Victorian novel – but it had many variants.

William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847-48) best exemplifies satirical realism, a move that emphasizes the worst qualities of each character and suggests that the world, or "Vanity Fair," is a dark and unfair place. The novel follows the adventures of Becky Sharpe, a scheming and amoral heroine who manipulates all those around her (and does very well for herself), in contrast to Amelia Sedley, a trusting and virtuous young woman who struggles to find happiness.

Psychological realism emphasizes portraying the rich inner life of characters – their thoughts, feelings, motivations, anxieties, etc. In George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-72) for instance, she portrays the progress of several marriages in a small provincial town. Dorothea Brooke, the heroine, is an idealist who marries an elderly scholar, Casaubon, in the hopes of helping him with his work. But she becomes disillusioned and finds herself attracted to his nephew Will Ladislaw.

Social realism focuses on the foibles, eccentricities, and remarkable characteristics of people, who are frequently caricatured. Often comic (and sometimes tragicomic), it is best exemplified by the work of Charles Dickens. In novels like *Oliver Twist* (1837-39) in which Dickens uses the plight of the orphan Oliver to critique a heartless orphanage overseen by eccentric bumblers, Dickens both criticized the social system and created a vibrant world of memorable characters. In his masterpiece *Bleak House* (1852-53) Dickens takes aim at the bureaucratic excesses of the court system as seen in the never-ending court case Jarndyce v. Jarndyce.

The rapid transformation of Britain into an industrial society prompted some writers to write novels which exposed the difficult plight of the working class. In Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854), the millworker hero, Stephen Blackpool, faces ostracism after his refusal to join the millworkers' union. Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855) uses the viewpoint of Margaret Hale, an emigrant from southern England to a northern industrial city, to address the plight of millworkers.

As Dickens and Gaskell focused on important domestic issues, other writers turned their attention to Britain's rapidly-expanding empire, which they took as a subject for novels and poetry. Rudyard Kipling celebrated British rule in India with his novel *Kim* (1901), in which the young Kim becomes a British spy in India. Joseph Conrad took a more skeptical

stance toward imperialismin *Heart of Darkness* (1899), in which the sailor Marlow journeys through the Belgian Congo. Although ostensibly about the Belgian rather than the British Empire, Marlow informs his fellowsailors that his tale applies to Britain as well.

With the cheaper price of printing, British journalism and periodical writing flourished and formed a significant part of Victorian literary production. Essayists like John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, Thomas Babington Macauley, John Stuart Mill, and Matthew Arnold all wrote famous works of nonfiction prose that analyzed British history and critiqued current trends in British society. Professional female journalists like Harriet Martineau and prominent reformers like Florence Nightingale also used the periodical press to raise awareness about important issues in British society. Finally, important figures in British literature were also frequent contributors to the periodical press. Dickens ran a literary magazine called *Household Words*, while Eliot edited the *Westminster Review* for several years.

The nineteenth century is frequently seen as the golden age of children's literature. Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) narrate the story of Alice, who finds herself in a place called "Wonderland" populated by grinning cats, mad hatters, and an evil queen. J.M. Barrie's *Peter and Wendy* (1911) similarly imagines a fantastical place of mermaid lagoons, evil pirates,and fairy magic.

The last part of the Victorian period, roughly 1880-1900, is referred to as the "fin de siecle," a French term that means "end of the century." Novels from this period tend to be melancholy and bleak, which conventionally had happy endings. Thomas Hardy's famously depressing novels *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1892) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895), for instance, describe how their protagonists' lives are ruined by social forces. Tess gives birth to a child out of wedlock, which causes the husband she later marries to shun her when he finds out. Jude Fawley's dreams of becoming a student at an elite university are destroyed both by his low social status as a stoneworker and by a disastrous early marriage.

Fin de siecle literature is also characterized by a move away from the forms of realism that had dominated the earlier part of the century and into genre fiction. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, made his first appearance in 1886. Science fiction also became popular in the fin de siècle, as H. G. Wells imagined future worlds in *The Time Machine* (1895) and an alien invasion in *The War of the Worlds* (1897).

At the same time that Hardy envisioned bleak outcomes of human striving and Doyle and Wells developed new genres, Oscar Wilde wrote hilariously witty plays like *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) which describes the comic endeavors of two men who are trying to marry two women, both of whom are determined to marry men named Ernest. Although Wilde was the toastof the literary town at the time of the play's production, he was soon prosecuted for sodomy and thrown into jail. His "Ballad of Reading Gaol" (1897) is a mournful evocation of prison life and the death of dreams, as the refrain reiterates: "all men kill the thing they love."

1.4 KEY WORDS :

1. **Romanticism :**

   A movement in the arts and literature that originated in the late 18th century, emphasizing inspiration, subjectivity, and the primacy of the individual.

2. **Gothic :**

   Gothic literature is a genre of fiction that combines romance and darkelements to produce mystery, suspense, terror, horror and supernatural.

3. **Fiction :**

   Literature in the form of prose that describes imaginary events and people.

4. **Era :**

   A long and distinct period of history.

5. **Victorian period :**

   The Victorian era spans the 63 years of Queen Victoria's reignover Great Britain and Ireland from 1837 until her death in 1901.

6. **Atheist :**

   A person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods.

1.5 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS :

1. Write an essay on Romantic period?
2. What role does William Wordsworth's Poetry Play in The Romantic Literary Tradition?
3. Write an essay on Victorian era?

1.6 SUGGESTED READINGS :

4. Adams, James Eli. *A History of Victorian Literature*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2012.
5. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Victorian Age*. Ed. Carol T. Christ andCatherine Robson. New York: Norton, 2006.
6. Frank Jordan, ed. *The English Romantic Poets*: A Review of Research and Criticism Fourth Edition, (1985).
7. Rene Wellek *History of Modern Criticism*: 1750-1950 Volume 2 (1955).
8. Morse Peckham *The Triumph of Romanticism* (1970).

Dr. K. Narasimha Rao

LESSON – 2

LITERARY TERMS

(Related to pieces selected**)**

Objectives :

- To introduce students to a comprehensive range of literary terms that are essential for understanding and analysing literature.
- To enhance students' ability to identify, define, and explain various literary devices and techniques employed in writing.
- To foster an appreciation for the power of language and its ability to convey meaning, create imagery, and evoke emotions.
- To equip students with the necessary vocabulary to critically discuss and interpret literary works.

Structure of the lesson :

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Literary Terms

- 2.2.1 Lyric
- 2.2.2 Ballad
- 2.2.3 Dramatic Monologue
- 2.2.4 Sentimental Novel
- 2.2.5 Sentimental Comedy

2.3 Other Terms

- 2.3.1 Ode
- 2.3.2 Historical Novel
- 2.3.3 Gothic Novel
- 2.3.4 Regional Novel
- 2.3.5 Flat character
- 2.3.6 Round Character
- 2.3.7 Protagonist

2.4 Self Assessment Questions

2.5 Suggested Readings

2.1 INTRODUCTION :

Literary terms are important to discuss and analyze literature, it is necessary to know some of the basic terms and expressions used within the subject area. Many writers employ the use of literary devices to express their thoughts figuratively. The writer uses this technique to invoke the reader's thoughts and enable the reader to see beyond the literal sense of the sentences, to unravel the biggerpicture.

2.2 LITERARY TERMS :

2.2.1 Lyric :

In the most common use of the term, a **lyric** is any fairly short poem, consisting of the utterance by a single speaker, who expresses a state of mind or a process of perception, thought, and feeling. Many lyric speakers are represented as musing in solitude. In *dramatic lyrics,* however, the lyric speaker is represented as addressing another person in a specific situation; instances are John Donne's "Canonization" and William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." Although the lyric is uttered in the first person, the "I" in the poem need not be the poet who wrote it.

In some lyrics, such as John Milton's sonnet "When I consider how my light is spent" and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," the references to the known circumstances of the author's life make it clear that we are to read the poem as a personal expression. Even in such **personal lyrics,** however, both the character and utterance of the speaker may be formalized and shaped by the author in a way that is conducive to the desired artistic effect. In a number of lyrics, the speaker is a conventional period-figure, such as the long-suffering suitor in the Petrarchan sonnet (see *Petrarchan conceit),* or the courtly, witty lover of the *Cavalier* poems. And in some types of lyrics, the speaker is obviously an invented figure remote from the poet in character and circumstance. The lyric genre comprehends a great variety of utterances. Some, like Ben Jonson's "To the Memory of William Shakespeare" and Walt Whitman's ode on the death of Abraham Lincoln, "O Captain, My Captain," are ceremonial poems uttered in a public voice on a public occasion.

But the genre also includes extended expressions of a complex evolution of feelingly thought, as in the long elegy and the meditative ode. And within a lyric, the process of observation, thought, memory, and feeling may be organized in a variety of ways. For example, in "love lyrics" the speaker may simply express an enamoured state of mind in an ordered form, as in Robert Burns' "O my love's like a red, red rose," or Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways"; or may gallantly elaborate a compliment (Ben Jonson's "Drink to me only with thine eyes"); or may deploy an argument to take advantage of fleeting youth and opportunity (Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress," or Shakespeare's first seventeen sonnets addressed to a male youth); or may express a cool response to an importunate lover (Christina Rossetti's "No, thank you, John"). In other kinds of lyrics, the speaker manifests and justifies a particular disposition and set of values (John Milton's "L' Allegro" and "II Penseroso"); or expresses a sustained process of observation and meditation in the attempt to resolve an emotional problem (Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations

of Immortality," Arnold's "Dover Beach"); or is exhibited as making and justifying the choice of a way of life (Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium").

In the original Greek, "lyric" signified a song rendered to the accompaniment of a lyre. In some current usages, lyric still retains the sense of a poem written to be set to music; the *hymn,* for example, is a lyric on a religious subject that is intended to be sung. The adjectival form "lyrical" is sometimes applied to an expressive, song-like passage in a narrative poem, such as Eve's declaration of love to Adam, "With thee conversing I forget all time," in Milton's *Paradise Lost,* IV, 639-56.

2.2.2 Ballad :

A ballad is a type of poem that tells a story and it is traditionally set to music. English language ballads are typically composed of four-line stanzas that follow an ABCB rhyme scheme. The ballad is one of the oldest poetic forms in English. There are so many different types of ballads that giving one strict definition to fit all the variations would be nearly impossible. The simplest way to think of a ballad is as a song or poem that tells a story and has a bouncy rhythm and rhymescheme.

Traditional ballads are written in a meter called common meter, which consists of alternating lines of iambic tetrameter (eight syllables) with lines of iambic tri-meter (six syllables). Many ballads have a refrain (a line or stanza that repeats throughout the poem), much like the chorus of modern-day songs. Ballads are a type of formal verse, meaning that they tend to have both strict meter and a definedrhyme scheme.

The stanzas of a typical ballad follow the rhyme scheme "ABCB." For instance, here's the first stanza of a famous Irish folk ballad entitled "Tam Lin" that exemplifies the traditional ABCB rhyme scheme.

O I forbid you, maidens all, That wear gold in your hair, To come or go by Carterhaugh,For young Tam Lin is there.

The same ballad has a refrain of six lines that shows how the typical "ABCB" rhyme scheme canbe modified for stanzas with more than four lines. The following stanza has a rhyme scheme of ABCBDB.

Janet has kilted her green kirtleA little above her knee,

And she has braided her yellow hairA little above her bree,

And she's away to CarterhaughAs fast as she can hie.

Note: "bree" means "brow," and "hie," means "go." Also, "hie" is pronounced "hee," so it rhymeswith "knee" and "bree."

2.2.3 Dramatic Monologue :

Dramatic monologue is a literary form where the writer takes on the voice of a character and speaks through them. Although dramatic monologues also occur in theatre and prose, the term most frequently refers to a poetic form where the poet creates a character who speaks without interruption. Within the poem’s framework, the speaker reveals surprising

information about their character or situation to an implied or explicit audience, often not intended to be the reader.

A dramatic monologue is also called a persona poem, and the character speaking in the poem is referred to as a "persona." The narrator of a persona poem or dramatic monologue is most frequently a person, but dramatic monologues can also be told by animals, objects, places, or abstract concepts (such as love or destiny).

While, for the most part, the dramatic monologue was written in the voice of a fictional character, the form sometimes makes use of a character who is already well-known so the poet can explore larger themes. Since the latter half of the 20th century, the form has taken on a political dimension as poets began writing dramatic monologues in the voices of misunderstood historical figures (as in Robert Hayden's "A Letter from Phillis Wheatley, London, 1773") or reclaimed racial stock figures (Cornelius Eady's *Brutal Imagination*).

Dramatic monologues fall into three main categories.

1. **Romantic monologues** are poems where a character speaks about a romantic relationship, either past, current, or desired. "Dilemma" by Anthony Hecht is anexample of a romantic monologue.
2. Conversational monologues are poems where the dramatic monologue is presented by the speaker as if it is part of a conversation. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Eolian Harp" is one example.
3. **Philosophical monologues** are poems where the character explicates their personal philosophy or theories about the world. "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Alley" by William Wordsworth is one example of a philosophical monologue.

Poets use dramatic monologues because it allows them to write about situations and subject matter that is not taken from their own lives. Readers often assume other writers, like novelists or playwrights, create characters wildly different than the writers themselves. But with poetry, readers tend to believe poems are about the writer's personal experience. Writing dramatic monologues give poets the same artistic freedom and permission to create outside narratives, characters, and situations that writers in other genres take for granted.

The form is also a powerful way to create narrative tension as the speaker reveals crucial information to the reader in a way that allows the reader to feel as if they are there.

2.2.4 Sentimental Novel :

A sentimental novel, or a novel of sensibility is a literary genre, popular in the 18th century, that is defined by its focus on concepts of sentiment and sensibility. These novels are concerned with evoking a certain kind of feeling from their reader. They included purposefully distressing scenes, as well as tender ones, that were utilized as important plot elements.

Character's emotions strongly influenced their actions and how others perceived them. The authorsalso relied on the reader's emotional reactions to shape their understanding of the

characters and plot. These novels are concerned with evoking a certain kind of feeling from their reader.

Sentimental novel**,** broadly, any novel that exploits the reader's capacity for tenderness, compassion, or sympathy to a disproportionate degree by presenting a beclouded or unrealistic view of its subject. In a restricted sense the term refers to a widespread European novelistic development of the 18th century, which arose partly in reaction to the austerity and rationalism of the Neoclassical period. The sentimental novel exalted feeling above reason and raised the analysis of emotion to a fine art. An early example in France is Antoine-François Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* (1731), the story of a courtesan for whom a young seminary student of noble birth forsakes his career, family, and religion and ends as a card shark and confidence man. His downward progress, if not actually excused, is portrayed as a sacrifice to love.

The assumptions underlying the sentimental novel were Jean-Jacques Rousseau's doctrine of the natural goodness of man and his belief that moral development was fostered by experiencing powerful sympathies. In England, Samuel Richardson's sentimental novel *Pamela* (1740) was recommended by clergymen as a means of educating the heart. In the 1760s the sentimental novel developed into the "novel of sensibility," which presented characters possessing a pronounced susceptibility to delicate sensation. Such characters were not only deeply moved by sympathy for their fellow man but also reacted emotionally to the beauty inherent in natural settings and works of art and music. The prototype was Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67), which devotes several pages to describing Uncle Toby's horror of killing a fly. The literature of Romanticism adopted many elements of the novel of sensibility, including responsiveness to nature and belief in the wisdom of the heart and in the power of sympathy. It did not, however, assimilate the novel of sensibility's characteristic optimism.

They included purposefully distressing scenes, as well as tender ones, that were utilized as important plot elements. Character's emotions strongly influenced their actions and how others perceived them. The authors also relied on the reader's emotional reactions to shape their understanding of the characters and plot. Throughout history, authors like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Oliver Goldsmith, Frances Burney, Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and others published sentimental novels and poems. Some scholars cite *Dombey and Son* by Charles Dickens are a particularly interesting and powerful work of sentimentalism. *Vicar of Wakefield* by Oliver Goldsmith was published in 1766 and is also categorized as a comedy or satire. The book was one of the most popular novels of Victorian literature. It tells the story of a lovable vicar who deals with bankruptcy and the abduction of his daughter.

2.2.5 Sentimental Comedy :

Sentimental comedy, a dramatic genre of the 18th century, denoting plays in which middle- class protagonists triumphantly overcome a series of moral trials. Such comedy aimed at producing tears rather than laughter. Sentimental comedies reflected contemporary philosophical conceptions of humans as inherently good but capable of being led astray through bad example. By an appeal to his noble sentiments, a man could be reformed and set back on the path of virtue. Although the plays contained characters whose natures seemed

overly virtuous, and whose trials were too easily resolved, they were nonetheless accepted by audiences as truthful representations of the human predicament. Sentimental comedy had its roots in early 18th century tragedy, which had a vein of morality similar to that of sentimental comedy but had loftier characters and subject matter than sentimental comedy.

Writers of sentimental comedy included Colley Cibber and George Farquhar, with their respective plays *Love's Last Shift* (1696) and *The Constant Couple* (1699). The best-known sentimental comedy is Sir Richard Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), which deals with the trials and tribulations of its penniless heroine Indiana. The discovery that she is an heiress affords the necessary happy resolution. Steele, in describing the affect he wished the play to have, said he would like to arouse "a pleasure too exquisite for laughter." Sentimental comedies continued to coexist with such conventional comedies as Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) and Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775) until the sentimental genre waned in the early 19th century.

In France *comedie larmoyante* (*q.v.*), similar to sentimental comedy, was written principally by Pierre-Claude Nivelle de La Chaussée, whose *Le Prejuge a la mode* (1735; "Fashionable Prejudice") is a good example of the genre.

2.3 OTHER TERMS :

2.3.1 Ode :

An ode is a short lyric poem that praises an individual, an idea, or an event. In ancient Greece, odes were originally accompanied by music—in fact, the word "ode" comes from the Greek word *aeidein*, which means to sing or to chant. Odes are often ceremonial, and formal in tone. There are several different types of odes, but they are all highly structured and adhere to poetic forms.

An ode poem is traditionally divided into three sections, or stanzas :

1. **The strophe**. In a Greek ode, the strophe usually consists of two or more lines repeated as a unit. In modern usage, the term strophe can refer to any group of verses that form a distinct unit within a poem.

2. **The antistrophe**. The second section of an ode is structured the same way as the strophe, but typically offers a thematic counterbalance.

3. **The epode**. This section or stanza typically has a distinct meter and length from the strophe andantistrophe, and serves to summarize or conclude the ideas of the ode.

The English Romantic poets wrote many odes, all of which explored intense emotions. While Romantic odes deviate in form and meter from the traditional Greek ode, they all tend to follow some kind of traditional verse structure. For example, Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," believed to have been written in response to the loss of his son, is written in iambic pentameter.

There are three main types of odes :

- **Pindaric ode**. Pindaric odes are named for the ancient Greek poet Pindar, who lived during the 5th century BC and is often credited with creating the ode poetic form. A Pindaric ode consists of a strophe, an antistrophe that is melodically harmonious, and anepode. Pindaric poems are also characterized by irregular line lengths and rhyme schemes.
- **Horatian ode**. Named after Roman poet Horace, who lived during the 1st century, the Horatian ode consists of two- or four-line stanzas that share the same meter, rhyme scheme, and length. Unlike the more formal Pindaric ode, the Horatian ode traditionallyexplores intimate scenes of daily life.
- **Irregular ode**. Irregular odes follow neither the Pindaric form nor the Horatian form.Irregular odes typically include rhyme, as well as irregular verse structure and stanzapatterns.

The *Greek* or *Pindaric* (Pindar, ca. 552–442 B.C.E.) ode was a public poem, usually set to music,that celebrated athletic victories. (See Stephen Burt's article "And the Winner Is . . . Pindar!") English odes written in the Pindaric tradition include Thomas Gray's "The Progress of Poesy: A Pindaric Ode" and William Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Reflections of Early Childhood." Horatian odes, after the Latin poet Horace (65–8 B.C.E.), were written in quatrains in a more philosophical, contemplative manner; see Andrew Marvell's "Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland."

The Sapphic ode consists of quatrains, three 11-syllable lines, and a final five-syllable line, unrhyming but with a strict meter. See Algernon Charles Swinburne's "Sapphics."

The odes of the English Romantic poets vary in stanza form. They often address an intense emotionat the onset of a personal crisis (see Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode,") or celebratean object or image that leads to revelation (see John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode to a Nightingale," and "To Autumn"). Browse more odes.

2.3.2 Historical Novel :

Historical fiction is a literary genre where the story takes place in the past. Historical novels capture the details of the time period as accurately as possible for authenticity, including social norms, manners, customs, and traditions. Many novels in this genre tell fictional stories that involve actual historical figures or historical events. Historical fiction as we know it in contemporary Western literature dates back to the early 19th century. Sir Walter Scott, Honoré deBalzac, James Fenimore Cooper, and Leo Tolstoy were among the first novelists to explore the historical setting as its own concept for a book.

By the early 20th century, the genre was thriving in the United States with a focus on war stories, like Kenneth Roberts' Arundel about the American Revolution or William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom about the American Civil War.

Five Common Elements of Historical Fiction :

1. **Setting :** The setting is the most important part of a historical fiction novel. It should take place during an authentic period in history and be set in a real historical place. For example, New York City during the Great Depression or Paris, France during World War II.

2. **Plot :** The plot in a historical fiction novel is a combination of real events and fictional events. You can invent characters, cities, and events, but they still must make sense to the time period. For example, a novel set in London, England in 1666 would benefit from incorporating the Great Fire of London, a major turning point in the city's history.

3. **Characters :** The characters can be real, fictional, or both, but they should all look, speak, and act in ways that accurately reflect the era. For example, if you are writing a book about Mary Tudor, it shouldn't disregard or reinvent her family history as the daughter of Henry VIII and sister to Elizabeth I, who both played an important role in Mary's reign.

4. **Dialogue :** The dialogue must be authentic to the time period and should reflect the status of the characters who are speaking. For example, British soldiers in the Revolutionary War wouldn't use Western slang of today.

5. **Conflict :** The problems the characters encounter should be conflicts people of that era would encounter. For example, your book might describe the hesitation and fear German soldier feels as he is to the Eastern Front, where he knows he is likely to die.

Indeed, in the past, gothic novels were also often called 'gothic romances' because before our current understanding of 'romance,' the term denoted narratives and creative work that focused on 'fancy' (fantasy) rather than reality and championed subjectivity and the imagination in opposition to Enlightenment ideals. Knowing how to work storylines and keep well-established themes fresh was, moreover, more important than stylistic or linguistic prowess to gothic novel writers. This, however, also meant that throughout literary history, they have never been highly esteemed by the literary elite.

2.3.3 Gothic Novel :

The gothic novel is one of the oldest and most studied forms of 'genre' or 'formula fiction.' It got its start around the middle of the 18th century in Great Britain and encompasses novels and stories that could be described as a mix of horror, mystery, adventure, psychological thriller and historical fiction.

In the most general terms, Gothic literature can be defined as writing that employs dark and picturesque scenery, startling and melodramatic narrative devices, and an overall atmosphere of exoticism, mystery, fear, and dread. Often, a Gothic novel or story will revolve around a large, ancient house that conceals a terrible secret or serves as the refuge of an especially frightening and threatening character.

Despite the fairly common use of this bleak motif, Gothic writers have also used supernatural elements, touches of romance, well-known historical characters, and travel and adventure narratives to entertain their readers.

Gothic literature developed during the Romantic period in Britain. The first mention of "Gothic," as pertaining to literature, was in the subtitle of Horace Walpole's 1765 story "The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story" which was supposed to have been meant by the author as a subtle joke—"When he used the word it meant something like 'barbarous,' as well as 'deriving from the Middle Ages." In the book, it's purported that the story was an ancient one, then recently discovered. Butthat's just part of the tale. The supernatural elements in the story, though, launched a whole new genre, which took off in Europe. Then America's Edgar Allen Poe got ahold of it in the mid-1800s and succeeded like no one else. In Gothic literature, he found a place to explore psychological trauma, the evils of man, and mental illness. Any modern-day zombie story, detective story, or Stephen King novel owes a debt to Poe. There may have been successful Gothic writers before and after him, but no one perfected the genre quite like Poe.

A few of the most influential and popular 18th-century Gothic writers were Horace Walpole (*The Castle of Otranto*, 1765), Ann Radcliffe (*Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794), Matthew Lewis (*The Monk*, 1796), and Charles Brockden Brown (*Wieland*, 1798).

The genre continued to command a large readership well into the 19th century, first as Romantic authors such as Sir Walter Scott (*The Tapestried Chamber*, 1829) adopted Gothic conventions, then later as Victorian writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson (*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1886) and Bram Stoker (*Dracula*, 1897) incorporated Gothic motifs in their stories of horror and suspense.

Elements of Gothic fiction are prevalent in several of the acknowledged classics of 19th-century literature, including Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of theSeven Gables* (1851), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831 in French), and many of the tales written by Edgar Allan Poe such as "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) and "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843).

2.3.4 Regional Novel :

A novel describing people and landscape of an actual locality outside the metropolis. Hardy set his works in a fictive Wessex where an appreciation of both aesthetic and geological aspects of landscape complements a concern with agricultural and economic issues. Thenceforward these two approaches tend to diverge.

The regional novel is a writing in which the setting or local colour, plays an unusually important part. In almost all narratives there is setting of some kind but in many of them it could as well have been somewhere else. Regional literature deals with the distinctive atmosphere, people, problems, customs and expressions of one particular community or district. It shows a market tendency to frankness and realism. Some examples of regional novels are – Hardy's Wessex novels, Barrie's Scottish kailyard novels, Bennet's Five Towns series and Shela Kaye-Smith's Sussex novels.

In the 19th and the 20th centuries the regional novel flowered abundantly. It received a fresh impetus from a certain historical situation and flourished numerically more than ever before. The golden age of the English regional novel is from 1800 to 1940. It developed in the works of Maris Edgeworth, Charlotte Bronte, Emile Bronte, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. Maria Edgeworth is the first of the great regional novelists of England. The region she discovered was Ireland. In her novel she made a quite new use of the national element. Another great English regional novels is Bronte's "Shirley". The scene of "Shirley" is the cloth district of the West Riding of Yorkshire.Emily Bronte's "Wuthering Heights is superbly regional. The pictures of the West Riding moors in all their moods are magnificent literature and magnificent regionalism. Mrs. Gaskell wrote regional novels about industrial Lancashire-Mary Barton and North and South.

George Eliot's first four novels are regional. Their setting is the midland countries where she sent her childhood and youth. The scene of "Adam Bede" is set in Staffordshire and Derbyshire. "TheMillon the Floss" is a Lincolnshire novel. In "Silas Marner" the scene is Warwickshire. Thomas Hardy has made aremarkable contribution to regional fiction. Hardy has written fourteen novel and two or three volumes of short stories. They are localized in Wessex, six, south west countries of England, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. Every variety of this diverse landscape is portrayed in Hardy's novels. He has painted the rocky coast in A Pair of Blue Eyes."He has depicted the farmland and undulating downs in "Far From the Madding Crowd". He has portrayed the Wild Heath in "The Return of the Native". He has drawn the moods and orchards in"The Woodlanders." In "Tess of D'urbervilles" We observe the rich fertile dairy values where therustic cows stand knee-deep in the lush pastures.

In a regional novel, the novelist mainly focuses on the people of a certain area, their habits, language, and dialect. We find Wessex, a local place in Thomas Hardy's novels. We may also call George Eliot a regional novelist to some extent. We find English Midlands, particularly the places of Warwickshire and Lincolnshire as the setting in most of her novels. Some Indian novelists also use local areas as a setting in their novels. We can quote examples of R K Narayana and Raja Rao. Narayana has used the area of Malgudi and Raja Rao has used the area of Kanthapura for the setting of his novels. Both of these two places are imaginary ones but they describe the realities of the local areas in the South of India.

2.3.5 Flat character :

A flat character is one that lacks complexity in several facets. The two-dimensional character's journey is often described as having a flat arc, meaning they don't change from the beginning of the story to the end. They also usually lack complex personality traits.

A flat character will typically :

- Have no internal conflict
- Conform to a stereotype
- Never experience character development
- Lack a multi-faceted personality

Whereas a three-dimensional or round character will typically :

- Have internal conflict
- Undergo significant character development
- Experience mental and emotional changes
- Have a multi-faceted personality

Flat characters are also sometimes referred to as “one-dimensional” or “two-dimensional." Both of these monikers point to the same thing: a character who has very minimal complexity, and oftenrenders the story less believable as a result.

Don't make the mistake of conflating a flat character with a static character. “Static” (or its inverse, “dynamic”) strictly describes the **amount of change** that a character undergoes throughout the story. “Flat” is a referendum on the character's **complexity.** That means that, generally speaking, all two-dimensional characters are static, but *not all static characters are two-dimensional*.

2.3.6 Round Character :

A round character is deep and layered character in a story. Round characters are interesting to audiences because they feel like real people; audiences often feel invested in these characters’ goals, successes, failures, strengths, and weaknesses.

1. Round characters are fully realized characters that come into conflict with each other and other characters in believable ways, spurring character development.
2. One literary term often confused with “round character” is “dynamic character,” and whilethey both go hand in hand, they are different concepts. While a round character is a character with a complex personality, a dynamic character is one that changes throughoutthe course of a story.
3. Hence, a character can be both round (interesting) and dynamic (changed).

Examples of famous round characters in literature include Elizabeth Bennet in Jane Austen’s *Prideand Prejudice* and Jay Gatsby in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby.*

2.3.7 Protagonist :

The *protagonist* is the main character in a story. Also called the central character, focal character, primary character, or hero, the protagonist plays a key role in a narrative’s development because the story revolves around them. They encounter some internal or external conflict that drives the plot, and they tend to experience transformative change that incites the climax and resolves the narrative.

The word *protagonist* originated from Greece, as the *protagonistes* was the actor of primary importance in a dramatic performance. The word has since evolved to refer to the central character in any narrative.

Determining the protagonist is generally easy. Most stories use common cues to

signal the main character, such as the title, point of view, characterization, or exposition that clearly establishes character roles.

These narrative characteristics can help readers identify the protagonist.

- The protagonist exists at the center of the story; the book's narrative is the protagonist'snarrative.
- The protagonist faces conflict that forms the foundation of the plot (which oftenmanifests through an antagonist who directly opposes the protagonist).
- The protagonist has goals and makes decisions to achieve those wants or needs.
- The protagonist's decisions have consequences on the plot, whether good or bad.
- The protagonist transforms because their choices and experiences, and they end thestory in a different place than where they started.

Most protagonists fall into one of these categories: heroes, antiheroes, villains, supporting protagonists, false protagonists, and rotating protagonists.

The hero is the traditional, conventional protagonist. This class of protagonist can be divided into subcategories, like the classic hero and the tragic hero.

The classic hero, for example, is inherently good. They display honorable virtues like bravery, integrity, and righteousness, and they're altruistic, striving for the greater good and pursuing selfless goals. *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë features a classic heroine.

The tragic hero shares many of these traits, but they meet a tragic end typically prompted by a mistake or personal flaw. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* stars a tragic hero.

These protagonists (**Anti- hero**) defy the audience's expectations. They typically do the right thing but for the wrong reasons, and while they display many character flaws, some goodness exists at their core. Like heroes, antiheroes take many forms. An **antihero** may be disreputable, cowardly, and selfish, or they can be a reluctant hero, a generally good but cynical person who avoids conflict until it affects them personally.

While **villains** typically fulfil roles as antagonists or secondary characters, some villains are protagonists in their own stories. Like antiheros, villains embody traits that contrast with a traditional hero. Unlike antiheroes, villains do bad, even evil, things for ignoble reasons.

Protagonists give a narrative forward momentum. They begin a story in one place and typically end up in other. During their journey, they are impeded by some conflict, challenge, or obstacle that gives the plot its basis. In confronting and overcoming this conflict, the protagonist carries the narrative through to its resolution. The protagonist's traits, goals, and motivations influence how the story unfolds, and their choices directly affect the primary plot beats, especially the climax.

Because the protagonist exists at the heart of the story, their characterization plays a crucial role in hooking the reader's interest and sympathy. When the reader cares about the main character, they become invested in their story and are more likely to read through to the conclusion. This is why so many memorable protagonists are round or dynamic characters; nuanced characterization reflects the personalities of real people, as does the ability to learn, grow, and change. A capacity for depth and transformation makes a character more realistic and authentic.

Protagonists often serve as viewpoint characters, meaning the story is told from their point of view. This is another strategy writers use to help readers relate to the main character. Allowing the reader to experience the protagonist's perspective both emphasizes and personalizes their narrative dilemma and motivation.

2.4 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS :

1. Write a short note on Lyric?
2. Define Ballad.
3. What is Dramatic monologue? Explain.
4. What are the differences between Sentimental novel and Sentimental comedy?
5. What is an Ode? Discuss.
6. What is Gothic novel?
7. Define Regional novel.
8. Flat character / Round character. Discuss.
9. Write a note on Protagonist?

2.5 SUGGESTED READING :

1. Abrams, M. H. (Meyer Howard), 1912-2015. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* Boston, MA: Thomson, Wadsworth, 2005.

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LESSON – 3

TINTERN ABBEY

----William Wordsworth

Objectives :

- To enable the students to understand and appreciate Wordsworth as a Romantic Poet.
- To analyse and understand William Wordsworth as a nature poet.
- To introduce students to the romantic poetry.

Structure of the lesson :

3.1 Introduction to the Poet

3.2 Wordsworth the Poet of Nature

3.3 Introduction to the Poem

3.4 Themes in Wordsworth's Poem "Tintern Abbey"

3.5 Text of the Poem

3.6 Summary of the Poem

3.7 Line wise explanation of the Poem

3.8 Key Words

3.9 Self Assessment Questions

3.10 Suggested Readings

3.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE POET :

William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, on April 7th, 1770. He was a prolific writer. His poetic career covers a period of more than sixty years, and so far as the bulk of his poetry is concerned, few poets can challenge comparison with him. Wordsworth's poetic career may be divided into four periods, the early period, the period of gloom, the glorious decade, and the period of decline.

The Early Period :

Wordsworth's poetic life began, on the banks of the Derwent in Cockermouth, when he was a child in arms :

> Was it for this, that one the fairest of all rivers loved
>
> To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song?

It began consciously in the Vale of Esthwait when he attended Hawkshead School. As a school boy he was encouraged by his teachers in the writing of English Verse, for which he showed a natural talent. These verses were much admired far more than they deserved, for they were but a lame imitation of Pope's versification, and a little in his style. One of his youthful poems stands out: he called it The Vale of Esthwaite and describes it as ' a long poem running on my own adventures and the scenery of the country in which I was brought up. The Vale of Esthwaite ran into many hundreds of lines. The most minute and copious inventories of the aspects he saw, of the noises he heard, in his native lakes (An Evening Walk) or in his wandering through Switzerland (Descriptive Sketches). Such acuteness and copiousness of observations were only possible in the case of a devotee.

The Period of Gloom

The poems of this period (1792-1797) bear the marks of the poet's tortured state of mind. Wordsworth's state of mind at this time is clearly reflected in that remarkable poem, Guilt and Sorrow. IT is a story of cruel wrongs suffered by an innocent woman, chiefly as the result of war, and by a technically guilty but essentially good man, who ends on the gallows as a confessed murderer. Wordsworth said: " Its object is partly to exposes the vices of the penal law and the calamities of War as they affect individuals". It is a thoroughly Godwinian story.

Thus, Wordsworth had written by 1797, but only An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches had been published. These early poems have one quality in common: they are solid, the product of direct observation of Nature and human life.

The Great Decade

Wordsworth wrote his best poems during the glorious decade from 1797 to 1807. The volume of Lyrical Ballads was published in the autumn of 1798. The ballads are not landscape poetry, most of them are about ordinary people and poor people with names like Michael and Susan anis Simon Lee. The language of poems included in the Lyrical Ballads is simple, not poetic, artificial or grandiose. Most of the words are in everyday use even today, and many of the poems, like traditional ballads, are made or partly made of conversation. The heroic couplet has gone. Some of the poems are in blank verse, but most of them are in very simple ballad stanzas, with short lines and simple rhymes.

Wordsworth's next major publications was the poems in Two Volumes of 1807. This collection contains, besides the sonnets on National Independence and Liberty, and the Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, such masterpieces as Resolution and Independence, Theaffliction of Margaret, the Ode to Duty, the Elegiac stanzas suggested by a picture of Peelecastle, The Happy Warrior, the Immortality Ode, and the Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle etc., themes and in a more elevated style than the simple lyrics and plain pastorals of 1803. It also contains beautiful flower pieces like The Daffodils, To the Daisy, and To the Celandine.

The Period of Decline

After 1807 Wordsworth's poetic powers began to decline, The Excursion is a

disconcerting great poem. IT contains passages as good, or nearly as good, as the best of The Prelude. But apart from Book I the great poetic passages of The Excursions suffer from their somewhat prosaic contexts. The framework of the whole poem, a series of only very faintly dramatic speeches by the Wanderer, the Solitary and the Pastor, serves well for didactic discourse. The decline in Wordsworth poetic powers is undeniable. HE still wrote many poems, but he attempted no sustained flights.

3.2 WORDSWORTH THE POET OF NATURE :

Wordsworth's passion for Nature is well known. As De Quincey puts it "Wordsworth had his passion for Nature fixed in his blood. It was a necessity of his being, like that of a mulberry leaf to the silk-worm, and through his commerce with Nature did he live and breathe." The divinization of Nature, which began in the modern world at the Renaissance and proceeded during the eighteenth century, culminates for English literature in Wordsworth. "It was Wordsworth's aim as a poet to seek beauty in meadow, woodland, and the mountain top, and to interpret this beauty in spiritual terms". Wordsworth's childhood days were spent in the midst of beautiful sights and sounds of Nature. The child looked upon nature as a source and a scene for animal pleasure like skating, riding, fishing and walking.

In Tintern Abbey he refers to the 'Glad animal movements' of his childhood days. He developed a passion for the sensuous beauty of Nature. As he grew up, his 'coarser pleasure' lost their charm for him, and nature was loved with an unreflecting passion altogether untouchable by intellectual interests or associations. All these aching joys and dizzy raptures came to an end with his experiences of human suffering in France. The French Revolution opened his eyes and made him realize the dignity to the common man. In Wordsworth the conviction of the universal presence of love in Nature is equally characteristic of his writing in phases as distinct from one another in his poems. He believes that there is a pre-existing harmony between the mind of man and Nature.

Thus nature healing power, which for some may be merely an outworn doctrine, was for him a fact of experience, and the rapture of that experience, which glows through Tintern Abbey and much of his best poetry, can be caught by any reader, without reference to the ethical and philosophical theories which Wordsworth evolved from it. Wordsworth is universally recognized as a great poet of Nature. But he was not content to be thought, or to be, a poet of Nature only, singing the sensuous joy of a life lived in natural surroundings, like Cowper in The Task : God made the country, and Manmade the town.

Wordsworth aspired to become a philosophical poet, whose ultimate theme was not a Nature but the heart of man. And the poetry of man took in his hands as great a development as the poetry of Nature. The French Revolution has been built up for so long as an influence on the early Romantics that we apt to forget the English democratic revolution that preceded it. Wordsworth's temper was essentially democratic. He had lived in a democratic society. He lost his faith in the French Revolution as a political creed, but its effect remained intact in his mind. The Revolution humanized his soul and built him into a poet of man. IT took him away from contemplation of his own soul to live in hope for mankind, to proclaim his faith in and

seek the love of mankind. The main theme in his pomes of incidents in human life is love, the working of love, its power to inflict the deepest wounds and to heal the most irreparable.

3.3 INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM :

The Romantic age in English literature began with the publications of Lyrical Ballads in 1f798. Of its two poems of supreme value, the first and the last in the book, Coleridge wrote the first and Wordsworth the last, an afterthought, lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour, July 13,1798. This glorious afterthought is the crowning dome to the edifice that is Lyrical Ballads. Tintern Abbey stands, with the Immorality Ode, as the two greater landmarks in Wordsworth's poetry.

This is the first poem in which for the first time Wordsworth had felt himself in full and articular control of his genius. He could not have written it a year before."No poem of mine" Wordsworth said, "was composed under circumstance more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it ever was altered, and the poem that we know today is identical with composed on the Wye's banks-an unusual occurrence in Wordsworth's poetry.

The title of the poem is not quite accurate. If it was written, as the poet says. 'upon leaving Tintern' on July 13, the sense of its composition must have been not 'above' Tintern Abbey, but below it. In fact, it must have been written largely on board the 'small vessel' which took them back to Bristol.IT is a curious fact that nowhere in the poem does Wordsworth mention Tintern Abbey itself, though we know that he must have admired it, for they returned from Chested to spend a second night there.Tintern Abbey is a poem of self-disclosure. IT is The Prelude in little. It is impossible to understand it without knowing where, when to whom and about what he wrote it, for these personal elements are not only a part of the poem, they are what the poem is about. "The poem is about the dissociation of sensibility from thought and their reintegration. Having had to abandon his childhood intuitions for the sake of thought, and having had abandon thought when he would recover and emotional response to nature. Therefore, Wordsworth is still, in spite of the evolution of his thought, a 'lover of the meadows and the woods', being 'well pleased to recognize', he concludes in the final lines of the main section of the poem.

It is in Tintern Abbey that we see for the first time Wordsworth as 'a worshipper of nature'. "IT is not the first poem to show his sense of the importance of natural surroundings, other poems show his first-hand knowledge of country life, with its beauties and hardship. But it is Tintern Abbey that shows for the first time his romantic passion for nature, and in which he gives us highly emotional description of the effects of the outer world upon his own inner self. The main theme of the poem is the poet's relationship with Nature and his indebtedness to her. In fact, we know everything about Wordsworth as a poet of nature from Tintern Abbey. We can see here not only Wordsworth the nature-poet but also Wordsworth the nature-mystic.

If ever there was a philosophic poem, Tintern Abbey is one. In it Wordsworth clearly

reveals it's mysticism and pantheism. In Tintern Abbey Wordsworth's philosophy has been stated, but nowhere has poetry been subordinated to philosophy. In fact, the claim of poetry and philosophy have been harmonized. The poem has thereby acquired a dignity of its own.

In Tintern Abbey, Wordsworth has employed the double-exposure technique. As he is interested in the stage of growth, he often juxtaposes two widely separated periods of time in such a way that we are made dramatically conscious of the degree of growth that has taken place between stage one and stage two. Poem is quite unlike both lyrics and ballads in style, for its language is not simple any standards.

3.4 THEMES IN WORDSWORTH'S POEM TINTERN ABBEY :

Nature as a source of solace and renewal :

Wordsworth believed that nature has the power to heal and rejuvenate the human spirit. In "Tintern Abbey," he describes how the natural world has helped him to overcome difficult emotions, such as loneliness and despair. He also suggests that nature can provide us with a sense of peace and well-being, even in the midst of challenging times.

Memory and imagination as gateways to deeper understanding :

Wordsworth believed that memory and imagination are essential for human flourishing. In "Tintern Abbey," he describes how his childhood memories of nature have shaped his adult worldview. He also suggests that our imagination allows us to see the world in new and creative ways, and to connect with the natural world on a deeper level.

Nature, humanity, and the divine as interconnected parts of a whole :

Wordsworth believed that all things in the universe are interconnected. In "Tintern Abbey," he suggests that we are all part of a larger whole, and that nature can help us to experience this sense of unity. He also implies that the natural world is a manifestation of the divine, and that we can connect with God through our experiences of nature.

Nature's awe-inspiring beauty as a source of spiritual insight :

The sublime is a term used to describe experiences of awe and wonder, which often evoke a sense of our own smallness in comparison to the vastness and power of nature. In "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth describes how the natural world can inspire us with a sense of the sublime, and how these experiences can lead to deeper spiritual insights.

The individual's unique perspective and capacity for growth :

Wordsworth believed that each individual has a unique perspective on the world, and that we all have the capacity to grow and learn. In "Tinter Abbey," he suggests that nature can help us to develop our own unique perspectives and to appreciate the beauty and wonder of the world around us.

Simplicity and contentment as essential ingredients for a happy life :

Wordsworth believed that simple pleasures, such as spending time in nature,are essential for a happy life. In "Tinter Abbey," he describes how he has found joy and

contentment in the simple things, such as the sound of birdsong or the sight of a flowing river. He also suggests that nature can teach us to appreciate the beauty and wonder of the everyday world.

3.5 TEXT OF THE POEM :

Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey on Revisiting The Banks of the Wye During A Tour.

July 13, 1798

Five years have past; five-summers, with the length

Of five long winters ! and again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a soft inland murmur- Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,

That on a wild secluded scene impress

Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quite of the sky.

The day is come when I again repose

Here, under this dark sycamore, and orchard-tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,

Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves

'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see

These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little line

Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,

Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke

Sent up, in silence, from among the trees !

With some uncertain notice, as might seem

Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,

Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire

The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through along absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owned to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart:
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: -feelings too
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, act
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owned another gift,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:- that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quite by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft

In darkness and amid the many shapes

Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir

Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,

Have huge upon the beatings of my heart

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,

O Sylvan Wye ! thou wanderer thro' the woods, **55**

How often has my spirit turned to thee !

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,

With many recognitions dim and faint,

And somewhat of a sad perplexity,

The picture of the mind revives again:

While here I stand, not only with the sense

Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts

That in this movement there is life and food

For future years. And so I dare to hope, **65**

Thought changed, no doubt, from what I was when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides

Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,

Whenever nature led: more like a man

Flying from something that he dreads, than one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then

(The coarser pleasure of my boyish days,

And their glad animal movements all gone by)

To me was all in all. I cannot paint **75**

What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion: the rock,

The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and thjeir forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this **85**
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have fallowed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing of often times
The still sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor granting, thought of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturb me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky and in the mind of man;
A motion and a sprit, that impels **100**
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things. Therefore, am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountain; and of all that we behold

Of eye, and ear, - both what they half create,

And what perceive; well pleased to recognize

In nature and the language of the sense,

The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul

Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,

IF I were not thus taught, should I the more

Suffer my genial spirits to decay:

For thou art with me here upon the banks

Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,

My dear, dear Friend; and in the voice I catch

The language of my former heart, and read

My former pleasure in the shooting lights

Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while

May I behold in thee what I was once,

My dear, dear Sister ! and this prayer I make,

Knowing that Nature never did betray

The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege

Through all the years of this our life, to lead

From joy to joy; for she can so inform

The mind that is within us, so impress

With quietness and beauty, and so feed

With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,

Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,

Nor greeting where no kindness is, nor all

The dreary intercourse of daily life,

Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore, let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be natured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place **140**
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh ! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts,
Of tender joy with thou remember me,
And these my exhortations ! Nor, perchance
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence – wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream **150**
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service; rather say
With warmer love – oh ! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me

More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake! 158

3.6 SUMMARY OF THE POEM :

The poet revisits the Wye after a lap of 5 years. Once again, he hears the murmur of Wye, and sees the steep and lofty clips, the dark sycamore, the plots of cottage crown, Orchard with its unripe fruits, the hedge-rows pastoral farms, and columns of smoke rising from among the trees with a distant of the gipsy tents in the woods or of some hermit's cave.

A long absence does not seem to have blotted out of his memory these beautiful forms. These beautiful shapes of nature have been a source of comfort to him, and have sustained him during his exile amid the noise and bustle of towns and cities. They have also a profound spiritual effect on him. He owes to them that exalted mood in which he can perceive the reality above and beyond earthly things. In these moments if illumination, when all is wrapped in a state of joy and harmony, he has an insight into the life of things. But if this were a vain belief, the poet knows at least that whenever he is oppressed by the unprofitable, and meaningless business of the world he has turned to the ever-sustaining memory of the wooded landscape of the Wye for comfort.

Now once again the post stands on the banks of the Wye, and the old picture revives in his Andamid. He looks forward to many pleasant thoughts to be called up by the memory of the landscape. Then he contrasts his present feelings with the past ones. In his childhood days the poet's love of nature was simply a healthy boy's delight in outdoor life. In his boyhood days he enjoyed nature only through the senses. At that time the sounding cataract haunted him like a passion, and his hungry soul fed itself on the beautiful colors and lovely forms of the mountains and the woods. As yet his love for nature was untouched by intellectual interests or associations. But as he advanced in age gradually, he began to look upon nature in a new light after his familiarity with the suffering of mankind. At last he has discovered in nature the existence of a living spirit- a pervasive spirit that dwells in the light of the setting sun and the round ocean, in the living air and the blue sky, and in the mind of man. He is happy to find that his purest thoughts are stimulated by nature and her impression received through the avenues of his sense organs, nature has thus become the nurse, the guide, the guardian of his heart, and the soul of all his moral being.

It is quite possible that even if he had not learned this lesson from nature he would not have allowed his warm feelings to lose their liveliness because he has the company of his dear sister on the banks of the beautiful river Wye. In her eyes he can still see gleams of pleasure which he had enjoyed five years ago. The lesson that he has learned is that nature.

The full title of this poem is "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798." It opens with the speaker's declaration that five years have passed since he last visited this location, encountered its tranquil, rustic scenery, and heard the murmuring waters of the river. He recites the objects he sees again, and describes their effect upon him: the "steep and lofty cliffs" impress upon him "thoughts of more deep seclusion"; he leans against the dark sycamore tree and looks at the cottage-grounds and the orchard trees, whose fruit is still unripe. He sees the "wreaths of smoke" rising up from cottage chimneys between the trees, and imagines that they might rise

from "vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods," or from the cave of a hermit in the deep forest.

The poet then describes how his memory of these "beauteous forms" has worked upon him in his absence from them: when he was alone, or in crowded towns and cities, they provided him with "sensations sweet, / Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart." The memory of the woods and cottages offered "tranquil restoration" to his mind, and even affected him when he was not aware of the memory, influencing his deeds of kindness and love. He further credits the memory of the scene with offering him access to that mental and spiritual state in which the burden of the world is lightened, in which he becomes a "living soul" with a view into "the life of things." The speaker then says that his belief that the memory of the woods has affected him so strongly may be "vain" but if it is, he has still turned to the memory often in times of "fretful stir."

Even in the present moment, the memory of his past experiences in these surroundings floats over his present view of them, and he feels bittersweet joy in reviving them. He thinks happily, too, that his present experience will provide many happy memories for future years. The speaker acknowledges that he is different now from how he was in those long-ago times, when, as a boy, he "bounded o'er the mountains" and through the streams. In those days, he says, nature made up his whole world: waterfalls, mountains, and woods gave shape to his passions, his appetites, and his love. That time is now past, he says, but he does not mourn it, for though he cannot resume his old relationship with nature, he has been amply compensated by a new set of more mature gifts; for instance, he can now "look on nature, not as in the hour / Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes / The still, sad music of humanity." And he can now sense the presence of something far more subtle, powerful, and fundamental in the light of the setting suns, the ocean, the air itself, and even in the mind of man; this energy seems to him "a motion and a spirit that impels / All thinking thoughts.... / And rolls through all things." For that reason, he says, he still loves nature, still loves mountains and pastures and woods, for they anchor his purest thoughts and guard the heart and soul of his "moral being."

The poet says that even if he did not feel this way or understand these things, he would still be in good spirits on this day, for he is in the company of his "dear, dear (d) Sister," who is also his "dear, dear Friend," and in whose voice and manner he observes his former self, and beholds "what I was once." He offers a prayer to nature that he might continue to do so for a little while, knowing, as he says, that "Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her," but leads rather "from joy to joy." Nature's power over the mind that seeks her out is such that it renders that mind impervious to "evil tongues," "rash judgments," and "the sneers of selfish men," instilling instead a "cheerful faith" that the world is full of blessings. The speaker then encourages the moon to shine upon his sister, and the wind to blow against her, and he says to her that in later years, when she is sad or fearful, the memory of this experience will help to heal her. And if he himself is dead, she can remember the love with which he worshipped nature. In that case, too, she will remember what the woods meant to the speaker, the way in which, after so many years of absence, they became dearer to him—both for themselves and for the fact that she is in them.

"Tintern Abbey" is composed in blank verse, which is a name used to describe unrhymed lines in iambic pentameter. Its style is therefore very fluid and natural; it reads as easily as if it were a prose piece. But of course, the poetic structure is tightly constructed; Wordsworth's slight variations on the stresses of iambic rhythms is remarkable. Lines such as "Here, under this dark sycamore, and view" do not quite conform to the stress-patterns of the meter, but fit into it loosely, helping Wordsworth approximate the sounds of natural speech without grossly breaking his meter. Occasionally, divided lines are used to indicate a kind of

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3.7 LINE WISE EXPLANATION OF THE POEM :

Five years have past --- An appetite; a feeling and a love (1-80)

The poet stands bewitched on the bank of his fantastically beautiful river. Once again, he says, he hears the sweet sound coming from the rolling water of the river that springs from a mountain and flows through the plains. Once again, he looks at the height steep rocks and is impressed by the solitary scene around them.

The wild scene of so solitude od the steeps clefts impresses up on the mind of the poet thoughts of deeper loneliness. Moreover, the quite landscape below seems to become joined to the peace of the sky above by means of sky-rising mountains. Many old and familiar scenes attract his attention and je feels quite at home in this wild country. Once again, he rests quite under the dark sycamore tree and looks about him at the quite rural scene. He sees several plots of land around cottage. He looks at clusters of trees in the orchards near the cottages.

The trees in the orchard are laden with raw fruits. Because of their green leaves and fruits, they seemed to be apparelled in one green-colour dress. These trees are naturally lost among the thick woods and wild growing shrubs and thickets. The season which the poet mentioned in this passage is early autumn, since he paid the second visit to the Wye in the middle of July. The poet has come once again after a lapse of five years. The familiar scene appears to him in new light. The hedge-rows have grown so thick that they do not appear as part of the rural scene.

Their wild growth gives the poet an impression that the wood, in a wild mood, has spread itself to the very cottage doors. He appreciates the green countryside, with the pastoral farms which spread their green freshness to the very doors of the cottages. From silent

orchard trees lines of curling smoke are rising high. They look beautiful to the poet. Looking at the curling smoke rising from the trees, the poet speculates that they are coming, perhaps, from the terms of wandering gypsies who have made this wild forest their temporary dwelling-place. Or, perhaps, it is rising from the cave od some hermit who is quietly sitting by his fire. But whether the smoke is coming from Gypsy tents of from a hermit's cave in either case the poet is pleased to imagine that these people live in the very lap of Nature and they must have imbibed the spirit of peace and calm of the happy scene.

That had a no need of a -------May I behold in thee what I was once (81-120)

The poet is referring here to the period of five years that has elapsed between his first and second visits to the beautiful scenery of the river Wye. These scenes have never been wholly absent from his mind during that interval. He has often been reminded of them when he felt lonely or depressed while living in some town or city.

The memory of these beautiful scenes has often given birth in his heart to sweet sensations whenever he felt tired following the routine of daily life. The feeling of an unspeakable joy advanced like a tide along his bold-stress and passed from the senses to the heart and then to the mind. In this process it quieted and soothed them all. IT restore the peace of the poet's mind and pacified his heart which had become restless under the pressure of the daily routine of life.

The poet explains the beneficial influences of nature's beauty on the mind and heart of man in the light of his own experience. In the first place, the memory of these lovely scenes gave birth to a sensation of cooling and refreshing peace which soothed his senses, his heart, and his mind, which were disturbed by the busy life of the crowded cities. Secondly, they produce feeling of joy which kept the heart cheerful state of human mind is very important in directing the best part of goods and virtuous man's life. Under the impulse of these cheerful disposition the good man performs act of kindness and love almost unconsciously. These little act of kindness and love performed spontaneously are important determiners of the virtuous life of a man. As our mind is absorbed in the meditation of the beautiful and tranquil scene of nature, a wave of joy spreads through our whole system. These gradually produced a state of mind akin to the mystic trance. In this state of mind the mystery of the universe and the problems of life and death, evil and pain, which lie upon our soul like a weight, begin to clear up. We begin to realize the true nature of the universe.

When this mood is finally established, the higher faculties of our mind and soul are forced into activity, while the common functions of the body are sent to sleep. The breathing is almost suppressed and even the circulation of our blood is temporarily suspended so that physically we seem almost dead. In the mean while our soul begins to operate with its full energy.

The inner eye becomes calm and clear and it realize that the world is an orderly moral system, not a cheos. Under the influence of deep joy born out of his realization, we are able to perceive the inner spirit of universe which animates all things. The poet says that the blissful mood aroused by the contemplation of the natural scene may be a delusion on his

part, because it cannot be explained except on the level of feeling. But the poet has turned to these scenes with hope and faith in the dark days of his life. They have given him a ray of hope in the darkness of life. They have given strength in the days when life seemed lacking in all joy, in the days when living human beings looked like so many lifeless objects.

It has given him solace in the days when the useless burry and bustle of city life gave him many anxious moments, or when the painful excitement raging everywhere in the world set on his heart like a heavy loan. In those moments his mind turned many times with faith and hope to the scenes of river Wye.

My dear, dear Sister! ------More dear, both for themselves and for the sake!. (121-159)

The picture of his past experiences with Nature is somewhat dim and uncertain in the beginning, but it gains more and more in clarity as he proceeds. His memory begins to work in the midst of half-forgotten thoughts. Many things and objects are recalled and recognized only faintly, and in the process his mind feels somewhat puzzled and worried. But gradually his mental picture becomes more and more clear.

Standing on the bank of this beautiful river he feels pleased not only in the presence when he is enjoying the scene around him. He also has hope that this scene may give him many happy moments of quite contemplation in the future years of his life. Thus the poet seems to link the present both with the past and the future. Nature is looked upon as a source's of joy and peace for all time. He further says that he has changed considerably in his mind and thoughts from those days of the past when he had come to theses hills five years ago.

He was a quite a young man then, and Nature seemed to attract him with her charms. He roamed about and jumped and frisked like a wild deer among the hills and forests and along the brooks and rivers. Nature then seemed to lead him according to her own will. But he compares his attraction towards her Rather to the feelings of a man who runs away from something that he fears then he use of man who seeks something he loves. Nature at that time was everything to the young poet, even though he had already superseded the animal pleasure of his boyish days. Yet the poet is not very certain about his feelings and attitudes to Nature during his first visit. Nature at that time was a thing of pure attraction for him.

He was like a youthful lover of beauty. The beauty of nature haunted him and made him somewhat intoxicated. The water rushing downhill with great roar seemed to occupy his mind all the time just as a strong passion does. His feelings for her was moment governed by physical perception alone. His love for nature has gone deeper than that. For the loss of that early feeling of pure, unmixed joy, other and more realistic feelings have become associated with nature. Thus in his growth from early childhood towards maturity, he has also developed a matter attitude to nature. This was sufficient compensation for the loss of that early feelings of ecstasy in the contact with the nature. Wordsworth leaves out 'for my sake', but the poem has made clear that his salvation, as man and poet, is dependent upon the renovation he celebrates.

3.8 KEY WORDS :

Wye	**:**	River name
Exile	**:**	The state of being sent to live in another country, that is not your own.
Dwells	**:**	Live, beside
Betray	**:**	Place in the power of an enemy.
Philosophy	**:**	The study of the nature and meaning of the universe and of human life.
Thy	**:**	Yours
Thee	**:**	You
Thou	**:**	You
Pastoral	**:**	Of, relating to the countryside: not urban.
Gleams	**:**	To shine with.
Exhortations	**:**	Communication emphatically, urging someone to do something.

3.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

1. Attempt an essay on Wordsworth as a Nature Poet.
2. Characterize the relationship between Wordsworth and the natural environment in "Tintern Abbey", how does nature act on him?
3. What are the three stages of the Poet's development of attitude towards nature ? Discuss.

3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS :

1. Herford, D.H. : The Age of Wordsworth.
2. Hough, Graham : The Romantic Poets.
3. Raleigh, Walter : Wordsworth.
4. Abercrombie, Lascelles : The Art of Wordsworth.
5. Garrod, H.W. : Wordsworth : Lectures and Essays.

Dr. E. Bhavani

LESSON – 4

JOHN KEATS'S "LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI"

Objectives :

- To enable the students to identify and analyse the romantic features in Keats Poetry
- To identify and analyse the poem's poetic devices, such as imagery, symbolism, and figurative language.
- To interpret the poem's themes and meanings, such as love, loss, and the supernatural.

Structure of the lesson :

4.1 Brief Introduction to the Poet

4.2 Keat's Poetry

4.3 Introduction to the Poem

4.4 Text of the Poem "La Belle Dame sans Merci"

4.5 Summary

4.6 Critical Appreciation

4.7 Themes of John Keats' "La Belle Dame sans Merci"

4.8 Keat's use of Imagery, Symbolism and other Symbolisms in "La Belle Dame sans Merci"

4.9 Self Assessment Questions

4.10 Suggested Readings

4.1 BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE POET :

John Keats (1795-1821) was one of the most important English poets of the Romantic movement. He was born in London to a poor family, but he was educated at a prestigious school and went on to study medicine. However, he gave up medicine to pursue a career in poetry.

His poetry is known for its beauty, its sensuality, and its exploration of the human condition. He was particularly interested in the relationship between the individual and the natural world, and he often wrote about the beauty of nature and its power to inspire and heal.

He was not always well-received by critics during his lifetime, but he has since come to be recognized as one of the greatest English poets. His work continues to be read and studied by people all over the world.

4.2 KEAT'S POETRY :

John Keats was a romantic poet who lived in England from 1795 to 1824. He is known for his beautiful and evocative language, his love of nature, and his exploration of the human condition.

Keats' poetry is characterized by its use of vivid imagery and symbolism. He often uses language that is both sensory and evocative to create a powerful emotional response in the reader. For example, in his poem "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats uses the image of the nightingale's song to represent the beauty and mystery of life.

Keats was also a master of the sonnet. He wrote some of the most famous sonnets in the English language, such as "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" and "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be." Keats' sonnets are often characterized by their lyrical beauty and philosophical depth.

Keats was deeply in love with the natural world, and his poetry is full of vivid descriptions of landscapes and natural phenomena. He saw nature as a source of beauty, inspiration, and healing. For example, in his poem "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats writes about the beauty of the nightingale's song and how it transports him to a world of pure beauty and imagination. He also writes about how the nightingale's song helps him to forget his troubles and to find peace and solace.

He believed that the imagination is one of the most important human faculties. He saw it as a way to escape the mundane world and to experience the beauty and wonder of the universe. Keats' poetry is full of imaginative imagery and symbolism, and he often uses the imagination to explore complex philosophical and emotional themes. For example, in his poem "Ode to a Grecian Urn," Keats uses the image of a Grecian urn to explore the themes of beauty, truth, and eternity.

He was also interested in exploring the human condition in his poetry. He wrote about love, loss, grief, and despair, as well as joy, hope, and beauty. Keats' poetry is deeply personal and often reflects his own experiences and emotions. For example, in his poem "Endymion," Keats writes about his own unrequited love for a woman named Fanny Brawne.

He was a master of language and rhythm. His poetry is full of beautiful and evocative language, and he often uses sound effects to create a particular mood or atmosphere. For example, in his poem "Sleep and Poetry," Keats uses the repetition of the word "sweet" to create a sense of peace and tranquillity.

He often used symbolism in his poetry to explore complex themes and ideas. For example, in his poem "La Belle Dame sans Merci," Keats uses the image of a beautiful fairy lady to represent the dangers of enchantment and illusion.

He experimented with a variety of poetic forms in his work. He wrote sonnets, odes, ballads, and narrative poems. Keats was particularly skilled at writing sonnets, and he wrote

some of the most famous sonnets in the English language, such as "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" and "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be."

His poetry has had a profound influence on subsequent generations of poets. His work has been praised by poets such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Keats' poetry is still widely read and studied today, and he continues to be considered one of the greatest English poets.

4.3 INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM :

"La Belle Dame sans Merci" was written in April 1819 and was published in May 1820 in the journal *Indicator*. It draws on a 15th century poem by the French poet Alain Chartrier, which tells a similar story. Additionally, Keats draws on flower imagery that was frequently used in English literature during and before the Romantic period. La Belle Dame Sans Merci is a French phrase meaning 'The Lady Without Mercy'. The poem describes the encounter between a knight and a mysterious elfin beauty who ultimately abandons him.

The poem consisting of 12 stanzas is written in the style of a folk ballad and has a rhyme scheme ABCB. The entire poem can be thought of as a dialogue. It begins with an anonymous speaker. That speaker addresses the knight and asks him a question (stanzas 1-3). The knight answers, and speaks for the rest of the poem (4-12). The poem ends with knight restating his answer to the speaker's question.

4.4 THE TEXT OF THE POEM"LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI" :

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

Alone and palely loitering?

The sedge has withered from the lake,

And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

So haggard and so woe-begone?

The squirrel's granary is full,

And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,

With anguish moist and fever-dew,

And on thy cheeks a fading rose

Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true'.

She took me to her Elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;

They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall!'

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Source: Selected Poems (Penguin Classics, 1988)

4.5 SUMMARY :

The poem "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is written in Ballad form. The poem can be divided into two parts. The first part deals with an unknown speaker asking a disappointed knight about the cause of his sadness while in the second part the knight describes his meeting with a fairy and incidents which have made him unhappy.

In the first three stanzas, the speaker notices a knight wandering all alone on the bank of a lake, where the grass has become dry and no birds are singing. The knight looks wearied and fatigued, and the speaker wonders what could have possibly befallen him. It is late Autumn or early winter, and the birds are silent. The unknown speaker further says that the squirrel has collected and stored the grain and the crops have been reaped and gathered, then what is the reason which makes the knight wander aimlessly. The kinght's face was pale as a lily and his forehead was covered with sweat revealing that fact that the knight was in grip of a deep mental pain and fever and his cheeks were quickly losing their freshness and charm. The pitiable condition of the knight makes the person enquire the cause of his misery. The poem begins with the poet's question to the knight, "O what can ail thee". While we don't know yet what happened to the knight, the speaker sets up the reader for the knight's story, establishing the poem's dreary tone and atmosphere.

In reply to the question the knight answers that he met a beautiful lady in the meadows. She had long hair, white feet and passionate eyes. She seemed to be a fairy's child and he fell in love with her. As a token of his love, he gifted her a garland (made up of intertwined flowers) for her head, bracelets and fragrant zone i.e. a belt made up of flowers for her waist. The lady also responded to his love by looking at him with affection and making sweet moans.

Then the knight placed her on his horse and both of them rode for long time, and the lady sang a melodious fairy's song. She then gave him sweet roots to eat and manna, the heavenly food, to drink and in a strange language she expressed her love for him. When they reached her hiding place an "Elfin grot"the woman started to weep, and the knight kissed her eyelids four times. Then the lady sang sweet songs and put him to sleep.

While asleep, the knight had a fearful dream. In his nightmare, the knight saw kings, princes, and warriors who tell him that he's fallen completely under the woman's power. The men, once strong, powerful, and chivalrous, were now starved, pale, and horrified. When he woke up, he found himself lying on the cold mountain side and the woman is nowhere to be seen. Like the men in his dream, the knight is doomed to wander pale and alone among the hillside, on a journey that never ends.

4.6 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE POEM :

In the first three stanzas, the speaker addresses the knight he meets on the hillside, drawing the reader's attention to the knight's vulnerability. The knight looks pale, is "alone and loitering," his physical state is mirrored by the landscape, which is a common feature of Romantic poetry.

The first three stanzas, though relatively short, give a remarkable amount of information about the knight, the speaker, and the poem's conflict through the language and detail. First, we know that the knight is travelling alone and, based on his physical state, he is been wandering been on the road for quite some time. Next, we know that it is the end of autumn or early winter, because harvest time has ended and the grass has began to wither and die. The lily suggests purity, innocence, and virtue. The knight, in spite of his haggard and woeful state, retains the sense of honor and duty expected of a man of his stature. On the other hand, the lily symbolizes death.

Finally, the symbolic juxtaposition of the lily and rose foregrounds a tension between purity and eros. The troubles the knight encountered on the road were likely erotic in nature. From the repetition of "O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms," we can deduce that danger lurks in the woods, and that the knight is not in a condition to face the impending challenges. By opening the poem with the question, the speaker begins a conversation that will last throughout the duration of the poem, and the majority of the poem is the knight's answer.

In the fourth stanza, we learn that the knight was enchanted by a woman, and that his experience with her caused his pitiable state. He compares her to "a faery's child," suggesting that she possessed a supernatural charm. Her "wild" eyes indicate her sexual appeal and desire. The garland and bracelets that he makes for the woman indicate his desire. The woman's looks and her moans tells us that their brief relationship was erotic. However, the woman's supernatural characteristics suggest that, for the knight, the love he found may be too good to be true.

In stanzas four and five, the knight appears to occupy a position of power in the relationship, in spite of the woman's charms. He gives her gifts and sets her on his horse, and the couple ride away. However, in stanza six, the situation reverses: the woman feeds him

honey and manna, expresses her love, and then brings him to her home. When the knight kisses her eyelids, the woman lulls him to sleep, bringing woeful, foreboding nightmares. The knight's act of love becomes the cause of his pain, in spite of the affair's pleasure.

The first half of the knight's story creates a complex picture of the woman: she is a femme fatale with a supernatural ability to seduce the men who cross her path. Her "faery-like" characteristics, the knights, kings, and princes mentioned in the poem, point to a medieval poetic tradition. Keats draws upon these references and modernizes them through his explicit juxtaposition of sexual liberation and the courtly tradition.

Having devoted so much emotional energy to the Lady and put himself completely under her control, the knight undergoes a spiritual death when she disappears. In his dream the knight sees the Lady's former victims: "pale kings," "princes," and "warriors"—"death-pale were they all." In their faces he sees the man he will become: someone deathly, starved, and captivated by memories of the Lady to the point of enslavement. Like them, he will wake up "death-pale," or, as the speaker first describes him, "Alone and palely loitering"—physically alive, yet condemned to replay his memory of an obsessive love for the rest of his days. The Lady is finally revealed to be La Belle Dame sans Merci—literally, The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy.

Strangely, the Lady's merciless behaviour actually consists of the love and joy she provides; her sudden disappearance is what makes the knight's experience so painful exactly because she was previously so kind. The shape of the Lady's cruelty suggests that anything one falls in love with or obsesses over can cause such pain, since anything can disappear in an instant. The poem thus cautions against such intense, obsessive love, arguing that it's ultimately not worth the agony it can cause.

The story reaches its climax in the tenth stanza of the poem, during the knight's terrifying nightmare. We learn that all the men ensnared by the lady are of noble stature. This detail is crucial because it alerts us to the tensions between the woman's sexual liberation and the chivalrous, courtly tradition of the kings, princes, and warriors whom she seduces. Bound to a code of honor, these men would probably think twice before sleeping with a woman they met in the woods. However, their exhaustion, loneliness, and desire, combined with the woman's charm and forward nature, created the perfect storm for spontaneous, immediate, erotic satisfaction.

The dream tells us that, falling for the lady proved disastrous. Having devoted so much emotional energy to the Lady and offered his self completely to her control, the knight undergoes a spiritual death when she disappears. In his dream, the knight sees the Lady's former victims: "pale kings," "princes," and "warriors"—"death-pale were they all." In their faces he sees the man he will become: someone deathly, starved, and captivated by memories of the Lady to the point of enslavement. Like them, he will wake up "death-pale," or wandering forever in the woods, searching for a love that will never be found again"—physically alive, yet condemned to replay his memory of an obsessive love for the rest of his days.

But the poem isn't simply condemning this kind of love; rather, it expresses a contradictory longing for both the courtly tradition's security and the intense passion of eroticism. For the knight, the woman's earlier emphasis on her "true" love for him certainly connected to an idea of stability and faithfulness; however, the association of sex with the woman's "faery-like," bewitching charms suggests the danger of erotic desire, and the uncertainty of these affairs.

Giving in to sexual desire could mean losing love and experiencing profound emotional painbut resisting this desire can be just as painful, and just as preoccupying as love's loss. Even though the knight was bewitched by the woman, the pleasure and joy he felt during their brief, erotic relationship was real. The woman is no longer physically present at the end of the poem, but she still holds countless men "in thrall," or captive beneath her power.

Considering the personal nature of much of keat’s poetry, it is possible that the poet's allegorically-inflected knight's tale refers to the frustrations and fears of his own relationship. Although Keats' love for Fanny Brawne was reciprocated, the couple faced difficult obstaclesfirst, Brawne's family was of a higher social class, and second, Keats' health was failing. Keats' proposals to Fanny Brawne were initially rejected because of his financial situation; Brawne and her family accepted when it became clear Keats was dying of tuberculosis, knowing well his winter in Italy would be his last. While scholars believe that Brawne and Keats never consummated their love, the powerful emotions expressed in their letters read much like the speaker's passion for the lady.

The Lady is finally revealed to be La Belle Dame sans Merci—literally, The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy. The shape of the Lady’s cruelty suggests that anything one falls in love with or obsesses over can cause such pain, since anything can disappear in an instant. The poem thus cautions against such intense, obsessive love, arguing that it’s ultimately not worth the agony it can cause.

When the knight ends his story, the speaker has yet to meet the lady in the meadows. What choice will he make when they eventually cross paths? Will he make it through the woods with his heart intact? Or will he be like the other men lost in the woods, alone and bloodless, only capable of reliving his story as a warning?

4.7 THEMES OF JOHN KEATS' “LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI” :

The nature of love and desire : The poem tells the story of a knight who is seduced by a beautiful fairy lady, only to be abandoned and left to waste away in despair. This suggests that love can be a dangerous and destructive force, especially when it is based on physical attraction and fleeting desire.

The dangers of enchantment and illusion : The fairy lady in the poem is a seductive and enchanting figure, but she is also ultimately dangerous. She lures the knight into a world of illusion and fantasy, only to leave him abandoned and heartbroken. This suggests that we should be wary of things that seem too good to be true, and that we should not be fooled by appearances.

The power of the imagination : The poem is full of vivid imagery and evocative language, which Keats uses to create a truly immersive experience for the reader. The poem also suggests that the imagination can be a powerful force, both for good and for evil. It can help us to see the world in new and creative ways, but it can also lead us astray if we are not careful.

The relationship between the individual and the natural world : The poem is set against the backdrop of a lush and verdant forest. The natural world is both beautiful and threatening, and it reflects the knight's own inner turmoil. The poem suggests that the individual is inextricably linked to the natural world, and that our inner state is often reflected in the world around us.

The fragility of human life : The knight in the poem is a tragic figure who is ultimately destroyed by his love for the fairy lady. The poem suggests that human life is fragile and that we should cherish the time we have.

4.8 KEAT'S USE OF IMAGERY, SYMBOLISM AND OTHER SYMBOLISMS IN "LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI" :

Imagery :

Keats uses vivid imagery to create a sense of atmosphere and to convey the speaker's emotions. For example, in the first stanza, the speaker describes the "sedge is wither'd from the lake," the "meads have brown'd their burnish'd locks," and the "holly-hocks have lost their flame." This imagery creates a sense of decay and decline, which foreshadows the speaker's own downfall.

Keats also uses imagery to describe the fairy lady's beauty. For example, he writes that her eyes are "wild," her hair is "long and wild," and her song is "wild enchanting melody." This imagery suggests that the fairy lady is a creature of the natural world, but it also hints at her wild and dangerous nature.

Symbolism :

Keats uses a number of symbols in the poem to explore its themes. For example, the forest can be seen as a symbol of the unconscious mind or of the dangers of temptation. The fairy lady can be seen as a symbol of love, desire, or enchantment. The knight can be seen as a symbol of innocence, vulnerability, or the human spirit.

Here are some other symbols in the poem :

The sedge :

The sedge is a type of marsh grass. It is often used as a symbol of death or decay. In

the poem, the withered sedge could symbolize the speaker's fading life force or the death of his innocence.

The hollyhocks :

Hollyhocks are flowers that are often associated with love and passion. In the poem, the faded hollyhocks could symbolize the speaker's lost love or the fading of his passion for the fairy lady.

The pale lily :

The lily is a flower that is often associated with death and mourning. In the poem, the pale lily on the knight's brow could foreshadow his death or his descent into madness.

The fading rose :

The rose is a flower that is often associated with love and beauty. In the poem, the fading rose on the knight's cheek could symbolize the fading of his love or the loss of his beauty.

The gloam :

The gloam is the twilight or dusk. It is often used as a symbol of mystery or danger. In the poem, the gloam could symbolize the speaker's descent into madness or the dangers of the forest.

4.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS :

1. Attempt an essay on the theme of the Poem “La Belle Dame Sans Merci”.
2. Analyse Keat’s as a Romantic Poet with reference to his Poem “La La Belle Dame Sans Merci”. How does the Poem fit into the philosophies of Romanticism?
3. What does the poem tell us about the importance of reality over illusion? Discuss.
4. What does the poem tell us about the fragility of human life? Discuss.

4.10 SUGGESTED READINGS :

a) "John Keats and the La Belle Dame sans Merci" by Mario Praz
b) "The Meaning of Keats' La Belle Dame sans Merci" by A.C. Ward
c) "La Belle Dame sans Merci: The Knight as Romantic Artist" by E.D. Hirsch Jr.
d) "La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation" by Norman Holland.
e) "La Belle Dame sans Merci and the Medieval Past" by John Bayley.

Prof. B. Karuna

LESSON - 5

MY LAST DUCHESS

Robert Browning

Objectives :

- Students will be able to understand and appreciate Robert Browning's poetry the greatness of the poet.
- Students will acquire knowledge of genres and literary terms.
- Students will be able to analyse Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" as a dramatic monologue,
- Students will be able to explore the themes of power, control, and gender, and use of poetic artistry.

Structure of the lesson :

5.1 Introduction to the Author

5.2 Text of the poem

5.3 Context of the Poem

5.4 Brief Summary

5.5 Line wise explanation of the poem

5.6 The Themes of Browning's poetry

5.7 Dramatic Monologue

5.8 Key Words

5.9 Self Assessment Questions

5.10 Suggested Readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE POET :

Robert Browning was born in the comparatively rural parish of Camberwell on May 7, 1812. His father was in the Bank of England. He was a man of more than ordinary culture and originality of mind, who possessed a liberty of six thousand volumes. The poet's mother was a Scotch. He was influenced by Keats, Shelly and Byron. It was in 1845 that Browning met his future wife. Elizabeth Moulton Barrett (1806-1816), herself a poet of high rank, know already as the author of The Seraphim, 1838, and poems, 1844.At the age of twenty, the young poet wrote his first printed Poem-Pauline: a Fragment of a Confession, which was published in January 1835.The most popular of his production are: How

They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix and Home Thoughts from the Sea, Sordello, a poem of 6000 lines of heroics couplet. In rapid succession appeared other poems of the series: King Victor and King Charles (1842); Dramatic Lyrics, which included Cavalier Tunes, My Last Duchess, Johannes Agricola, The Pies Piper, etc., (1842) The Return of the Druses (1843); A Blot in the 'Escutcheon (1843) Colombes's Birthday 1844.He published two tragedies Luria and A Soul's Tragedy. The fame was largely increased by the publication, in the years 1868-69, of the Ring and the Book. The noble old man fell into his sleep, on the night of December 12, 1889. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The style of the Monologue is dense and epigrammatic. The line, "all smiles stopped together", is a concentrated expression of a whole life's tragedy. But despite this density and concentration, the poem is lucid and clear. IT is entirely free from the usual faults of Browning. No doubt, there are a few parentheses, but they do not come in the way of understanding. The poem is written in Heroic couplets, but as the sense runs on from one line to another, the readers are hardly conscious of the rhyme.

5.2 TEXT OF THE POEM :

My Last Duchess

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandol'f hands
Will't busily a day, and there she stands.
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir 'twas not
Her Husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say " Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much;" or " Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat;" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had

A heart- how shall I say ?-too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked what're
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one ! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the west,
The drooping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace-all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,-good ! but thanked
Somehow-I know not how-as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling ? Even had you skill
In speech-(Which I had not) – to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, " Just this
Or that in your disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" – and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
-E'en then would be some stooping; and I chuse
Never to stoop. Oh Sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile ? This grew commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise ? We'll meet
The company your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go.
Together down, Sir ! Notice Neptune, thought,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,

Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

5.3 CONTEXT OF THE POEM :

Phelps regards it as "one of the finest dramatic monologues, not only of Browning, but in the whole range of English literature". The speaker is the **Duke of Ferrara**, an important city of **Italy.** It was an important culture centre during the Renaissance. Whether the character of the Duke in the Monologue is based on some actual historical figure or not, there can be no denying the fact that in the Monologue, the poet has captured the very spirit of Renaissance Italy, its intrigues, its sensuality, its greed, as well as its cultural and artistic activity.My Last Duchess was first published in the volume of poems called Dramatic Lyrics, in 1842. It was republished in the Dramatic Romances of 1865. It is a dramatic monologue.

Borrowing's monologues grow out of some 'crisis' or 'critical situation' in the life of principal figure, and embody the reaction of that figure to the particular situation. In his monologue generally, the speaker refers to other character or characters, and in this way reveals not only his character but that of other also. Thus the present monologue is a remarkable piece of character-study not only of the Duke but also of his last Duchess, and the messenger of the neighbouring Count forms the listener and the interlocutor.

5.4 BRIEF SUMMARY :

The Duke of Ferrara. A powerful, proud, and hard-hearted Italian Duke of the 16thcentury has been widowed recently. He intends to marry a second time. The messenger of a powerful Count, who has his estate in the neighbourhood, comes to the Duke's palace to negotiate with him the marriage of the Count's daughter. The Duke takes him round his picture gallery and shows to him the portrait of his last Duchess. The portrait is life-like and realistic, and the Duke, who is a great lover of the fine arts, is justly proud of it.

The Duke points out the portrait to the messenger and tells him that he alone uncovers the picture and nobody else is allowed to do so. At this point, the Duke notice an inquiring look in the eyes of the messenger and at once understands that he wants to know the cause of the deep, passionate look in the eyes of the Duchess, and proceeds to satisfy his curiosity. In this way Browning turns the monologue into a colloquy. The inquiring looks, a big question-mark, and provide the speaker with an occasion for explanation and self-analysis. In this way, much valuable light is thrown on character, and much that is past and dead is brought to life.

In response to the inquiring look of the messenger, the Duke tells him that the deep passion in the eyes of the Duchess does not result from any sex-intrigue or futility love. He did not give her any occasion to be unfaithful to him. Even the portrait on the wall was done not by an ordinary artist, but by a monk, and he was allowed only one day to do it. He did not allow the Monk any longer time, for he did not want to provide them any occasion for intimacy. This shows that the Duke is a jealous tyrant and the poor Duchess could not have enjoyed any freedom of movements as the wife of such a man. Continuing further with his explanation, the Duke tells the envoy that his last Duchess had very childish and foolish nature. She was pleased with trifles, would thank others for even the slightest service they

happened to render to her, and had no sense of dignity and decorum. For example, the faint blush of joy on her cheek and neck was not caused by the presence of her husband alone. If the painter happened to mention that her cloak covered her wrist too much, or that paint could never hope to capture the light pink glow on her throat, she would take such chance remarks as compliments and blush with pleasure. She would had a childish heart, and was pleased too easily by such trifles as the gift of a branch laden with cheerier, the beautiful sunset, or the mule presented to her by someone for her rides round the terrace.

She would blush with pleasure at such trifles, just as much as she would blush at some costly ornament presented by him. She was the wife of a Duke who belonged to an ancient family, nine-hundred-year-old. But she considered even this gift of his at par with the trifling services rendered to her by others. As a matter of fact, she had no discriminations, and no sense of dignity and decorum. She smiled at everybody without any distinction; she thanked everybody in the same way. He expected better sense from his wife. He did not correct her, for even to notice such frivolity would have meant loss of dignity, and he did not like to suffer this loss. Besides, she would have argued and discussed with him, instead of listening to his advice. Her habit of smiling continued to grow till it became intolerable to him. At last he gave orders, and "Then all smiles stooped together". The line has been left intentionally enigmatic; we cannot say for certain how the smiling stopped. But, most probably, the poor, innocent Duchess was murdered at the command of her brutal and stony-hearted husband.

The Duke then asks the messenger to come down, where the other guests of his are waiting. In passing, he tells the messenger that he would expect a rich dowry from his master, the Count, though, of course, he adds very cleverly, his primary concern is the daughter, and not the dowry. The Duke is not only hypocrite of the first water. The only good point about him is his love of art. As they go down the stairs, he asks the messenger to have a good look at the bronze statue of Neptune, the sea-god. In this status, the god is shown riding and controlling a sea-horse. It was done specially for him by the great sculptor, Claus of Innsbruck. It is the name of an imaginary artist invented to impress the messenger; just as earlier he had invented the name of the painter, Fra Pandolf.

5.5 LINE WISE EXPLANATION OF THE POEM :

Line 1-15

My Last Duchess opens up with the speaker asking a listener if he would please sit down and look at a portrait of his last Duchess. This makes the readers wonder why this Duchess is no longer his present Duchess. He does not reveal whether she is deceased or put away in a convent somewhere.

He asks his listener to sit and look at the life-sized painting of her. He reveals that this painting is behind a curtain and that no one but he is allowed to draw the curtain to view the painting or to show it to anyone. This is very suspicious behavior. The reader can immediately sense that the Duke is controlling. The question that still remains unanswered is, why is this his *last* Duchess?

The Duke describes the look on the Duchess' face and that she had a joyous look and an earnest glance. He notes that "twas not her husband's presence only called that spot of joy into the Duchess' cheek". This is a curious thing to say. Why would he expect that his presence alone, and nothing else, would bring joy to her face? He does not answer that question, but the fact that he notes this gives a little bit of insight into why he was the only one who was allowed to open the curtain.

All along, he wanted to be the only one who would bring a look of joy to his Duchess' face. Now that she was put away somewhere, and her life-size painting was on the wall, he could be the only one to ever see that look of joy on her face because he would allow no one else to look at the painting without his permission. Suddenly, our speaker seems somewhat psychotic.

Line 16-24

In this section of *My Last Duchess*, the Duke seems to be remembering his former Duchess and all that bothered him about her. It would seem that she was too easily pleased by everyone around her. The Duke was not happy with this. He didn't like that if someone like "Fra Pandolf" (we don't know much more about this character) were to tell her that her shawl covered her wrists too much, she would blush.

The Duke did not like that she would blush at the flirtations of another man. He did not like that the things which he called common courtesy would "call up that spot of joy" which she seemed to always have on her face. The Duke accuses her of having a heart that was "too soon made glad" and "too easily impressed."

He was annoyed that she liked everything that she looked at. This man seems more and more psychotic and controlling as *My Last Duchess* goes on. It would seem that he put away his Duchess because he could not control her feelings. He wanted to be the only one to bring her joy and make her blush.

Line 25-35

In these lines of *My Last Duchess*, the Duke continues to explain all of the flaws in the Duchess' character. He says that she values her white mule, a branch of cherries, and sunset as much as she values a piece of jewelry that he had given her. He is irritated that she does not seem to see the value in what he gives to her or that she seems to value the simple pleasures of life as much as she values his expensive gifts to her. He also seems irritated that she does not seem to understand the importance of his place in life.

By marrying her, he had given her a "nine-hundred-years-old name." This reveals that his family had been around for a very long time, and thus, he gave her a well-known and prestigious name in marrying her. She did not seem to be any more thankful for this than she was thankful to watch the sunset. This irritated the Duke so much that he was not even willing to "stoop" to her level to discuss it with her. He thinks it would be "trifling" to do so.

Line 35-47

The Duke continues to explain that he chooses never to stoop to discuss with his Duchess what made him so disgusted with her. Yet, he seems quite comfortable discussing it with this listener. Perhaps he thought himself too high and mighty to stoop to talk to a woman, even if that woman was his wife. He admitted that she smiled at him pleasantly when he passed by, but it bothered him that everyone received that same smile from her. He explained that he "gave commands" and "then all smiles stopped together." This causes the reader to feel sorry for the Duchess, and rightly so.

She was a lovely, happy, smiling person. It seems that the Duke commanded her in such a way as to make her stop smiling altogether. He robbed her of her joy with his controlling attitude toward her. After explaining what happened when he commanded her, the Duke turns his attention back to the painting on the wall and says, "There she stands as if alive". This suggests that the real Duchess is no longer alive. The Duke seems happier with a painting of her because he can control who gets to look at the joy in her face. The Duke then invites his listener to return downstairs with him.

Line 47-56

This section of *My Last Duchess* reveals the identity of the Duke's listener. He is the servant of a Count in the land, and they are trying to arrange a marriage between the Duke and the Count's daughter. The Duke says that his "fair daughter" is his "object". He brings the man back downstairs with him, and as they walk, he points out the bronze statue that was made especially for him.

The statue is of Neptune taming a sea horse. Neptune, of course, is the god of the sea. This symbolizes the Duke and the sea horse symbolizes any Duchess he would acquire. The Duke views himself as a god, and he wishes to tame his wife to do whatever he wishes her to do and even to feel whatever he wishes her to feel. This man is clearly demented and controlling, and the speaker in *My Last Duchess* reveals Browning's ideas of his fellow men.

5.6 THE THEMES OF BROWNING POETRY :

Browning's interests were wide and varied, but primarily he was a poet of Man. His business was, "soul-dissection". Poet selects a wide variety of human types belonging to different professions, ages and countries. This explains the wide variety of subjects which Browning treats of in his poetry. Crimes, art, love, religion, philosophy, Nature, human personality, etc., are the main themes of Borrowing's poetry. He is interested in all of them because they enable him to study the human soul from various angles, and reveal its many facets. Human soul is studied in the most varied, the most poignant, and the most unusual situations. "Browing's is not the drama of the importance until it is transformed into a form influencing mind and character". Sexual love considered as a passion has two aspects- it is spiritual as well as physical.

Browning differs from the other Victorians who recoiled from the flesh and looked upon it as an obstacle in the way of the development of the human soul. It is a measure of his

realism that he does not is regard claims of the body; rather he regards physical passion as essential for a happy married life, and as a means to spiritual development. His concern is with the harmonious development of human personality. If Browning had any special love for any country, it was Italy, and more specially the Italy of the Renaissance. "Perhaps no English poet ever knew any foreign country so well, as Browning knew Italy, certainly none has dedicated more of his best work to a land which was not his own". Browning had a great love of nature, and his description of nature have an essentially Italian inspiration. His landscape is real and actual, and they are always landscapes with human figures. Browning cannot keep his human interests out of his poetry for any length of time. Nature serves as a landscape in Grammarian's Funeral, and Caliban upon Setebos. His theory of the relationship of Man, God and Nature, is that nature has no vital sympathy for man, no message and neither is she a refuge for broken spirits. Religions too, finds a prominent place in the poetry of Browning. It was a subject and several of his poems deal with the theme of religion.

5.7 DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE :

Browning's genius was essentially dramatic. His dramatic bent of mind is seen in his characterisation, and in the unfolding of strong dramatic situations. He also considered the drama as the highest form of expression. His first play Strafford was produced in 1837, and the last In a Balcony in 1844.As Hugh Walker points out, "Browning did not invent the dramatic monologue, but he made it specially his own, and no one else has ever put such rich and varied material into it". With all, 'external machinery' of action and plot, and concentrate his attention on, "the incident in the development of a soul". The Dramatic Monologue is,' dramatic', because it is the utterance of imaginary characters and not of the poet himself, and because in it character is developed not through any description on the part of the poet but, through a conflict between the opposite thoughts and emotions of the character himself.

It is a 'monologue', because it is a conversation of a single individual with himself (Mono means 'one' and 'loge' means conversation). The form is also referred to as monodrama. Walter Pater has called the poetry of Browning, "the poetry of situation". A power of conceiving subtle mental complexities with clearness, and of expressing them in a picturesque form and in perfect lyric language. Each poem renders a single mood, and renders it completely. But it is still only a mood; My Last Duchess is a life. The poem is a subtle study in the jealousy of egoism-not a study so much as creation; and it places before us, a typical Duke of the Renaissance. The dramatic monologue is brought to perfection and they must be entirely objective. Browning's monologues grow out of some 'crisis' or 'critical situation' in the life of the principal figure, and embody the reaction of that figure to the particular situation. In his monologues generally, the speaker refers to other character or characters, and in this way reveals not only his character but that of others also. The presence of some listener or interlocutor is also implied. Thus, the present monologue is a remarkable piece of character-study not only of the Duke but also of his last Duchess, and the messenger of the neighbouring Count forms the listener and the interlocutor.

5.8 KEY WORDS :

1. Alliteration :

Occurs when the poet uses the same consonant sound at the beginning of words. For example, "look" and "looked" in line twenty-four.

2. Caesura :

Seen through pauses the poet uses in the middle of lines. For example: "Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked."

3. Enjambment :

Seen through line breaks. For example, the transition between lines two and three as well as lines five and six.

5.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS :

1. In Robert Brownings 'My *Last* Duchess', what are the three important qualities of Duke first wife? Why he would want her to be immortalized in a portrait?
2. Discuss the dominant theme in Robert Browning 'My Last Duchess'. How does the tone, speaker and the diction help in developing this theme?
3. Illustrate the technique of the Dramatic Monologue in Borrowing's poetry.
4. Describe the purpose / message of "My Last Duchess" and how is this message conveyed.

5.10 SUGGESTED READINGS :

1. Endowed : *Life of R.Browning*
2. Stop ford H.Brooke : *The poetry of Browning.*
3. H.Walker : *Literature of the Victorian Era.*
4. J.Fortheringham : S*tudies of the Mind and Art of Robert Browning*
5. Dallas Kenmare : *Browning and Modern Thought.*

Dr. E. Bhavani

LESSON – 6

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

--OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Objectives :

- Students will be able to understand the major ideas and themes of the play by the end of the lesson.
- Students will understand the essence of the major and minor characters of the play
- Students will be able to understand the importance of the play and will be able to apply the knowledge of the play to their real events of lives.
- Students will be able to communicate their understanding of the play through writing, speaking, or creative expression.

Structure of the lesson :

6.1 Biographical Sketch

6.1.1 Beginnings

6.1.2 Honours

6.1.3 Popular Works

6.2 Characters in the Play

6.3 Summary of the Play

6.4. Critical Appreciation of the Play

6.5 Key Words

6.6 Self Assessment Questions

6.7 Suggested Readings

6.1 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH :

6.1.1 Beginnings :

Goldsmith's early life was shaped by the economic and social realities of Ireland in the 18th century. The country was poor and underdeveloped, and the majority of the population lived in poverty. Goldsmith's family was no exception. His father's salary as a clergyman was barely enough to support the family, and they were often forced to live in cramped and uncomfortable conditions. Goldsmith's education was also disrupted by

financial difficulties. He was forced to leave school for several periods of time in order to work and earn money to support his family. This meant that he never received a formal education, and he was largely self-taught. Despite the challenges he faced, Goldsmith was determined to make a better life for himself. He worked hard and studied diligently, and eventually he was able to achieve his dream of becoming a writer. His early experiences of poverty and hardship shaped his perspective on the world, and they are reflected in many of his works.

6.1.2 Honours :

Oliver Goldsmith was awarded the following honours :

a) Member of the Royal Academy of Arts (1770)

b) Member of the Literary Club (1773)

c) Honorary degree from Trinity College Dublin (1774)

In addition to these formal honours, Goldsmith was also highly respected by his contemporaries for his literary achievements. He was considered to be one of the most important writers of his time, and his works were widely read and admired. Goldsmith's membership in the Royal Academy of Arts and the Literary Club were both significant honours. The Royal Academy of Arts was a prestigious institution that was founded in 1768 to promote the arts in Great Britain. The Literary Club was a group of leading writers and intellectuals who met regularly to discuss literature and other cultural topics. Goldsmith's membership in these two organizations was a testament to his high standing in the British literary world. Goldsmith's honorary degree from Trinity College Dublin was also a significant honour. It was awarded to him in recognition of his literary achievements and his contributions to British culture. Goldsmith was the first person to be awarded an honorary degree from Trinity College Dublin in over 100 years.

The honours that Oliver Goldsmith received were a testament to his high standing in the British literary world and his contributions to English literature. He was a respected writer and intellectual, and his works continue to be enjoyed by readers today.

6.1.3 Popular Works :

Goldsmith's most popular works include :

1. *The Vicar of Wakefield (1766):* A novel about a kindly vicar and his family, who are forced to confront unexpected adversity.
2. *She Stoops to Conquer (1773):* A play about two young men who mistake a country manor for an inn, and the ensuing comedic chaos.
3. *The Deserted Village (1770):* A poem that laments the decline of rural England and the plight of the poor.

These works are all considered to be classics of English literature, and they are still widely read and enjoyed today.

Some of his other notable works include :

a) *The Traveller (1764):* A poem that reflects on Goldsmith's travels through Europe.

b) *The Citizen of the World (1762):* A collection of essays that satirize English society.

c) *The Hermit (1764):* A ballad about a hermit who learns the value of contentment.

d) *Retaliation (1774):* A poem in which Goldsmith pokes fun at his friends and colleagues in the Literary Club.

Goldsmith's works are known for their humour, their compassion, and their social commentary. He was a keen observer of human nature, and he frequently used his writing to satirize the social conventions of his time. Goldsmith's works continue to be relevant today because they explore universal themes such as love, loss, identity, and the pursuit of happiness.

6.2 Characters in the Play, *She Stoops to Conquer :*

Oliver Goldsmith's play *She Stoops to Conquer* is a comedy of manners that explores a variety of themes, including love, marriage, social class, and identity. The play features a cast of memorable characters, each with their own unique personality and motivations. Two of the play's main characters, Marlow and Kate are discussed here in detail.

- **Marlow :**

  Marlow is a young gentleman who is well-educated and well-bred. However, he is also socially awkward and shy around women. Marlow has a strong sense of social class, and he is uncomfortable around people who he perceives to be lower-class. At the beginning of the play, Marlow is introduced to the Hard castle family, who are wealthy landowners. Marlow believes that the Hardcastles are upper-class, and he is initially very respectful and polite towards them. However, when Marlow learns that the Hardcastles are actually lower-class, his attitude changes completely. He becomes rude and dismissive, and he refuses to court their daughter, Kate. His behaviour towards the Hardcastles is a reflection of his own internalized prejudices. He has been taught to believe that upper-class people are superior to lower-class people, and he is unable to overcome these prejudices, even when he is faced with evidence to the contrary. He is not simply a one-dimensional villain. He is also a complex and sympathetic character. He is aware of his own flaws, and he struggles to overcome them. He is also capable of great kindness and compassion. For example, when Marlow meets Kate for the first time, he is immediately attracted to her. He is hesitant to pursue her because he believes that she is lower-class. Eventually, Marlow's feelings for Kate overcome his prejudices. He confesses his love to her, and they are married in the end.

His character arc is one of the most satisfying aspects of *She Stoops to Conquer*. He begins the play as a socially awkward and prejudiced young man, but he ends up as a kind and compassionate husband. Marlow's transformation is a reminder that we are all capable of change, and that we should not judge others based on their social class or any other external factor.

- **Kate :**

Kate is a strong-willed and independent young woman. She is also intelligent and witty. Kate is not afraid to challenge the social conventions of her time. At the beginning of the play, Kate is introduced to Marlow and Hastings, two young gentlemen who are visiting her family's estate. Marlow and Hastings believe that Kate is a lower-class barmaid, and they treat her accordingly. However, Kate is not intimidated by their behaviour. She stands up to them and challenges their assumptions about her.

Her behaviour towards Marlow and Hastings is a reflection of her own self-confidence and self-respect. She knows that she is worthy of respect, regardless of her social class. She is also a complex and sympathetic character. She has been hurt in the past, and she is hesitant to trust men. However, when she meets Marlow, she is drawn to his kindness and sincerity. She eventually falls in love with Marlow, and they are married in the end. Her character arc is one of the most empowering aspects of She Stoops to Conquer. She begins the play as a young woman who is defined by her social class. However, she ends up as a woman who is in control of her own destiny. Kate is a reminder that we should never allow others to define us, and that we should always stay away from such kind of people

- **Mr. Hardcastle :** The patriarch of the Hardcastle family, Mr. Hardcastle is a country gentleman who prefers the simple life to the corruption and decadence of the city. He often argues with his wife, but he loves their daughter, Kate, and is dismissive of his son-in-law, Tony.

- **Mrs. Hardcastle :** Mrs. Hardcastle is vain and pretentious, and she dislikes country life, dreaming of wealth and refinement. She is willing to try to force her son and niece to marry for the sake of increasing the family fortune.

- **Kate Hardcastle :** The Hardcastle’s daughter, Kate is young, intelligent, easy-going, and attractive. She likes entertaining guests and wearing fine clothes.

- **Constance Neville :** Mrs. Hardcastle's niece, Constance is playful and fond of gossip. She is willing to cross her aunt if that's the only way to marry the man she wants, Hastings.

- **Tony Lumpkin :** Mrs. Hardcastle's son from a prior marriage, Tony is a good-natured and affectionate young man who enjoys drinking, riding horses, and gambling. He is not academically gifted, but he is quick-witted and intelligent.

- **Hastings :** Constance Neville's secret lover, Hastings is a close friend of the younger Marlow and is well-known by his father but unknown to the Hardcastle family. He is faithful friend and lover.

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE PLAY :

She Stoops to Conquer is a classic comedy play written by Oliver Goldsmith in 1773. The play is set in the English countryside and revolves around the misadventures of a young man named Charles Marlow and his visit to the home of Mr. Hardcastle, a wealthy land owner. The play begins with Mr. Hardcastle's plan to arrange a marriage between his daughter, Kate Hardcastle, and Charles Marlow. However, Charles Marlow is known for his shyness and awkwardness around upper-class women, which makes him unable to converse with them comfortably. Ironically, he is very comfortable with lower-class women.

Kate, aware of Marlow's social anxiety, decides to take matters into her own hands and pretends to be a barmaid when he and his friend, George Hastings, arrive at the Hardcastle residence. This role reversal allows her to communicate with Marlow without the constraints of class and hierarchy. As the play unfolds, misunderstandings, mistaken identities, and humorous situations abound. Tony Lumpkin, Mr. Hardcastle's stepson, adds to the confusion by leading Marlow and Hastings astray, directing them to a local inn instead of the Hardcastle residence.

Meanwhile, Kate's younger half-brother, Constance Neville, is caught in a love triangle involving herself, Hastings, and the conniving Tony. Tony has his own motives for preventing Constance and Hastings from marrying, as he hopes to inherit her dowry.

In the climax of the play, Marlow, believing Kate to be a simple barmaid, expresses his affection for her without reservation. When he discovers her true identity, he becomes embarrassed and confused. Eventually, all misunderstandings are cleared up, and the play concludes with several couples happily united, including Marlow and Kate, Hastings and Constance, and Tony and his love interest, Bet Bouncer.

She Stoops to Conquer is a comedy of manners that satirizes the social conventions and class distinctions of the time. It highlights the absurdity of rigid social hierarchies and the power of love to transcend them. The play is known for its witty dialogue, memorable characters, and farcical elements, making it a beloved classic of English literature. In summary, *She Stoops to Conquer* is a delightful comedy that explores themes of mistaken identity, love, and social class through a series of humorous and cleverly orchestrated events. It remains a timeless and enjoyable work that continues to entertain audiences to this day.

6.4 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE PLAY :

She Stoops to Conquer is a well-written and entertaining play that has something to

offer everyone. It is a classic comedy of manners that continues to be relevant today as it challenges us to think about our own beliefs and to question the social order. One of the things that makes *She Stoops to Conquer* so enjoyable is its cast of characters. Marlow is a complex and sympathetic protagonist who is struggling to overcome his social awkwardness. Kate is a strong and independent heroine who is not afraid to stand up for herself. The supporting characters, such as Tony Lumpkin and Mrs. Hardcastle, are also well-developed and humorous. The play is also notable for its sharp wit and social commentary. Goldsmith satirizes the snobbery and hypocrisy of the upper class, as well as the greed and materialism of the middle class. He also explores themes such as love, marriage, and social class. *She Stoops to Conquer* is a well-written and entertaining play that has something to offer everyone. It is a classic comedy of manners that continues to be relevant today.

THE PLAY IS DIVIDED INTO FINE ACTS

The first act of She Stoops to Conquer introduces the main characters and sets up the central conflict of the play. Marlow's social awkwardness and Kate's independence are both foreshadowing the comedic events to come. The act also introduces the subplot involving Constance and Hastings, which adds to the humour and suspense of the play.

The second act of the play is full of comedic misunderstandings and disguises. Marlow's mistaken belief that the Hardcastles are innkeepers leads to a number of hilarious situations. The subplot involving Constance and Hastings also comes to a head in this act, as they devise a plan to trick Mrs. Hardcastle into giving them her blessing.

The third act of the play is where the central conflict is finally resolved. Marlow and Kate confess their love for each other, and Hastings and Constance are also united. The act ends with a message about the importance of love and following your heart.

The fourth act of the play is a bit of a detour from the main plot, as it focuses on Tony Lumpkin's attempts to sabotage Marlow and Kate's relationship. The act is still full of humour and memorable scenes, such as the scene where Tony tries to convince Marlow that he is a highwayman.

The fifth and final act of the play wraps up all of the loose ends. Tony's sabotage attempts are foiled, and Marlow and Kate are finally able to get married. Hastings and Constance are also married, and the play ends with a happy celebration.

Goldsmith's *She stoops to Conquer* is a complex and thought – provoking play that explores a variety of important themes. The play explores the complex nature of love and marriage, particularly the ways in which social class and financial status can complicate romantic relationships. For example, the young gentleman Marlow is initially turned off by the country girl Kate because he believes that she is a lower-class barmaid. However, when he learns that she is actually the wealthy heiress of a country squire, he suddenly changes his tune. The play also explores the importance of honesty and authenticity in relationships.

She Stoops to Conquer is a sharp satire of the social conventions of 18th-century

England. Goldsmith pokes fun at the snobbery and pretensions of the upper class, as well as the hypocrisy and greed of the middle class. The play also highlights the plight of the poor and the oppressed.

The play, also explores the ways in which people construct their identities and the ways in which their identities are shaped by society. For example, Marlow's identity is heavily influenced by his social class and his upbringing. He believes that he must behave in a certain way in order to maintain his status. Kate, on the other hand, is more comfortable with her own identity. She is not afraid to be herself, even if it means challenging social norms.

The play highlights the importance of family ties and the need for love and support from one's family. For example, the Hardcastle family is a close-knit unit that provides each other with strength and support.

On another level, the play explores the power of deception and the ways in which it can be used to achieve one's goals. However, Goldsmith ultimately suggests that deception is not a sustainable way to build relationships or achieve happiness.

The play also explores the importance of forgiveness and the ability to move on from past mistakes. In the end, the characters in She Stoops to Conquer are able to forgive each other and build stronger relationships, as it challenges us to think about our own values and beliefs and to question the social order. His exploration of various themes is both humorous and thought-provoking. He uses his characters and plot to expose the absurdities of the social order and to challenge his audience to think about their own values and beliefs.

6.5 KEY WORDS :

1. **Assiduities** : Constant or close attention to what one is doing.
2. **Bill of fare** : Menu.
3. **Bolster** : A long, thick pillow that is placed under other pillows for support.
4. **Cantankerous** : Bad-tempered, argumentative, and uncooperative.
5. **Coxcomb** : A vain and conceited man; a dandy.
6. **Fopperies** : Behaviour of a man who is concerned with his clothes and appearance in an affected and excessive way; behaviour of a dandy.
7. **Fortin** : A small fortune.
8. **Genteel** : Well-bred.
9. **Levy** : A gathering of people, especially for a military or social purpose.
10. **Malady** : An illness or disease.

6.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS :

1. What are the main themes of "She Stoops to Conquer"?
2. How does Goldsmith satirize the social conventions of 18th-century England in the play?
3. Analyse the character of Marlow. What are his strengths and weaknesses?
4. Analyse the character of Kate. What are her strengths and weaknesses?
5. Discuss the relationship between Marlow and Kate. How does it develop over the course of the play?
6. What role does Tony Lumpkin play in the play? How does he contribute to the plot and the humour?
7. Discuss the use of disguise in the play. How does it contribute to the plot and the humour?
8. What is the significance of the play's title?
9. How does the play end? Is the ending satisfying? Why or why not?
10. What is your overall assessment of "She Stoops to Conquer"? Is it a well-written and enjoyable play? Why or why not?

6.7 SUGGESTED READINGS :

1. Goldsmith, Oliver. She Stoops to Conquer. Edited by Katharine C. Balderston. New York: Dover Publications, 1991.
2. Goldsmith, Oliver. She Stoops to Conquer. Edited by James Ogden. London: A&C Black, 2001.
3. Goldsmith, Oliver. She Stoops to Conquer. Edited by John Russell Brown. London: Methuen Drama, 1968.
4. Goldsmith, Oliver. She Stoops to Conquer. Edited by David Bevington. New York: Bantam Books, 2001.
5. Goldsmith, Oliver. She Stoops to Conquer. Edited by Arthur Friedman. New York: Norton Critical Editions, 1990.

Prof. B. Karuna

LESSON – 7

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

----Jane Austen

Objectives :

- To encourage students to critically evaluate the novel and its impact on literature and society.
- To explore Jane Austen's writing style, language, and use of dialogue, and how it contributes to the overall narrative.
- To explore themes such as class, marriage, and morality in the novel and discuss how they relate to the characters and their actions.
- To analyse and discuss the main characters (Elizabeth Bennet, Mr. Darcy, etc.) and their development throughout the story.
- To sensitize the learners to the various devices and techniques of English literature
- To enable the learners with the basic knowledge and skills needed to appreciate and analyze English literature

Structure of the lesson :

7.1 Jane Austen's Life and works

7.2 Introduction to Pride and Prejudice

7.3 Major and Minor Characters in the novel

7.4 Summary of Pride and Prejudice

7.5 Jane Austen's Art of Characterisation

7.6 The Theme of Love and Marriage in Pride and Prejudice.

7.7 Irony in the Novel

7.8 Pride and Prejudice as a Domestic Novel

7.9 Self Assessment Questions

7.10 Suggested Readings

7.1 INTRODUCTION OF JANE AUSTEN LIFE :

Jane Austen lived from 1775 to 1817. She stood between the age of Sense and the Age of Sensibility. We might say that she belongs to an age of transition. Social background

of Jane Austen was founded on very rigid class distinctions. There were three distinct classes, the land-owning aristocracy and settled gentry, the new prosperous industrialists, and the workers and labourers. Among these, the power was mainly in the hands of the land=owning classes. The industrial class emerging as a powerful section of the society on account of the industrialisation of the country did not have even the right to vote till then. In her novels, Jane Austen deals with neither the aristocracy at the top nor the poor. She practically identifies herself with the upper middle and the middle class proper and it di their various involvements, their clashes and adjustments, that constitute the main interest of her novels. Girls belonging to this class were not educated for any profession. But they were expected to be accomplished in music, drawing, dancing, needleless work, etc.

Political climate life span covered great political upheavals, but mostly on the continent and in America. In 1776, America won its war of Independence. In1789 there took place the French Revolution, the most significant of the political events of the country. The social and economic repercussions of the twin movement of industrialisation and urbanisation did not disrupt the patterns of rural life in and around Stevenson. Jane Austen belongs to the 18^{th} century in her moral outlook and in her prose style, she was fully aware of the romantic strain in the contemporary novel. In fact, she had realised its absurdities and decided to write in reactions to it.

7.2 INTRODUCTION TO PRIDE AND PREJUDICE :

Jane Austen began writing Pride and Prejudice when she was barely twenty-one. The novel was first written in the epistolary style under the title **First Impressions**. Elizabeth and Darcy, the major characters of *Pride and Prejudice* instead of falling in love at first sight, get prejudiced against each other, and the novel describes how these first impressions are first confirmed and later inverted. Jane Augusten, who had a great admiration for Miss Burney's novels, felt the relevance of pride and prejudice for her own story and decided to adopt it as the title. Probably written between October 1796 and August 1797.It was sixteen years later, in January 1813, that it was finally brought out by Egerton, who had published her first novel **Sense and Sensibility** also.

The Novel deals with the fortunes of the Bennet's-an ill-matched couple living in the countryside and their five daughters. The only pre-occupation of Mrs. Bennet, a woman of mean understanding and low information, is to get her daughters married off. The prospects are brightened with the arrival on the scene of two handsome and eligible bachelors, Bingley and Darcy. This simple plot is used to present the universal theme of love and marriage. Through a detailed discussion of five marriages, four new ones and a fifth old one, Jane Austen tries to define good reasons for marriage and bad ones. At every stage of novel, she keeps on emphasising the difference between appearance and reality.

7.3 MAJOR AND MINOR CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL :

Of all her heroines, Jane Austen liked **Elizabeth Bennet** the most. Elizabeth declines two marriage proposals. As she does not want to marry where is no life. She withstands the

pressure and resists the temptation she is gifted with an unfailing and irrepressible sense of wit and humour. Another quality of Elizabeth is her selflessness and warm heartedness. Elizabeth's perception in general is quite admirable.

She is willing to learn and the process of her self-awakening begins on receipt of Darcy's letter. This dramatic moment of self-understanding gradually brings about a total awareness of reality. There is a moral courage and independence of thinking. There is a rare touch of Vivacity and ebullience about Elizabeth of all Jane Austen's heroines, she impresses and delights us most.

Fitzwilliam Darcy, the owner of the Pemberley estate worth ten thousand pounds a year, is the hero of the novel. Darcy's pride is in evidence right from the moment he makes his appearance. He is declared to be 'the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world'. Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth quite early in the novel. It stiles him, first of all, that her face is rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. Lastly, his pride corrected by love.

It has been pointed out that though there are many fools in pride and prejudice, there is but one knave-**George Wickham**. And though villainous, villainous, he is an extremely pleasing and plausible man. Wickham's next victim is Lydia. Wickham has a very significant role to play in the novel.

Mr. Bennet is the head of the Bennet family living in the village of Longbourn in Hertfordshire. In the very first chapter, Jane Austen describes him as 'so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve and caprice'.

Lydia's elopement causes him enough humiliation and he is awakened into self-realisation. It is obvious that **Mr. Bennet** is a character whom we are supposed to like and dislike all at once. He is endowed with intelligence, and perception with intelligence, and perception but he readily allows himself to be dictated by a woman of much meaner intelligence. His talk abounds in wit but lacks wisdom. That is why it is often difficult to appreciate his wit.

Mrs. Bennet, a woman of mean understanding. The entire being of her is in match-making for her daughters. She suffers from great instability of disposition. **Mrs. Bennet**, along with Mr. Collins, is a great comic character. While Mr. Collins is a satirical portrait of an English clergymen in the 18^{th} century. Mrs. Bennet is a creation of pure humour. It shows the greatness of Jane Austen's art that a woman who would have been an insufferable bore in real life has been turned into an artistic triumph.

Charless Bingley, the good looking and gentleman-like Bingley has 'a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners'. Undoubtedly he is bland and suave, affable and easy-going, easily pleased and capable of pleasing easily. His initial impression is very very pleasant. In order to make a correct estimate of Bingley, it is essential to study his character

together with Darcy's.Bingley's love for Jane is as sincere as it can be in an easy-going nature. Their relationship is based on the harmony arising out of similarity of nature.

Jane Bennet, the eldest of the Bennet sisters, is captivating in her physical appearance. Good natured herself, she complacently believes everybody to be good-natured. Her peculiar foible is her unwillingness to think ill of anybody. She is a young lady to great feeling and is deeply moved to see anyone in distress. Though a woman of great feeling, she maintains a steady, unruffled composure and does not let her inner feelings disturb outward equanimity.

Mr. Collins is a tall, heavy-looking Youngman od five-and-twenty. He is a distant cousin of Mr. Bennet, and Mr. Bennet's estate for want of a male heir, is entailed on him. The odd mixture of qualities renders him 'vastly stupid and vastly funny'. The low cringing to which Mr. Collins stoops in his relationship with Lady Catherine is extremely ridiculous. He is very formal and affected in his manners. He represents the degeneration of the Church of England in the 18^{th} century. Mr. Collin's proposal to Elizabeth is one of the great comic scenes of the novel. All his characteristics, stupidity, pompousness, conceit and clumsiness are flagrantly paraded here.

Lady Catherine De Bourgh is a tall and strong woman. She is a representative of the aristocratic hauteur. Having grown accustomed to adulation and flattery, she can brook no criticism or opposition and it is a new experience to her when Elizabeth refuses to be cowed down by her overbearing inquisitiveness and answers all her queries with composed dignity.

Lydia Bennet the youngest of the Bennet sisters is about sister years old. She is the tallest of all, is well-built and is endowed with a pleasant face and a fine complexion. Lydia, while a guest at Mrs.Forster's abuses her hospitality and shamelessly eloped with Mr. Wickham. It is one of the most imprudent matches, but Lydia thinks nothing of it, this shows her ignorance and imprudence. Her married life with Wickham was not a happy life, their manner of living is unsettled in the extreme. They are always spending more they ought. Lydia plays an important part in the structure of the novel. Her elopement with Wickham provides Mr. Darcy an opportunity to show his nobility, to be of use to Elizabeth and to earn her gratitude, and with it, her love.

Kitty the fourth among the Bennet sisters, is about 18 years old. She is almost a non-entity, for being weak-spirited herself, she is completely under the influence of Lydia. She is as giddy and flirtatious, as ignorant, idle and vain, as Lydia, though she is less talkative and noisy than her. However, after Lydia's marriage, she spends most of her time with her two elder sisters in society vastly superior to what she had generally known and becomes, by proper attention and management, less irritable and less insipid.

Charlotte Lucas the daughter of sir William and lady lucas is an intimate friend of Elizabeth. She is a sensible, intelligent, young woman of twenty-seven, fully conscious of her modest fortune and plain appearance. Aware of the social and economic insecurity of an

ageing spinster's life, she gives the greatest importance to marriage and the security of a home that marriage can provide.

7.4 THE THEME OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE :

One of the main themes in *Pride and Prejudice* is that of marriage and its close relation with money and social status. Through five marriages, four new ones and the fifth old one, Jane Austen tries to define good reasons for marriage and bad reasons. The novel's oft-quoted opening sentence: "It's a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" shows views on marriage in Austen's time. Marriage, it is argued, is the only fortunate event that can happen in a woman's life.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen puts marriage into all kinds of social and economic relationship from the beginning to end, which makes the novel have great practical experience. She uses the relationships of the characters in *Pride and Prejudice* to actually satirize the convention of marriage and money. The romantic relationships in *Pride and Prejudice* show the alliance of the love-interest and the material interest, albeit in a self-consciously ironic manner. The main themes in *Pride and Prejudice* are family, wealth, reputation, social class, and of course, pride and prejudice. These themes are shown in the novel through the relationships and interactions between various characters.

7.5 SUMMARY :

The news that a wealthy young gentleman named Charles Bingley has rented the manor of Nether Field Park causes a great stir in the nearby village of Long bourn, especially in the Bennet household. The Bennet's have five unmarried daughtersfrom oldest to youngest, Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia—and Mrs. Bennet is desperate to see them all married. After Mr. Bennet pays a social visit to Mr. Bingley, the Bennet's attend a ball at which Mr. Bingley is present. He is taken with Jane and spends much of the evening dancing with her. His close friend, Mr. Darcy, is less pleased with the evening and haughtily refuses to dance with Elizabeth, which makes everyone view him as arrogant and obnoxious.

At social functions over subsequent weeks, however, Mr. Darcy finds himself increasingly attracted to Elizabeth's charm and intelligence. Jane's friendship with Mr. Bingley also continues to burgeon, and Jane pays a visit to the Bingley mansion. On her journey to the house she is caught in a downpour and catches ill, forcing her to stay at Nether field for several days. In order to tend to Jane, Elizabeth hikes through muddy fields and arrives with a spattered dress, much to the disdain of the snobbish Miss Bingley, Charles Bingley's sister. Miss Bingley's spite only increases when she notices that Darcy, whom she is pursuing, pays quite a bit of attention to Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth and Jane return home, they find Mr. Collins visiting their household. Mr. Collins is a young clergyman who stands to inherit Mr. Bennet's property, which has been "entailed," meaning that it can only be passed down to male heirs. Mr. Collins is a pompous fool, though he is quite enthralled by the Bennet girls. Shortly after his arrival, he

makes a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth. She turns him down, wounding his pride. Meanwhile, the Bennet girls have become friendly with militia officers stationed in a nearby town. Among them is Wickham, a handsome young soldier who is friendly toward Elizabeth and tells her how Darcy cruelly cheated him out of an inheritance.

At the beginning of winter, the Bingleys and Darcy leave Nether field and return to London, much to Jane's dismay. A further shock arrives with the news that Mr. Collins has become engaged to Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's best friend and the poor daughter of a local knight. Charlotte explains to Elizabeth that she is getting older and needs the match for financial reasons. Charlotte and Mr. Collins get married and Elizabeth promises to visit them at their new home. As winter progresses, Jane visits the city to see friends (hoping also that she might see Mr. Bingley). However, Miss Bingley visits her and behaves rudely, while Mr. Bingley fails to visit her at all. The marriage prospects for the Bennet girls appear bleak.

That spring, Elizabeth visits Charlotte, who now lives near the home of Mr. Collins's patron, Lady Catherine de Bourg, who is also Darcy's aunt. Darcy calls on Lady Catherine and encounters Elizabeth, whose presence leads him to make a number of visits to the Collins's home, where she is staying. One day, he makes a shocking proposal of marriage, which Elizabeth quickly refuses. She tells Darcy that she considers him arrogant and unpleasant, then scolds him for steering Bingley away from Jane and disinheriting Wickham. Darcy leaves her but shortly thereafter delivers a letter to her. In this letter, he admits that he urged Bingley to distance himself from Jane, but claims he did so only because he thought their romance was not serious. As for Wickham, he informs Elizabeth that the young officer is a liar and that the real cause of their disagreement was Wickham's attempt to elope with his young sister, Georgiana Darcy.

This letter causes Elizabeth to revaluate her feelings about Darcy. She returns home and acts coldly toward Wickham. The militia is leaving town, which makes the younger, rather man-crazy Bennet girls distraught. Lydia manages to obtain permission from her father to spend the summer with an old colonel in Brighton, where Wickham's regiment will be stationed. With the arrival of June, Elizabeth goes on another journey, this time with the Gardiners, who are relatives of the Bennet's. The trip takes her to the North and eventually to the neighbourhood of Pemberley, Darcy's estate. She visits Pemberley, after making sure that Darcy is away, and delights in the building and grounds, while hearing from Darcy's servants that he is a wonderful, generous master. Suddenly, Darcy arrives and behaves cordially toward her. Making no mention of his proposal, he entertains the Gardiners and invites Elizabeth to meet his sister.

Shortly thereafter, however, a letter arrives from home, telling Elizabeth that Lydia has eloped with Wickham and that the couple is nowhere to be found, which suggests that they may be living together out of wedlock. Fearful of the disgrace such a situation would bring on her entire family, Elizabeth hastens home. Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Bennet go off to search for Lydia, but Mr. Bennet eventually returns home empty-handed. Just when all hope seems lost, a letter comes from Mr. Gardiner saying that the couple has been found and that

Wickham has agreed to marry Lydia in exchange for an annual income. The Bennets are convinced that Mr. Gardiner has paid off Wickham, but Elizabeth learns that the source of the money, and of her family's salvation, was none other than Darcy.

Now married, Wickham and Lydia return to Long bourn briefly, where Mr. Bennet treats them coldly. They then depart for Wickham's new assignment in the North of England. Shortly thereafter, Bingley returns to Nether field and resumes his courtship of Jane. Darcy goes to stay with him and pays visits to the Bennet's but makes no mention of his desire to marry Elizabeth. Bingley, on the other hand, presses his suit and proposes to Jane, to the delight of everyone but Bingley's haughty sister. While the family celebrates, Lady Catherine de Bourg pays a visit to Long bourn. She corners Elizabeth and says that she has heard that Darcy, her nephew, is planning to marry her. Since she considers a Bennet an unsuitable match for a Darcy, Lady Catherine demands that Elizabeth promise to refuse him. Elizabeth spiritedly refuses, saying she is not engaged to Darcy, but she will not promise anything against her own happiness. A little later, Elizabeth and Darcy go out walking together and he tells her that his feelings have not altered since the spring. She tenderly accepts his proposal, and both Jane and Elizabeth are married.

7.6 JANE AUSTEN'S ART OF CHARACTERISATION :

The range of Jane Austen characters is rather narrow. She selects her characters from among the landed gentry in the country side. She never repeats a single character. "In her six books, she never repeated a single character" says Lord David Cecil. Great artists always make their characters both individuals and representatives of a certain class. Characters are revealed dramatically as well as through direct comment through their conversation, their actions, their letters. She makes a very careful use of conversation. Jane Austen does not conceive her characters in pairs as Thackeray usually does. Her characters are substantially revealed thought comparison and contrast with others. Exactly like a miniature painter, Jane Austen builds characters through piling an infinite succession of minute details about them. In pride and prejudice, the Elizabeth-Darcy relationship is traced through a very large number of minute details like Darcy's dislike of Mrs. Hurst's leaving Elizabeth to take his disengaged arm as they walk in the Nether Field Park. We can see the Realism in characters impress us as real men and women since they are drawn to perfection, even the familiar and commonplace characters become highly interesting.

7.7 IRONY IN THE NOVEL :

The basic feature of every irony is a contrast between reality and appearance. Jane Austen makes use of irony in different levels. She makes use of it in her narrative style to uncover the incongruity, even contradiction existing under the surface harmony, there by adding a reach subtlety and complexity to her style and making it fit to be analysed and interpreted at different levels. Jane Austen's ironic tone is established in the very first sentence of the novel: "It is truth universally acknowledge, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife". The first half of this sentence suggests that some great 'universal' truth is the subject of the novel. Most of the events and situations in *Pride and Prejudice* have been given an ironic twist. Mr. Darcy remarks about Elizabeth that "she

is not handsome enough to tempt me"., and soon after gets captivated by her enormous eyes. Irony is always a means to rich comedy and is not tinged with any bitterness, nor does it reflect her cynicism. It is amusing but it is not just verbal wit for local entertainment. It provokes some deep thinking over some significant issues of human life. Thus, irony in her hands is an "instrument of moral vision" and not ' a technique of rejection'.

Plot-Construction : The precision, simplicity and symmetry of the plot of pride and prejudice evoke instinctive appreciation. There are no moral or philosophical distractions, no obtrusive characters, no digressive episodes, no loose ends dangling in the end. The interdependence of the main plot and the sub-plots is complete. The interplay between characters and events is held in perfect organic unity. Love and marriage happens to be the main themes of *Pride and Prejudice*. And this is common to the main plot as well as the three sub-plots. The moral valence of four marriages gives the plot a fine thematic unity apart from helping to project Jane Austen's moral vision.

The Dramatic Element in Pride and Prejudice: All Jane Austen's novels are structurally so dramatic that one wonders if she became a novelist only accident. The plot is coherent and well-integrated. The inter-linking of the main plot and the sub-plot is almost perfect. The Jane-Bingley sub-plot runs almost parallel to the main plot involving Elizabeth and Darcy. Dramatic irony is one of the prominent features and the difference between appearance and reality is emphasised at every stage. Jane Austen revels herself as a 'master dramatist-with a perfect ear, a perfect sense of timing, a shrewd instinct for climax and anti-climax.

Style: Jane Austen's style may appear formal, or it may appear stilted and old-fashioned. Irony is the most important aspect, may be either playful or sharp. Irony employed in this manner is not just a technique of using words ' to provide local entertainment in the form of wit'. An epigram is a witty, pointed saying, often with balanced phrases and clauses. She uses simple words, words of everyday use, words not beyond anyone's scope, but she works wonders with them. Used by her, they get invested with an evocative power.

Dialogue: In this novel, there is a general paucity of action, much attentive ear to the dialogues of the various people visiting the parsonage. Her dialogue in the novel derive their interest from their being true to human nature. Jane Austen often uses dialogues to project several viewpoints at once. These dialogues are specially amusing since they show how different people react to the same event, each according to his character.

7.8 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AS A DOMESTIC NOVEL :

As its name suggests, it is domestic novel deal with the homely life of a family, preferably belonging to the middle class. Its range is extremely narrow. It takes no cognizance of the social movements or political upheavals that might be affecting the general tenor of life. The usual theme of a domestic novel is love and marriage and the various stresses and strains of married life. Its plot is so developed that is comprehends in it a great deal of suspense and is able to sustain the interest of the reader throughout. She makes a very

candid confession that for her "two or three families in a country village" are enough to work with. Thus this novel deals with domestic life and aspirations of the Bennets and the Lauccases. The Bingley's, and the Darcy's with scattered references to a few other families. Apparently, this novel is concerned with husband-hunting. She is interested in discussing the importance of marrying where there is intellectual understanding and emotional compatibility, and not just where there is skin-deep beauty or the allurement of money. The novel also emphasises the adverse effect of ill-matched marriages on the emotional development of the children. Thus *Pride and Prejudice* may be a domestic novel but it presents a gripping drama of universal import. The greatness of Jane Austen's art lies in giving a homely and pedestrian theme a great moral dimension, and in presenting it so dramatically that one is pressed on to read it with a sustained interest.

7.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS :

1. Examine the appropriateness of Pride and Prejudice as the title of Jane Austen's novel.
2. What do you understand by irony? Illustrate Jane Austen's use of it in *Pride and Prejudice*.
3. Examine the structure of the novel *Pride and Prejudice*.
4. The plot of *Pride and Prejudice* has an 'exactness of structure and a symmetry of form'. Discuss and illustrate.
5. What is a domestic novel? Are we justified in regarding *Pride and Prejudice* as a domestic novel?

7.10 SUGGESTED READINGS :

1. Armstrong, Isobel (ed) : Pride and Prejudice(1990)
2. Butler, Marilyn : Jane Austen and the war of Ideas, 1987.
3. Newton, Judith Lowder : Women, power and subversion; social strategies in British Fiction 1981.
4. Ranner, Tony : Jane Austen 1986.
5. Todd, Janet (ed) : Jane Austen: New perspectives, women and Literature 3 1983.

Dr.E. Bhavani

LESSON – 8

THE STUDY OF POETRY

---- Matthew Arnold

Objectives :

- To introduce students to Matthew Arnold's influential role as a literary critic and his unique approach to evaluating literature.
- To explore Arnold's concept of "high seriousness" and its importance in his critical framework.
- To examine Arnold's belief in the power of poetry to provide insight into human nature, offer consolation, and foster personal growth.

Structure of the lesson :

8.1 Matthew Arnold's life and achievements

8.2 Introduction - The Study of Poetry

8.3 Summary - The Study of Poetry

8.4 Matthew Arnold as a critic

8.5 Key Words

8.6 Self Assessment Questions

8.7 Suggested Readings

8.1 MATTHEW ARNOLD'S LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS :

Matthew Arnold, (born December 24, 1822, Laleham, Middlesex, England—died April 15, 1888, Liverpool), English Victorian poet and literary and social critic, noted especially for his classical attacks on the contemporary tastes and manners of the "Barbarians" (the aristocracy), the "Philistines" (the commercial middle class), and the "Populace." He became the apostle of "culture" in such works as *Culture and Anarchy* (1869).

Matthew was the eldest son of the renowned Thomas Arnold, who was appointed headmaster of Rugby School in 1828. Matthew entered Rugby (1837) and then attended Oxford as a scholar of Balliol College; there he won the Newdigate Prize with his poem *Cromwell* (1843) and was graduated with second-class honours in 1844. For Oxford Arnold retained an impassioned affection. His Oxford was the Oxford of John Henry Newman—of Newman just about to be received into the Roman Catholic Church; and although Arnold's own religious thought, like his father's, was strongly liberal, Oxford and Newman always remained for him joint symbols of spiritual beauty and culture.

In 1847 Arnold became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who occupied a high

cabinet post during Lord John Russell's Liberal ministries. And in 1851, in order to secure the income needed for his marriage (June 1851) with Frances Lucy Wightman, he accepted from Lansdowne an appointment as inspector of schools. This was to be his routine occupation until within two years of his death. He engaged in incessant travelling throughout the British provinces and also several times was sent by the government to inquire into the state of education in France, Germany, Holland, and Switzerland. Two of his reports on schools abroad were reprinted as books, and his annual reports on schools at home attracted wide attention, written, as they were, in Arnold's ownurbane and civilized prose.

The work that gives Arnold his high place in the history of literature and the history of ideas was all accomplished in the time he could spare from his official duties. His first volume of verse was *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems. By A.* (1849); this was followed (in 1852) by another under the same initial: *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*. In 1853 appeared the first volume of poems published under his own name; it consisted partly of poems selected from the earlier volumes and also contained the well-known preface explaining (among other things) why *Empedocles* was excluded from the selection: it was a dramatic poem "in which the suffering finds no vent in action," in which there is "everything to be endured, nothing to be done." This preface foreshadows his later criticism in its insistence upon the classic virtues of unity, impersonality, universality, and architectonic power and upon the value of the classical masterpieces as models for "an age of spiritual discomfort"—an age "wanting in moral grandeur." Other editions followed, and *Merope*, Arnold's classical tragedy, appeared in 1858, and *New Poems* in 1867. After that date, though there were further editions, Arnold wrote little additional verse.

Not much of Arnold's verse will stand the test of his own criteria; far from being classically poised, impersonal, serene, and grand, it is often intimate, personal, full of romantic regret, sentimental pessimism, and nostalgia.

In 1857, assisted by the vote of his godfather (and predecessor) John Keble, Arnold was elected to the Oxford chair of poetry, which he held for 10 years. It was characteristic of him that he revolutionized this professorship. The keynote was struck in his inaugural lecture: "On the Modern Element in Literature," "modern" being taken to mean not merely "contemporary" (for Greece was "modern"), but the spirit that, contemplating the vast and complex spectacle of life, craves for moral and intellectual "deliverance". Several of the lectures were afterward published as critical essays, but the most substantial fruits of his professorship were the three lectures *On Translating Homer* (1861)—in which he recommended Homer's plainness and nobility as medicine for the modern world, with its "sick hurry and divided aims" and condemned Francis Newman's recent translation as ignoble and eccentric—and the lectures *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), in which, without much knowledge of his subject or of anthropology, he used the Celtic strain as a symbol of that which rejects the despotism of the commonplace and the utilitarian.

8.2 INTRODUCTION – THE STUDY OF POETRY :

Matthew Arnold was one of the foremost poets and critics of the 19th century. While

often regarded as the father of modern literary criticism, he also wrote extensively on social and cultural issues, religion, and education. Arnold was born into an influential English family—his father was a famed headmaster at Rugby—and graduated from Balliol College, Oxford. He began his career as a school inspector, traveling throughout much of England on the newly built railway system. When he was elected professor of poetry at Oxford in 1857, he was the first in the post to deliver his lectures in English rather than Latin. Walt Whitman famously dismissed him as a "literary dude," and while many have continued to disparage Arnold for his moralistic tone and literary judgments, his work also laid the foundation for important 20th century critics like T.S. Eliot, Cleanth Brooks, and Harold Bloom. His poetry has also had an enormous, though underappreciated, influence; Arnold is frequently acknowledged as being one of the first poets to display a truly Modern perspective in his work.

Perhaps Arnold's most famous piece of literary criticism is his essay "The Study of Poetry." In this work, Arnold is fundamentally concerned with poetry's "high destiny;" he believes that "mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us" as science and philosophy will eventually prove flimsy and unstable. Arnold's essay thus concerns itself with articulating a "high standard" and "strict judgment" in order to avoid the fallacy of valuing certain poems (and poets) too highly, and lays out a method for discerning only the best and therefore "classic" poets (as distinct from the description of writers of the ancient world). Arnold's classic poets include Milton, Shakespeare, Dante, and Homer; and the passages he presents from each are intended to show how their poetry is timeless and moving. For Arnold, feeling and sincerity are paramount, as is the seriousness of subject: "The superior character of truth and seriousness, in the matter and substance of the best poetry, is inseparable from the superiority of diction and movement marking its style and manner." An example of an indispensable poet who falls short of Arnold's "classic" designation is Geoffrey Chaucer, who, Arnold states, ultimately lacks the "high seriousness" of classic poets.

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

8.3 THE STUDY OF POETRY – SUMMARY :

Matthew Arnold wrote "The Study of Poetry" as an introduction to an 1880 anthology called *The English Poets*, and in it he refines his answers to what he considered the most important questions facing literary critics and readers: what function does poetry serve in modern society? What kind of poetry is best suited to serve these functions? What distinguishes truly excellent poetry from merely good poetry, and how can readers learn to

recognize classic poetry when they see it? Behind Arnold's questions and the answers, he gives to them, readers can discern the central principle that defines his views on culture and society: transcendent excellence does exist, poetry is where it can be found, and people should strive to honor it. In a nutshell, Arnold argues that poetry is a uniquely excellent art form and that, due to its virtues, it has a "high destiny" in human affairs; since this destiny touches on the highest aspirations of human beings, nothing but the highest standards will do, and readers must train themselves to uphold these standards. It is this task that Arnold offers to train readers to develop.

Arnold begins explaining this vital task—learning to discern the excellent qualities in poetry—by distinguishing the true estimate of a poem's worth (Arnold's argument assumes that a given poem has a single true worth that can be accurately discerned). The way to find this true estimate is from first identifying two *false* estimates. The true estimate is called the **real estimate**, and the false estimates are called the **historic estimate** and the **personal estimate**. According to Arnold, the real estimate is the only true determination of a poem's value; he also insists that the real estimate determines whether or not a poem belongs to the highest echelon of poetry, believing that the only reason to read poetry in the first place is to engage with the greatest works humanity can possibly offer.

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

Arnold says that when one reads poetry, he tends to estimate whether it is of the best form or not. It happens in three ways- the real estimate, the historic estimate, and the personal estimate. The real estimate is an unbiased viewpoint that takes into account both the historical context and the creative faculty to judge the worth of poetry. But the real estimate is often surpassed by the historic and personal estimate. The historic estimate places the historical context above the value of the art itself. The personal estimate on the other hand depends on the personal taste, the likes and dislikes of the reader which affects his judgment of poetry. Arnold says that both these estimates tend to be fallacious.

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

Thus, Arnold appeals to his readers to read classics with an open eye and not be blind to its faults. This will enable one to rate poetry with its proper value. Arnold here speaks about the idea of imitation. He says that whatever one reads or knows keeps on coming back to him. Thus, if a poet wants to reach the high standards of the classics he might consciously or unconsciously imitate them. This is also true for critics who tend to revert to the historic and personal estimate instead of an unbiased real estimate. The historic estimate affects the study of ancient poets while the personal estimate affects the study of modern or contemporary poets.

Arnold proposes the 'touchstone' method of analysing poetry in order to determine whether it is of a high standard or not. He borrows this method from Longinus who said in his idea of the sublime that if a certain example of sublimity can please anyone regardless of habits, tastes or age and can please at all times then it can be considered as a true example of the sublime. This method was first suggested in England by Addison who said that he would have a man read classical works which have stood the test of time and place and also those modern works which find high praise among contemporaries. If the man fails to find any delight in them then he would conclude that it is not the author who lacks quality but the reader who is incapable of discovering them. Arnold applies the touchstone method by taking examples from the time-tested classics and comparing them with other poetry to determine whether they possess the high poetic standard of the classics.He says that the poems need not resemble or possess any similarity to the touchstones. Once the critic has lodged the touchstones in his mind in order to detect the possession of high poetic quality,he will have the tact of finding it in other poetry that he compares to the touchstones. Arnold quotes Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton in an attempt to exemplify touchstone poetry. He says that the examples he has quoted are very dissimilar to one another but they all possess a high poetic quality. He says that a critic need not labour in vain trying to explain the greatness of poetry. He can do so by merely pointing at some specimens of the highest poetic quality. Arnold says that the high quality of poetry lies in its matter and its manner. He then goes by Aristotle's observation and says that the best form of poetry possesses high truth and seriousness that makes up its subject matter along with superior diction that marks its manner. However, Arnold mentions that the true force of this method lies in its application. He therefore urges critics to apply the touchstone method to analyse and rate poetry.

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

Next Arnold speaks about Chaucer who was much influenced by French and Italian

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

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

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

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

Then Arnold moves on to speak about Byron, Shelley and Wordsworth but does not pass any judgement on their poetry. Arnold believes that his estimate of these poets will be influenced by his personal passion as they are closer to his age than the classics and also because their writings are of a more personal nature. Finally, Arnold speaks about the self-preservation of the classics. Any amount of good literature will not be able to surpass the supremacy of the classics as they have already stood the test of time and people will continue to enjoy them for the ages to come. Arnold says that this is the result of the self-preserving nature of humanity. Human nature will remain the same throughout the ages and those parts of the classics dealing with the subject will remain relevant at all times thus preserving themselves from being lost in time.

Borrowing Longinus's concept of true sublimity to say that the time-tested classics act as the 'touchstone' to judge all other works of poetry. However, this does not warrant a need to have an exact replica of such content and quality in the works under the scanner. He named a few touchstones like Homer, Milton, Shakespeare, and Dante, etc. These particular exponents of poetry were able to enhance the experience of reading poetry through their matter and style. Arnold believes that the best poems have a kernel of truth in their matter and a sense of singular flair in their construction or manner. For critics, it is imperative to apply such a method judiciously and rigorously in order to develop the ability to find real

estimates of poetry.

The remaining essays, with the exception of the last two (on Tolstoy and Amiel), all deal with English poets: Milton, Gray, Keats, Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley. All contain memorable things, and all attempt a serious and responsible assessment of each poet's "criticism of life" and his value as food for the modern spirit. Arnold has been taken to task for some of his judgments and omissions: for his judgment that Dryden and Pope were not "genuine" poets because they composed in their wits instead of "in the soul"; for calling Gray a "minor classic" in an age of prose and spiritual bleakness; for paying too much attention to the man behind the poetry (Gray, Keats, Shelley); for making no mention of Donne; and above all for saying that poetry is "at bottoma criticism of life." On this last point it should be remembered that he added "under the conditionsfixed…by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty," and that if by "criticism" is understood (as Arnold meant) "evaluation," Arnold's dictum is seen to have wider significance than has been sometimes supposed.

Culture and Anarchy is in some ways Arnold's most central work. It is an expansion of his earlier attacks, in "The Function of Criticism" and "Heinrich Heine," upon the smugness, philistinism, and mammon worship of Victorian England. Culture, as "the study of perfection," is opposed to the prevalent "anarchy" of a new democracy without standards and without a sense of direction. By "turning a stream of fresh thought upon our stock notions and habits," culture seeks to make "reason and the will of God prevail."

Arnold's classification of English society into Barbarians (with their high spirit, serenity, and distinguished manners and their inaccessibility to ideas), Philistines (the stronghold of religious nonconformity, with plenty of energy and morality but insufficient "sweetness and light"), and Populace (still raw and blind) is well known. Arnold saw in the Philistines the key to the whole position; they were now the most influential section of society; their strength was the nation's strength, their crudeness its crudeness: Educate and humanize the Philistines, therefore. Arnold saw in the idea of "the State," and not in any one class of society, the true organ and repository of the nation's collective "best self." No summary can do justice to this extraordinary book; it can still be read with pure enjoyment, for it is written with an inward poise, a serene detachment, andan infusion of mental laughter, which make it a masterpiece of ridicule as well as a searching analysis of Victorian society. The same is true of its unduly neglected sequel, *Friendship's Garland* (1871).

8.4 MATTHEW ARNOLD AS A CRITIC :

It is said that when the poet in Arnold died, the critic was born; and it is true that from this time onward he turned almost entirely to prose. Some of the leading ideas and phrases were early put into currency in *Essays in Criticism* (First Series, 1865; Second Series, 1888) and *Culture and Anarchy*. The first essay in the 1865 volume, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," is an overture announcing briefly most of the themes he developed more fully in later work. It is at once evident that he ascribes to "criticism" a scope and importance hitherto undreamed of. The function of criticism, in his sense, is "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best thatis known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas." It is infact a spirit that he is trying to foster, the spirit of an

awakened and informed intelligence playing upon not "literature" merely but theology, history, art, science, sociology, and politics, and in every sphere seeking "to see the object as in itself it really is."

In this critical effort, thought Arnold, England lagged behind France and Germany, and the English accordingly remained in a backwater of provinciality and complacency. Even the great Romantic poets, with all their creative energy, suffered from the want of it. The English literary critic must know literatures other than his own and be in touch with European standards. This last line of thought Arnold develops in the second essay, "The Literary Influence of Academies," in which he dwells upon "the note of provinciality" in English literature, caused by remoteness from a "centre" of correct knowledge and correct taste. To realize how much Arnold widened the horizons of criticism requires only a glance at the titles of some of the other essays in *Essays in Criticism* (1865): "Maurice de Guérin," "Eugenie de Guerin," "Heinrich Heine," "Joubert," "Spinoza," "Marcus Aurelius"; in all these, as increasingly in his later books, he is "applying modern ideas to life" as well as to letters and "bringing all things under the point of view of the 19th century."

The first essay in the 1888 volume, *"The Study of Poetry,"* was originally published as the general introduction to T.H. Ward's anthology, *The English Poets* (1880). It contains many of the ideas for which Arnold is best remembered. In an age of crumbling creeds, poetry will have to replace religion. More and more, we will "turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us." Therefore we must know how to distinguish the best poetry from the inferior, the genuine from the counterfeit; and to do this we must steep ourselves in the work of the acknowledged masters, using as "touchstones" passages exemplifying their "high seriousness," and their superiority of diction and movement.

Lastly Arnold turned to religion, the constant preoccupation and true centre of his whole life, andwrote *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), *Literature and Dogma* (1873), *God and the Bible* (1875), and *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877). In these books, Arnold really founded Anglican "modernism." Like all religious liberals, he came under fire from two sides: from the orthodox, who accused him of infidelity, of turning God into a "stream of tendency" and of substituting vague emotion for definite belief; and from the infidels, for clinging to the church and retaining certain Christian beliefs of which he had undermined the foundations. Arnold considered his religious writings to be constructive and conservative. Those who accused him of destructiveness did not realize how far historical and scientific criticism had already riddled the old foundations; and those who accused him of timidity failed to see that he regarded religion as the highest form of culture, the one indispensable without which all secular education is in vain. His attitude is best summed up in his own words (from the preface to *God and the Bible*): "At thepresent moment two things about the Christian religion must surely be clear to anybody with eyesin his head. One is, that men cannot do without it; the other, that they cannot do with it as it is." Convinced that much in popular religion was "touched with the finger of death" and convinced no less of the hopelessness of man without religion, he sought to find for religion a basis of "scientific fact" that even the positive modern spirit must accept. A reading of Arnold's *Note Books* will convince any reader of the depth of Arnold's spirituality and of the degree to which, in his

"buriedlife," he disciplined himself in constant devotion and self-forgetfulness.

Arnold died suddenly, of heart failure, in the spring of 1888, at Liverpool and was buried at Laleham, with the three sons whose early loss had shadowed his life. At the root of Arnold's argument is his desire to illuminate and preserve the poets he believes to be the touchstones of literature, and to ask questions about the moral value of poetry that does not champion truth, beauty, valor, and clarity. Arnold's belief that poetry should both uplift and console drive the essay's logic and its conclusions.

Finally, Arnold speaks about the self-preservation of the classics. Any amount of good literature will not be able to surpass the supremacy of the classics as they have already stood the test of time and people will continue to enjoy them for the ages to come. Arnold says that this is the result of the self-preserving nature of humanity. Human nature will remain the same throughout the ages and those parts of the classics dealing with the subject will remain relevant at all times thus preserving themselves from being lost in time.

8.5 KEY WORDS :

1. **Poem :**

   A piece of writing in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensityby particular attention to diction (sometimes involving rhyme), rhythm, and imagery.

2. **Poetry :**

   Literary work in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by the use of distinctive style and rhythm; poems collectively or as a genre of literature.

3. **Touchstone Method:**

   Arnold's touchstone method is a comparative method of criticism. According to this method, in order to judge a poet's work properly, a critic should compareit to passages taken from works of great masters of poetry, and that these passages shouldbe applied as touchstones to other poetry.

4. **Anarchy :**

   A state of disorder due to absence or non-recognition of authority or other controlling systems.

5. **Critic :**

   A person who expresses an unfavorable opinion of something.

6. **Criticism :**

   The analysis and judgement of the merits and faults of a literary or artistic work. "Alternative methods of criticism supported by well-developed literary theories".

8.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS :

1. Write an essay on Matthew Arnold's The study of Poetry?
2. Write a note on Touchstone method?
3. Write a brief note on Arnold's religious writings?
4. Write an essay on "Arnold as a critic"?

8.7 SUGGESTED READINGS :

1. Arnold, Mathew. *"The Study of Poetry"* in The Norton Anthology of English *Literature.* E.d. Abrams M.H et al. Seventh Edition, Volume 2. New York: Norton and Company Ltd.,2000.
2. Egudu, R.N. *The Study of Poetry*. Ibadan: University Press Ltd., 1979
3. Abram, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981.

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