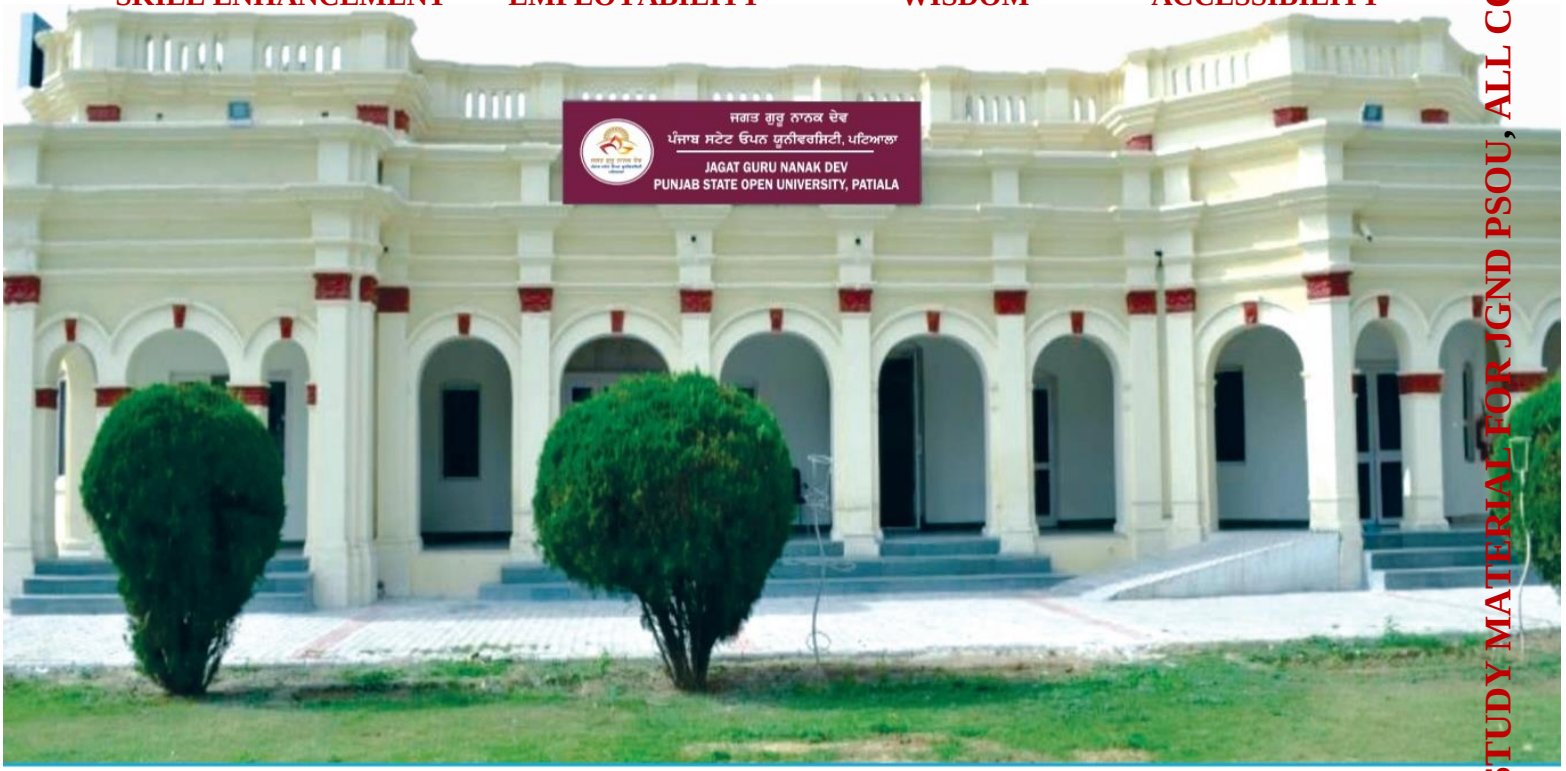
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JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV
PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

(Established by Act No. 19 of 2019 of the Legislature of State of Punjab)

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BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)
Semester III
Course : Reading Poetry
Course Code : BAB32302T

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PREFACE

Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala, established in December 2019 by Act 19 of the Legislature of State of Punjab, is the first and only Open University of the State, entrusted with the responsibility of making higher education accessible to all especially to those sections of society who do not have the means, time or opportunity to pursue regular education.

In keeping with the nature of an Open University, this University provides a flexible education system to suit every need. The time given to complete a programme is double the duration of a regular mode programme. Well-designed study material has been prepared in consultation with experts in their respective fields.

The University offers programmes which have been designed to provide relevant, skill-based and employability-enhancing education. The study material provided in this booklet is self-instructional, with self-assessment exercises, and recommendations for further readings. The syllabus has been divided in sections, and provided as units for simplification.

The Learner Support Centres/Study Centres are located in the Government and Government aided colleges of Punjab, to enable students to make use of reading facilities, and for curriculum-based counselling and practicals. We, at the University, welcome you to be a part of this institution of knowledge.

Prof. G. S. Batra,

Dean Academic Affairs

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)
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Section A

Unit 1: Understanding Poetry: Types of Poetry: Lyric, Ode, Sonnet, Elegy, Ballad, Epic, Mock Epic, Dramatic Monologue, Haiku, Confessional Poetry, conceit, doggerel, hymn.

Unit 2: Terms pertaining to Poetry

- **Stanza**: Couplet, tercet, terza rima, ottava rima, quatrain, spensarian stanza, rime royal.
- **Meter:** Heroic Couplet, Free Verse and Blank Verse.
- **Poetic devices:** alliteration, assonance, simile, metaphor, image, symbol, rhyme, Imagery, hyperbole, allusion.

The poems given below are prescribed from the text book *Selected College Poems*. Edited by Ambika Sengupta. Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2012.

Unit 3:

(i) All the World's a Stage
(ii) Kubla Khan
(iii) Ode to the West Wind

Unit 4:

(iv) La Belle Dame Sans Merci
(v) Ulysses
(vi) My Last Duchess

Unit 5:

(vii) Say not the Struggle not Availeth
(viii) A Prayer for My Daughter
(ix) The Road not Taken
(x) Journey of the Magi

Section B

Unit 6: Insight into great poetic movements

- Metaphysical poetry
- Romantic poets
- Pre-Raphaelite Poets

Unit 7: Indian English Poets

- **Rabindranath Tagore:** I Cast My Net into the Sea, When I Go Alone at Night
- **Nissim Ezekiel:** Night of the Scorpion, Good Bye party for Miss Pushpa T.S

Unit 8: Women Poets

- **Sarojini Naidu:** Cradle Song
- **Annie Walker:** Women's Rights
- **Maya Angelou.:** I Know why the Caged Birds Sing

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SECTION A

UNIT NO.	UNIT NAME
UNIT 1	UNDERSTANDING POETRY
UNIT 2	TERMS PERTAINING TO POETRY
UNIT 3	POEMS - I
UNIT 4	POEMS - II
UNIT 5	POEMS - III

SECTION B

UNIT NO.	UNIT NAME
UNIT 6	INSIGHT INTO GREAT POETIC MOVEMENTS
UNIT 7	INDIAN ENGLISH POETS
UNIT 8	WOMAN POETS

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UNIT 1: APPRECIATING POETRY

STRUCTURE

1.0 Objectives

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Types of Poetry:

- **1.2.1 Lyric**
- **1.2.2 Ode**
- **1.2.3 Sonnet**
  - **a. Petrarchan Sonnet**
  - **b. Shakespearan Sonnet**
  - **c. Spenserian Sonnet**
- **1.2.4 Elegy**
- **1.2.5 Ballad**
- **1.2.6 Epic**
- **1.2.7 Mock Epic**
- **1.2.8 Epithalmion**

1.3 Check your progress – I

1.4 Types of Poetry (contd.)

- **1.4.1 Dramatic Monologue**
- **1.4.2 Haiku**
- **1.4.3 Confessional poetry**
- **1.4.4 Conceit**
- **1.4.5 Doggerel**
- **1.4.6 Hymn**
- **1.4.7 Villanelle**
- **1.4.8 Concrete Poetry**
- **1.4.9 Free Verse**

1.5 Check your progress – II

1.6 Summing Up

1.7: Suggested Readings

1.8: Questions for Practice

1.8.1: Long Answer Questions

1.8.2: Short Answer questions

1.0 OBJECTIVE:

The principal objective of this course is to make students aware of the various types of poems available in the English literature. A student of literature should be able to distinguish immediately the type of poem that is being read. The characteristic feature of each type is also given here for ready reference. This will help in creating a deeper understanding of poetry.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Poetry has always been regarded as the most sensitive, intimate and exalted form of expression in literature. The inherent desire of human beings to express themselves has manifested itself in the creation of art and literature, and poetry is perhaps the oldest form of literature. Over the years, writing poetry has undergone many changes. Poets have experimented with the forms, developing their own favourite forms for expression. Today, many different types of poems exist while some others have been abandoned and are now not in use, and writers are still experimenting with the form, rebelling against traditional forms and their constraints. This course will help students in developing an appreciation of the various types of poems, and also to identify them at first glance. The course will also facilitate in understanding why a particular form is preferred by a given poet over another.

1.2 TYPES OF POETRY

1.2.1 Lyric:

The word can be said to be derived from the word 'Lyre', a musical instrument. In Greek poetry, a lyric was simply a poem that was meant to be sung to the accompaniment of a lyre. In general, the words of a song are referred to as the 'lyrics' but a lyric denotes a poem of limited length which expresses the thoughts and feelings of a single speaker. Although a lyric need not have any definite structure, many poets ascribe to certain poetic structures. A lyric may be categorized on the basis and nature of the speaker. In Dramatic Lyrics, for instance, the speaker is represented as addressing another person in a particular, defined situation. John Donne's 'Canonization', and William Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' are examples of Dramatic Lyrics. It is to be noted here that even though a poet may use the first person narrative, the 'I' in the poem need not be the poet of the lyric. But in certain cases, where the lyric refers to some special circumstances of the poet, well known to the public, as in John Milton's 'When I Consider How My Light is Spent', the lyric becomes intensely personal. However, the speaker in the lyric can also refer to the public in general conveying a public mood or uttered on some ceremonial occasion as in Walt Whitman's ode on the death of Abraham Lincoln 'O Captain, My Captain'. In still some other cases, the lyric may be written expressly to delineate a sustained process of thought and observation, and resolution as in Mathew Arnold's 'Dover

Beach'. The term is also extended to include expressions of a complex development of emotional thoughts as in the elegy or the ode. The process of observation, thought and memory is organized in many different ways. In love lyrics, for instance, the writer may use the form only to express an enamoured state of mind while retaining an organized structure and expression. 'How Do I Love Thee' by Elizabeth Barrett Browning is an example of a love lyric which expresses the writer's feelings of love all the time retaining the organization of thought. Ben Johnson's 'Drink to me Only with Thine Eyes' uses the form to forward an elaborate compliment. In the same way, Shakespeare's first seventeen sonnets, addressed to a male figure, are lyrics used as an argument to take advantage of fleeting youth. On the other hand, John Milton's 'L'Allegro' is written expressly to describe and praise a particular set of values and beliefs.

1.2.2 Ode:

An Ode is a lyric poem that is thus defined on the basis of its length, subject and style. Typically, a poem of some considerable length, serious in subject and elevated in style can be called an Ode. The form is usually traced back to the Greek poet Pindar, and was a choral song sung at an important celebratory occasion like victory in the Olympic Games. Typically, an ode was divided into three stanzas sung according to the movement of the chorus. This is how a **Pindaric ode** works. They consisted of the **strophe** – moving in rhythm to the left, the **antistrophe** – the movement to the right, and the **epode** – standing still. The Pindaric or the regular Ode had all the strophes and antistrophes in one stanza while the epodes were all contained in another stanza. Thomas Gray's 'The Progress of Poesy' is a perfect example of this particular arrangement. Typically, the Pindaric Odes are written to serve the purpose of glorifying a virtue or to praise someone. That is the reason why they are also called 'Encomiastic' in nature. Wordsworth's 'Ode to Duty', for instance, is a celebration of duty.

On the other hand, if in an ode the stanzas are irregular in rhyme scheme and number of lines it is called a 'Cowleyan' (after Abraham Cowley) or an 'irregular' ode. Apart from being celebratory in nature, an ode can also be personal expressions of the poet. John Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale' or Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind' are typical examples of odes where the poem is an expression of the poet's private and emotive meditations on a given subject or theme. Another characteristic feature of this type of ode is that it is inspired by an aspect of the outer scene and turns on the attempt to solve either a personal emotional problem or one that is concerned with a general human condition. In **Horation Odes** the passion and boldness of formal language of the Pindaric Ode is replaced by calm and meditative tones of expression and are colloquial in nature. They were modeled on the style, form, and tone of the odes of the Roman Horace. These are also usually 'homostrophic' which means written in a single repeated stanza form, and are also shorter in length than the Pindaric Odes. John Keats' 'Ode to Autumn' is an example of an Horation ode.

1.2.3 Sonnet: A poem containing fourteen lines, usually iambic pentameter and a complicated rhyme scheme is called a Sonnet. Sonnets can basically be divided into three broad categories:

a. **Petrarchan Sonnet**: Named after the Italian poet Petrarch, this sonnet typically has two distinct parts: octave (eight verses) following the rhyming scheme *abbaabba,* followed by a sestet (six verses) rhyming *cdecde*or some variant of this scheme. Petrarchan sonnet was quite popular with English poets like Wordsworth, Christina Rossetti, etc. Wordsworth's 'The World is Too Much with Us' is an example of a Petrarchan Sonnet. The octave is traditionally rhymed while the sestet follows the scheme *cdcdcd.*

b. **Shakespearan Sonnet**: Although Shakespeare did not create this form as the name suggests, it us thus named in honour of its great practitioner. This sonnet typicalls falls into three quartrains (four verses) with a concluding couplet (two lines), and follows the rhyming scheme of *ababcdcdefef gg.* Refer to his 'That Time of Year…' (sonnet no. 37).

c. **Spenserian Sonnet**: Named after Edmund Spenser, this form of sonnet varies only in the rhyming scheme that it follows which is continuing in nature: *ababbcbccdcdee.*

Sonnets were traditionally written to express love or sexual love but things changed with the coming of John Donne. He used sonnets to explore and express religious feelings and themes. His 'Holy sonnets' are an example of religious sonnets. In the latter part of the Seventeenth century John Milton also used sonnets to express more serious and lofty emotions. The popularity of sonnets waned a little in the Neoclassic Period but regained its popularity and remains a favoured form of poetry even today. In the Nineteenth century eminent poets like William Wordsworth, John Keats, Christina Rossetti, and in the Twentieth century W.B. Yeats, W.H. Auden, and Robert Frost wrote many sonnets. The characteristic feature of these sonnets was that the length of the stanza was just long enough to explore and develop a complex emotion but short enough to pose an artistic challenge to the poet.

A Sonnet sequence or Sonnet cycle refers to a series of sonnets by a single author which are linked together by exploring a common linking theme. These are usually love poems which are an expression of the feelings of the writer, the lover in these poems, and these sonnets reflect the development of love and relationship between the two persons. Shakespeare's sonnets are an example of this sequence which constitutes a kind of development of plot. Wordsworth's 'The River Duddon' and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's 'Sonnets from the Portuguese' are further examples of sonnet sequences

1.2.4 Elegy:

The word 'Elegy' is derived from the Greek word 'elegia' which means a lament. In Greek and Roman literature, any poem using the elegiac couplet on tragic subject like loss and change can be called an elegy. Themes of war and death and love often feature in elegies. Since the Sixteenth Century, elegies have been personal mournings lamenting the loss by death of an individual or of all men. W.H. Auden's 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats' and Thomas Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' respectively are examples of the personal and general elegies. A significant departure from this form and theme is the Pastoral Elegy wherein the poet and his subjects are referred to as shepherds and goatherds and the setting is the Classical pastoral world.

Mythical characters like nymphs and other inhabitants of this world join in mourning but the elegy typically ends on a happy or joyful note. John Milton's 'Lycidas' and P.B. Shelley's 'Adonais' are examples of the Pastoral Elegy.

But throughout the different ages, elegies have been written to express feelings of sadness brought about by any change or loss. In the Old English, poems like 'The Wanderer' and 'The Seafarer', laments about the transience of all things worldly are called elegies. John Donne's elegies are essentially love poems but they can also be called elegies as they are laments about change and loss in love. It was only in the Seventeenth century that the term came to be expressly used for poems which dealt with the sustained and formal lament about the death of a close person. These poems usually ended in the poet offering consolation to the troubled heart. Alfred Lord Tennyson's 'In Memoriam', and W.H. Auden's 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats' are prime examples of such personal elegies lamenting the deaths of Arthur Hallam and Yeats respectively.

'The Dirge' is also a lament on the lines of an elegy but differs from it in that a dirge is short and less formal than an elegy. A dirge is also usually meant to be sung. Shakespeare's 'Full fathom five thy father lies' from 'The Tempest' is a dirge. Nowadays, the term 'Threnody' is used in place of dirge, while 'Monody' is used to denote a dirge which is the utterance of a single person. Mathew Arnold's 'Thyrsis' is described as a monody by the poet as is John Milton's 'Lycidas'.

1.2.5 Ballad:

A ballad traditionally is a short poem, telling a story, meant to be sung since these are transmitted orally, they are narrative species of folk songs which circulated among the semi literate or illiterate audience. Because of this limitation of audience, ballads utilize simple language, tell the story briefly, incorporating action into the narrative. The folk ballad which originated and became popular in England was composed anonymously and was handed down to generations orally. This of course changed the narrative from person to person. The Literary ballad, on the other hand, is consciously written by the poet imitating the tropes of the folk ballad to narrate an episode of bravery, mystery etc. John Keats' 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and Oscar Wilde's 'Ballad of Reading Gaol' are prime examples of the literary ballad.

1.2.6 Epic:

An Epic poem is an extended narrative poem on a serious or exalted theme. It is narrated in a formal style and at its centre is a heroic figure whose actions determine the outcome or fate of a nation. There is a difference in the form and style of Traditional Epic and the Literary Epic. The former were written versions of the oral narratives about a tribal hero during difficult times like wars etc. Homer's 'The Iliad' and 'The Odyssey' are examples of the traditional epic poems. In the former, at the centre of the epic poem is the Greek warrior Achilles who was infallible but for his vulnerable heel. Literary Epics, on the other hand, are works by literary poets, and were written in deliberate imitation of the traditional epics. The prime example of this imitation is John Milton's 'Paradise Lost' which is inspired by Virgil's 'Aenieid'.

1.2.7 Mock Epic:

To understand the meaning of mock epic, it is also necessary to understand the term 'Burlesque', of which mock epic is a form. Burlesque is a term used to ridicule or make fun of attitudes, style or content by handling a serious or elevated subject in a trivial manner or a low subject with mock dignity. It is also used to denote various types of satirical imitations. But burlesque is distinct from parody which is its subgenre and is used for a work written specifically for the purpose of ridiculing a serious literary work or the typical style of a writer imitating the elevated style for an inappropriate or trivial subject. The mock epic treats a simple, trivial subject making it ridiculous by using elaborate and dignified devices used in the epic. Perhaps the best known mock epic is Alexander Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock' wherein the clash between two aristocratic families of the era, arising due to the cutting of a lock of hair of a lady by her fiancée, is described in lofty style and the whole episode is treated with ridiculous gravity and importance. It is important to note here that the style employed in the mock epic is called the 'mock heroic' used in works that do not ridicule the epic form. But the intent is similar to that in the mock epic i.e. to satirize the subject(s) by lending them with fake dignity. Oscar Wilde's 'The Importance of Being Earnest' is a popular example of this form.

1.2.8 Epithalmion:

The word is derived from the Greek word 'Epithalmium' which means 'at the bridal chamber'. Thus epithalmions are lyrics written to celebrate marriage and to be sung outside the chamber of a newly married couple. The classic Greek poets like Sappho and Theorcritus, and the Roman poets Ovid and Catullus were famous practitioners of the form. The form continued to be popular among the Neo-Latin poets of the Renaissance period whose model was followed by European writers. In the English language, Sir Philip Sydney wrote the first epithalmion. But it was Edmund Spenser who composed his great lyric in celebration of his own marriage who immortalized it. He wrote the lyric as a wedding gift to his bride. In this poem he describes the hours of his wedding day and night with ease and dignity. Later poets like John Donne, Ben Johnson and others also wrote such marriage songs which were serious or vulgar as was the writer's intention or temperament.

1.3: CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – I

1. What is the word 'Lyric' derived from?
2. What is a Dramatic lyric?
3. What is an Ode? What are its three stanzas called?
4. How are Cowleyan and Horation odes different from Pindaric ode?
5. What is the characteristic feature of a sonnet? Name the three types of sonnets in practice.
6. What is a sonnet sequence?
7. What is a Pindaric ode? What are its stanzas called?
8. How is a Cowleyan ode different from Horation ode?
9. What is an Elegy? What are Personal and general odes?
10. What is a Pastoral elegy?
11. How is an ode different from a dirge?

12. What do you know about Ballads? What are Literary ballads?
13. Who features at the centre of an Epic? What are Mock epics?
14. What is the meaning of the word 'Epithalmium'?
15. Match the following:

i.	A poem sung to a musical instrument	a. Sonnet
ii.	A poem of fourteen lines	b. Ballad
iii.	A poem written in praise of something	c. Elegy
iv.	A poem containing thrilling elements	d. Lyric
v.	A poem written as a lament	e. Ode

1.4 TYPES OF POETRY (CONTD.)

1.4.1 Dramatic Monologue:

A monologue is a lengthy speech delivered by a single person. A monologue is distinct from a soliloquy where the speaker is supposed to be alone on the stage and the device is used by dramatist to convey to the audience the innermost and true feelings of the character. Hamlet's soliloquy on action and inaction, 'To be or not to be', is perhaps the best known example of this form. Where it differs from the dramatic monologue is in the revelation that it makes at the end of the poem. A Dramatic Monologue typically has the following characteristics:

The character, ostensibly not the poet, is alone in the situation; the person addresses his audience whose reactions and responses are duly recorded by the narrator and shared with the audience through him/her; there is an unexpected revelation at the end of the poem which reveals some hitherto unknown aspect of the narrator's character and nature which serves the purpose of heightening interest in the reader's mind through suspense and shock. The dramatic monologue also differs from the soliloquy as in the latter the time and place are already established whereas in the former these indices of setting are established during the discourse itself. Robert Browning is the most famous practitioner of this form. His poems 'My Last Duchess' and 'Prophyria's Lover' are example of dramatic monologue. Although Browning is the most noted poet for this particular form, later poets like T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats used this form in 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' and 'Crazy Jane' respectively. A Dramatic Monologue is different from a **Dramatic Lyrics** as practiced by John Donne. In the dramatic lyric the import shifts from the revelation that the character makes to the elaborate argument offered to the reader for feeling the particular way that he/she is feeling. Donne's 'The Flea' is an example of the dramatic lyric as the poem focuses more on the narrator/poet's argument about seeing the flea as the bed of unison of the lovers as it has sucked blood from both.

1.4.2 Haiku:

A haiku is a Japanese form of poetry which is usually unrhymed, consisting of seventeen *jion* (Japanese symbol-sounds). The characteristic feature of a haiku is that it captures the essence of a moment, keenly perceived and felt and establishes a link between nature and human nature. It should be noted here that although traditionally a haiku has no fixed form, the western practitioners of the form, especially Americans, used three lines of five, seven, and five syllables. On the other hand, the English variation of the form consists of

seventeen syllables. This may vary as in having fewer syllables although hardly ever more. The following haiku by the renowned poet, Taniguchi Buson, is an illustration of the Japanese form of haiku although it should be noted that it loses its standard number of syllables in the translation even as it conveys the essence of a haiku:

The short night is through:
on the hairy caterpillar,
little beads of dew.

Ezra Pound and others were deeply influenced and fascinated by the brevity and intensity of the form and produced many poems in this form. His 'In a Station of the Metro' is one such example of English haiku:

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

The word 'haiku' can be said to be derived from the word 'Hokku' which is a loose word used to denote more than just one form of verse which also included haiku. Even as the form of haiku continues to prosper and is practiced throughout the world, *Hokku* has become obsolete in both Japan and America.

1.4.3 Confessional Poetry:

As the word suggests, this form of poetry is deeply and directly concerned with the mental and physical experiences of the poet's own life. This form of poetry was given impetus by the American poet Robert Lowell with his *Life Studies*. It is interesting to note how Confessional poetry came to be written in the first place. It was out of rebellion by the poets against the demands for impersonal poetry by poets like T.S. Eliot and the New *Critics.* Confessional Poetry is not to be confused with the genre of *Spiritual Autobiographies*, as in Augustine's 'Confessions' nor with the personal poems of the Romantic Period which delved in the representation of the poet's own circumstances, experiences, and feelings such as Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' or Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'Dejection: An Ode'. In these poems, the poets offer startling revelations about themselves, their emotions, suicidal tendencies, experiments with drugs, and sometimes even their sexual experiences and frustrations. In contrast the Confessional poems were written by poets like Robert Lowell, Allen Ginsberg, Sylvia Plath, and other American poets. As an extension of the same is *Confessional Literature* which is a type of autobiography involving the revelation by an author of events or feelings that are usually kept concealed from society. Jean Jacques Rousseau's 'Confessions' and Thomas De Quincey's 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater' deal expressly with a particular aspect of the writer's life.

1.4.4 Conceit:

The word 'conceit' is derived from the Italian word 'Concetto' which in turn means 'conception'. It is the use of a fanciful image employed by the poet especially a startling comparison between two very disparate objects which are not usually compared. The

Italian poet Petrarch made extensive use of such astonishing images in his poems and came to be called ‘Petrarchan conceits’. These similes and images were mocked by poets like Shakespeare who ridiculed them in his sonnets. The following is an example of the same where the images are reverted by the poet:

My Mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun
coral is far more red than her lips…

Metaphysical Conceits were practiced by Metaphysical poets like John Donne in the Seventeenth century. These again consisted of elaborate, extended, or startling analogies between obviously dissimilar objects. Donne’s ‘The Flea’ is an example of such conceits. In the poem the poet, having noted a flea which has sucked blood from both himself and his mistress, stops her from killing it by exclaiming that it is their marriage bed:

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, yea more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is.

1.4.5 Doggerel:

It is a term applied to rough and crudely written verse usually humourous in nature. Another characteristic feature of doggerel is that the verses are regular in meter and conventional in sentiment. The term probably has its first use by Geoffrey Chaucer’s ‘rym doggerel’ in ‘The Tale of Sir Thopas’, a burlesque of a medieval romance in his classic ‘The Canterbury Tales’. A doggerel might result from the ineptitude on the part of the writer but has also been deliberately used by poets for satiric or comic purposes. The poet John Skeleton wrote short lines of two or three stresses which were intentionally rough and varying in meter which came to be called ‘Skeltonics’. His verses from ‘Colin Clout’ are an example of doggerel:

On rainy days alone I dine,
Upon a chick, and pint of vine.
On rainy days, I dine alone
And pick my chicken to the bone:
But this my servants much enrages,
No scraps remain to save board-wages.

The renowned writer, Samuel Butler, also wrote doggerel only on his part the writing was intentional. For his particular brand of doggerel, known as 'Hudibrastic verse' he used tumbling, broken and comically grotesque octosyllabic couplet with imperfect rhymes. These are thus named for he used them in his poem 'Hudibras'. The following is an example, and extract, from the same poem:

Besides, he was a shrewd philosopher,
And had read every text and gloss over;
Whate'er the crabbed'st author hath,
He understood b'imlicit faith.

1.4.6 Hymn:

The term hymn is derived from the Greek word 'Hymnos', which were songs written specifically in praise of God but were also sung in praise of heroes and warriors, extolling their virtues, and, in some cases, in praise of some abstract concept. But today the usage is limited mostly to verses sung in praise of God, which celebrate God or express religious feelings, and are meant to be sung as a part of a religious service. Traditionally, the Christian Churches followed classical instances and introduced the singing of hymns as part of the religious ritual. These could also be derived from the Old Testament in the form of texts or paraphrases of the Old Testament Psalms, and sometimes were written to be sung in praise of God by the churchly authors of the time. This practice of writing religious lyrics set to tunes continued to flourish in the Middle Ages and the Protestant Reformation. The religious poet Martin Luther composed the lyric and the tune for many a hymn including 'A Mighty Fortress is Our God' which continues to be sung even today by many Christian denominations. Religious hymns continued to be written during the Renaissance and some of these were metrical version of psalms while others were original compositions. This practice received more impetus with the composition of 'Literary Hymns' on subjects other than religious while some of them were centred on secular or pagan themes. This tradition was kept alive by neo-Latin poets. The only difference was that now the hymns were meant to be read rather than sung, an activity which also involved quiet contemplation. The hymns composed by Edmund Spenser 'Fowre Hymns' are an example of literary hymns. Of the four hymns included here, the first two deal with and celebrate earthly love and beauty while the second two celebrate Christian love. This later practice continued to thrive in the nineteenth century and was taken up by many Romantic poets. John Keats' 'Hymn to Apollo' and Shelley's 'Hymn of Apollo' and 'Hymn of Pan' are fine examples of literary hymns written on secular subjects. The characteristic feature of the literary hymns was that they were long and elaborate compositions which resembled the ode, another form of praise.

1.4.7 Villanelle:

The term is derived from the word 'villa' i.e. a farm or a country house and thus its subject matter was usually pastoral in nature. It is one of the French fixed forms of poetry and is used for light verse. Technically a Villanelle is of 19 lines with five stanzas of tercets (three lines) followed by a quartrain (four lines). The opening line is repeated at the end of second and fourth tercets while the final line of the first tercet concludes the third and fifth. The two refrain lines are repeated at the end of the quartrain. W.E. Henley's 'Villanelle' is a good example of this form.

1.4.8 Concrete Poetry:

The original term used for concrete poetry was the latin phrase *Carmen figuratum* which literally means a shaped poem. This form of poetry is designed by the poet to take a particular shape on the page when written. The words and spacing are manipulated to emphasize a theme or some important element in the text. In some cases these can take the literal shape of the subject. In many cases such poems consist of single letters, words, or phrases in a variety of colours or styles, the purpose of which is to challenge the reader to perceive the shape and theme of the poem.George Herbert's

'The Altar' is an example of Concrete poetry as the words take on the shape of a church altar.

1.4.9 Free Verse:

As the name suggests, a free verse is free from any rules regarding rhyming or form. The writer is free to do whatever he/she wishes to in order to achieve the desired effect. It is often used in contemporary poetry.

1.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - II

1. What are the features of a Dramatic monologue? How is it different from a Dramatic Lyric?

2 In the American form of the 'Haiku' how many syllables are used in each line?

3 What are Confessional poetry and Confessional literature?

4 What are Petrarchan and Metaphysical conceits?

5 What is the characteristic feature of a Hudibrastic verse?

6 What are Literary hymns?

7 What are Villanelles usually composed for?

8 What do you know about Concrete poems?

9 Why are Free verses preferred by contemporary poets?

1.6: SUMMING UP

The main aim of this unit was to familiarize students with different types of poetry, which should heighten not only the understanding of poetry in all its diversity but should also bring about a deeper understanding of poems. The identification of different poems on the basis of meter, rhyming scheme, division of lines, intention etc adds to the beauty of poems. It is hoped that students, after going through the above definitions, will find it easy to differentiate between different types of poems at a glance.

1.7: SUGGESTED READINGS:

a) **Literary Terms by Karl Beckson**
b) **A Handbook of Literary terms by M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham**
c) **Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms by Chris Baldick**

1.8: QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE:

1.8.1: Long Answer Questions

1. What are the different types of sonnets? How do they differ from one another?
2. How would you define an Elegy? How is it different from a Dirge? What are the characteristic features of a Pastoral Elegy?
3. What is the definition of a Lyric? What are its characteristics?
4. What is the difference between an epic and a Mock Epic?
5. Show your familiarity with Odes.

1.8.2: Short Answer Questions

1. What are the different stanzas of an ode called?
2. What is a Dramatic Lyric?
3. What are the various elements that can be found in a Ballad?

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)
Semester III
Course Code:BAB32302T
Reading Poetry

UNIT 2: TERMS PERTAINING TO POETRY

STRUCTURE

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2. Terms Pertaining to Poetry:

2.2.1 Stanza

- **a. Couplet**
- **b. Tercet**
- **c. Terza rima**
- **d. Ottava rima**
- **e. Quartrain**
- **f. Spenserian stanza**
- **g. Rime royal**

2.2.2 Meter

- **a. Quantitative**
- **b. Syllabic**
- **c. Accentual**
- **d. Accentual syllabic**

2.3 Check Your Progress – I

2.4 Literary devices

- **2.4.1 Alliteration**
- **2.4.2 Simile**
- **2.4.3 Metaphor**
- **2.4.4 Imagery**
- **2.4.5 Symbol**
- **2.4.6 Rhyme**
  - **a. Internal rhyme**
  - **b. End rhyme**
  - **c. Masculine rhyme**

d. Feminine rhyme

2.4.7 Hyperbole

2.4.8 Allusion

2.5 Check your Progress – II

2.6 Summing up

2.7 Suggested readings

2.8 Questions for practice

2.8.1 Long answer questions

2.8.2 Short answer questions

2.0 OBJECTIVES:

The principal aim of this unit is to familiarize students with the various poetic devices and terms used in poetry. The terms pertaining to poetry give an idea of how poems are divided into different sections, and what they are called. The literary devices will help in understanding how such devices are made use of by different poets in order to create some special desired effect.

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

A deep knowledge of how poems are divided into different sections by lines or stanzas, and how these enhance the beauty of the poem is desirable for all students of literature. Literary devices have always been an integral part of poetry. All poets make use of such devices to achieve certain effects of imagery or sound, bringing depth and complexity to their works, which heighten the appreciation of the creativity of the poet. Students of literature derive due pleasure from the identification of the literary devices made use of by poets and how these affect or improve the overall reading of the work.

2.2.1 Stanza:

It is a group of lines which constitutes a division of a poem. The pattern of a stanza is determined by the number of lines, the number of feet per line, the meter, and the rhyme scheme. Usually, once the stanza pattern is established in the poem it is followed throughout the poem but variations of this have been used by poets for artistic effect. To understand the various stanza forms it is desirable to know the following terms:

a. **Couplet**: A couplet is the term used for two successive lines of verse, usually rhymed and with the same meter. The following stanza, humourous in nature, by an anonymous writer consists of a pair of couplets:

Lizzie Borden with an axe,
Hit her father forty whacks,
When she saw what she had done,
She hit her mother forty-one.

a. Tercet: In verse, a tercet is a set of three lines which constitutes a unit. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with triplet where it designates a three-line stanza on a singly rhyme. The term may also be used in Petrarchan sonnets where it refers to half of the sestet and to the Terzarima (see below) stanza. The following, Thomas Carew's 'Inscription on the Tomb of the Lady Mary Wentworth', is an example of a tercet:

And here the precious dust is laid:
Whose purely-tempered clay was made
So fine, that it the guest betrayed.

Else the soul grew so fast within
It broke the outward shell of sin,
And so was hatched a cherubin.

b. Terzarima: It is a series of interlocking tercets in which the second line of each tercet rhymes with the first and third lines of the succeeding one, and follows the rhyming scheme: aba, bcb, cdc, and so on. The form originated in Italy and was used by Dante in 'The Divine Comedy' as well as by Petrarch and Boccaccio. Into English it was first introduced by Sir Thomas Wyatt in the sixteenth century and in spite of being used by popular and important poets like Shelley, Browning and Auden it did not really become popular. Shelley's 'Ode to the west Wind' is a famous example of a terzarima.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy might harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Sprite fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

c. Ottava rima: The form originated in Italy and has been very popular with poets like Boccaccio, Pulci, and Tasso. As the name suggests it has eight lines in iambic pentameter which is rhymed *abababcc.* This stanza is most favoured for narrative or epic verse. In Don Juan, a mock epic, Lord Gordon Byron uses ottava rima. The poem opens as follows:

I want a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one;
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan –
We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
Sent to the devil somewhat ere his time.

Byron uses the form to great comic effect especially with the use of the forced rhyme in the concluding couplet.

d. Quartrain: A stanza of four lines is called a quartrain. The most commonly used stanza in English versification, a quartrain allows the writer the liberty of using different meters and rhyme schemes. The ballad stanza uses alternate four and three-foot lines with the rhyming scheme *abcb* or *abab*. Emily Dickinson uses the quartrain in a subtle and varied style.

Purple – is fashionable twice
This season of the year,
And when a soul perceives itself
To be an Emperor

It will be beneficial here to also know what the 'Heroic Quartrain' is. It is a stanza of four lines written in iambic pentameter (a line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short and one long syllable) as used by Thomas Gray in 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' with the rhyming scheme abab.

e. Spenserian Stanza: A Spenserian stanza is a still longer form of writing than the Ottava Rima as it consists of nine lines in which the first eight lines are in iambic pentameter and the last one in iambic hexameter (also called Alexandrine) as used by Edmund Spenser in 'The Faerie Queene'. Many poets were inspired by Spenser's graceful writing to take up this rather difficult form. John Keats used this form in 'The Eve of St. Agnes' as did P.B. Shelley in 'Adonais' and Lord Byron in 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage'. The following is an example taken from Spenser's 'The Faerie Queene';

And more, to Lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rocke tumbling downe
And ever-drizling raine upon the loft
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne:
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard: but careless Quiet lyes,
Wrapt in eternal silence farre from enemyes.

f. Rime Royal: It was first introduced by Geoffrey Chaucer in 'Troilus and Cressida' and other narrative poems. But it is believed to take its name from the its later use by King James I of Scotland, also known as 'the Scottish Chaucerian', in his poem 'The King's Quair (The King's Book). It consists of a seven-line iambic pentameter stanza with the rhyming scheme *ababbcc.*The Rime Royal was used by many Elizabethan poets like Shakespeare in 'A Lover's Complaint' and 'The Rape of Lucrece' of which the following is an extract:

From the besieged Ardea all in post,

Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,
Lust-breathed tarquin leaves the Roman host
And to Collatium bears the lightless fire
Which, in pale embers hid, lurks to aspire
And girdle with embracing flames the waist
Of Collatine's fair love, Lucrece the chaste.

2.2.2 Meter: The term 'meter' refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line. In the English verse, it is based on accent rather than quantity. The number of syllables in a line may be fixed while the number of stresses varies, or the stresses may be fixed with variation in the number of unstressed syllables. In the most commonly used form of the meter, the number of both stressed and unstressed syllables is fixed. In practice, a meter retains its basic pattern while the syllables vary in order to bring variety to the verse making it less monotonous. In modern verse, however, a cadence is preferred, which approximates the flow of speech. In the European language, there are four main types of meter:

I. **Quantitative:** In this case, the meter is established by the duration of the utterance of a syllable, and consists of recurrent patterns of long and short syllables.
II. **Syllabic:** This form is used mostly in French and other Roman languages, and depends on the number of syllables in a line with little import given to the fall of the stresses.
III. **Accentual:** In Old English, the meter is accentual i.e. it depends on the number of stressed syllables in a line without regard to the number of intervening unstressed syllables.
IV. **Accentual-syllabic:** This form combines the features of the two preceding types. Here the metric units consist of a recurrent pattern of stresses on a recurrent number of syllables.

Of the given four types, the last one has been the most favoured one of poets from Chaucer to those of the present day.

It will be profitable to understand the four distinct and standard feet in English:
Iambic: In this form, an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.
*(*from Thomas Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'*)*

Anapestic: Here, two unstressed syllables are followed by a stressed syllable.

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold.
*(*from Lord Byron's 'The Destruction of Sennachrib'*)*

Trochaic: In this, a stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed syllable.

There they are, my fifty men and women.
*(*from Robert Browning's 'One Word More')

Dactylic: In this form, a stressed syllable is followed by two unstressed syllables.

Eve, with her basket, was
Deep in the bells and grass.
(from Ralph Hodgson's 'Eve')

a. Heroic Couplet: The term takes its origin from the use of such couplets in the seventeenth century in heroic poems and in heroic dramas. These are two lines of iambic pentameter which rhyme in pairs i.e. *aa, bb, cc,* and so on. This form was introduced in the English poetry by Geoffrey Chaucer in most of 'The Canterbury tales'. Since then it has been in constant use. Poets like John Dryden, Samuel Johnson, and Alexander Pope used this form extensively, especially Pope who favoured it over other forms. For the Neoclassical poets, especially Pope, the closed heroic couplet was a dominant form wherein there is usually a pause at the end of the first line and the termination of a unit at the end of the second line. The following, taken from Pope's 'An Essay on Criticism' is a fine example of a heroic couplet;

One science only will one genius fit;
So vast is art, so narrow human wit:
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
But oft in those confined to single parts.

b. Free Verse: By the French this form was called the *verslibre,* and it lacks regular meter and line length. It relies more upon the natural speech rhythms of the language, the flow or cadences which are a result of the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. This form has gained popularity in this century but it was primarily used by the French poets of the nineteenth century in an effort to free themselves from the confines of the metrical regularity of alexandrine. The English and American poets used the form in order to seek freedom in verse structure. It was used in the King James translation of The Holy Bible especially in the 'Song of Solomon' and the Psalms. Walt Whitman's 'Leaves of Grass' is perhaps the most famous and striking example of the organization of speech patterns into verse cadences.

A child said What is the grass? Fetching it
to me with full hands,
How could I answer the child? I do not know
what it is any more than he.
I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out
of hopeful green stuff woven.

c. Blank Verse: Strictly speaking, a blank verse is nothing other than unrhymed, the term is restricted to unrhymed iambic pentameter. As compared to all the other English metrical forms, the blank verse is closest to the natural rhythms of English speech. It is flexible and adaptive varied levels of discourse. Because of this it has been in more frequent use than other forms of versification. In the English language it was first introduced by the

Earl of Surrey in his translations of the second and fourth books of Virgil's 'The Aeneid'. Later on it came to be the standard meter for Elizabethan poets. Even in the twentieth century eminent poets like T.S. Eliot, and Maxwell Anderson favoured this form for their verse plays. It was also chosen by John Milton for his epic 'Paradise Lost'. The Romantics like William Wordsworth (in *The Prelude*), Robert Browning (in *The Ring and the Book*) and Coleridge (in *Frost at Midnight*). In some cases, the blank verse is divided by the poet into five-line stanzas as in Alfred Lord Tennyson's 'Tears, Idle Tears'. Such divisions in blank verse poems are used to set off a sustained passage from other passages and are called 'Verse paragraphs'. Poets like Wordsworth and Milton used verse paragraphs of longer length. Milton's 'Paradise Lost' is a great verse paragraph with twenty six lines, while Wordsworth used this form in 'Tintern Abbey' with a para of twenty-two lines.

2.3 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – I

1. What are the different criteria for determining a stanza?
2. Who introduced the Heroic couplet in English?
3. How many lines constitute a Heroic couplet? What is the rhyming pattern?
4. In which work was Rime royal introduced? After whom is it named?
5. What is the origin of Ottava rima and who introduced it in English?
6. What are the characteristic features of a Spenserian stanza?
7. How many types of meter are there in poetry?
8. How is Free verse different from Blank verse?
9. **State whether True or False:**
    a. Rime Royal was introduced by John Keats.
    b. Heroic couplet was introduced by Geoffrey Chaucer.
    c. A Spenserian stanza has 8 lines in each stanza.
    d. Terza rima has stanzas of 5 lines.
    e. In heroic couplets rhyming scheme is *aa bb cc*.

2.4 POETIC DEVICES:

2.4.1 Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of a speech sound in words approximate to one another usually at the beginning of words, which is also called 'Head Rhyme'. In normal practice, the term is used only for repetition of consonants and that too when the recurring sound is emphatic as it begins a word or a stressed syllable within a word. In the Old English alliterative meter, alliteration is the main organizing device of the verse line. In this form, the verse is unrhymed and each line is divided into two half-lines of two stresses by a significant pause (also called 'caesure'), and one or both of the two stressed syllables in the first half-line alliterate with the first stressed syllable of the second half-line. Middle English poets like William Langland used alliteration extensively in his poems like 'Piers Plowman', and 'Sir Gwain and the Green Knight'. However, in the later day usage, alliteration is used only for stylistic effects to provide tone or colour, or to reinforce the meaning of the line. The following stanza by W.S. Gilbert in 'The Mikado' is an example of alliteration:

To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock,
In a pestilential prison, with a life-long lock,
Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock,
From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big, black block.

When the repetition is of a sequence of two or more consonants, with a change in the intervening vowel (for example, such combinations as live-love, lean-alone, etc) the form is called '**Consonance**'. W.H. Auden's poem 'O Where are You Going?' makes use of consonance quite dominantly.

'Out of this house' - said rider to reader,
'Yours never will' - said farer to fearer,'
They're looking for you' – said hearer to horror,
As he left them there, as he left them there.

On the other hand, '**Assonance'** is the repetition of identical or similar vowels, especially in the stressed syllables, in a sequence of words approximate to one another. In Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' the recurrent 'i' (underlined) in the stressed syllables is an example of assonance:

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time…

2.4.2 Simile: To understand the word and its meaning, it would be easier to see it as a version of 'similar to'. A simile is thus a comparison between two unlike objects, usually an unknown quantity with a known quantity in order to understand the value attributed to the unknown one. The comparison between the two objects is drawn out by using words like 'like' and 'as'. A direct comparison between two like objects is simply that, a comparison. For example if we say: He is as tall as his brother, we are making a simple, direct comparison between two similar objects. But if we say, He is as ugly as sin, we are comparing the quality of one with another. This constitutes a simile. A simple example of a simile would be Robert Burns' famous lyric: *My love's like a red, red rose*…All poets of any import have made use of similes in their poems to great effect. Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' also uses similes to forward such comparisons. Consider the following lines from the same:

And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

In comparison, 'Epic Similes' or Homeric similes (so called because of the great Greek poet Homer) are formal, extended similes in which the secondary subject, the vehicle, is elaborated deliberately beyond its points of close parallel to the primary subject, the tenor. The term is taken from its common use in epics by writers like Homer, from whom it was taken forward by Virgil, Milton, and other poets. In 'Paradise Lost' Milton makes repeated use of epic similes to forward an elaborate description of one or both objects.

2.4.3 Metaphor: A metaphor is again a comparison between two unlike objects, the difference from a simile being that here the comparison is by identification of substitution of

one for the other. In the lines given above by Robert Burns, if we remove the word 'like' it would technically become a metaphor as then the comparison would be a substitution. The two objects are identified as 'tenor' (for the subject as in 'My love' above) and the 'vehicle' (for the metaphorical term, as 'rose' above). In an 'Implicit Metaphor', the tenor is not specified but only implied to be understood as such. For example, to describe a stubborn man we say 'a mule standing his ground' where the man is said to be a mule. A 'Dead metaphor' is the term used for a substitution which has been so overly used as to lose its meaning and the distinction between tenor and vehicle lies ceases to exist as such. 'Leg of the table' and 'heart of the matter' are examples of dead metaphors.

2.4.4 Imagery: in its most common usage, the term 'imagery' refers to 'mental pictures' which means the use of language to represent descriptively things, actions, or even abstract ideas so that upon reading the poem or part of it the reader is able to conjure a mental picture of the same in the mind. In order to develop a mental image, the writer makes elaborate, startling or unusual descriptions by using similes and metaphors. This usage is intended to render vividness and immediacy to the object being described. In the 'Lucy poems', Wordsworth uses images to describe Lucy and her life by using word-images. In 'She Dwelt among the untrodden Ways' Wordsworth uses such words as 'untrodden ways', 'violet' and 'star' to develop a particular image. Imagery is not limited to objects that we can see but also to qualities that are auditory, tactile, olfactory (of smell), and so on. In 'in Memoriam', Tennyson's range of imagery is not limited to the visual alone but encompasses qualities that can be smelled, tasted, or heard. For example:

Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer-spice the humming air…

Similarly, John Keats personifies an abstract idea to present an image in his 'To Autumn':

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind…

Thus, we can say that the purpose of imagery is to serve as a vehicle for the imaginative thought, the aesthetic experience, which the writer wishes to communicate to the reader.

2.4.5 Symbol: A symbol should be seen as distinct from a sign, an object which signifies something else. In order to be efficient a sign must have a single meaning. A red light that instructs drivers to stop is a sign that is universal in nature and meaning. A symbol, on the other hand, is more complex. In its simplest sense, one thing that stands for another is a symbol. For example, the cross can be seen as a symbol of Christianity just as a hammer-and-sickle can be seen as a symbol of communism. These are complex as they can hold different meanings for different people or in different circumstances. In literature, symbols do not have a publicly accepted meaning but take their meaning(s) from the context in which they appear which could be the private system of the writer's. In Herman Melville's 'Moby Dick' the

white whale is simply an animal but as the story progresses it keeps on taking more and complex meanings. It is less common to see not an object but the whole poem as a symbol but poets like Coleridge have written poems which are completely symbolic in nature. 'The Rime of the Ancient mariner' is about the journey of the titular character but may be seen as a symbolic and universal journey into the depths of despair and the return to spiritual stability.

2.4.6 Rhyme: The repetition of similar or duplicate sounds at regular intervals, usually the repetition of the terminal sounds of words at the ends of lines of verse. Many important poets like Milton have spoken against the usage of rhyme but in spite of such opposition rhyme remains one of the most persistent of all poetic devices. It draws attention to the word as sound as opposed to the word as a conveyer of meaning. Since it is commonly used at the end of a line, it can be seen as a marker which signals the end of the rhythmical unit. When these are regularly arranged, rhymes also help to serve to mark stanzaic structures.

Of the various forms of rhymes, some are distinguished by position. Some such common forms are:

Internal rhyme: As the name suggests, the rhyme here is internally located i.e. within the line. In the line 'Sister my sister, O fleet sweet swallow' from Algernon Swinbourne's 'Itylus' the words 'fleet' and 'sweet' provide the internal rhyme.

End rhymes: In this type of rhyming, the pattern of rhyming is sustained at the end of a line verse. It is the most commonly used form of rhyming in practice. It is also known as a 'tail rhyme'. The following couplet from Edgar Allen Poe's 'the Raven' as an example of end rhyme:

Once upon a midnight dreary,
While I pondered, weak and weary…

There are still other variations of rhymes depending upon stressed symbols:

Masculine rhyme: In this form, the rhyme is limited to a single stressed terminal syllable. Wordsworth's 'The Solitary Reaper' has two consecutive lines ending with the single stressed syllable:

I listened, motionless and still;
And as I mounted up the hill…

Here, 'still' and 'hill' form the masculine rhyme.

Feminine rhyme: In this, the rhyme extends over two or more syllables. It is also known as the 'double rhyme'. In some cases, it may extend over three syllables also. In the following stanza about Lear's description of himself, the first and third lines are an example of feminine rhyme while the second and fourth constitute masculine rhyme:

He has many friends, laymen and clerical,
Old Foss is the name of his cat;
His body is perfectly spherical,
He weareth a runcible hat.

On the other hand, an '**Eye rhyme**' is a term used for words whose ending words are spelled alike and may also be pronounced in the same way too. For example, word pairs like 'love-prove' or 'laughter-daughter' give the impression of being similar in sound but are not.

2.4.7 Hyperbole: It is a figure of speech wherein a particular desired effect is achieved by extreme deliberate exaggeration. Hyperboles exist in verse as abundantly as they do in common everyday expressions. 'Packed like sardines' is one such example. Andrew Marvell

used this form in the way he describes the way in which he would love his mistress if he had time in his 'To His Coy Mistress' which is one of the most remarkable examples of hyperboles in English.

My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow,
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze:
Two hundred to adore each breast:
But thirty thousand to the rest…

2.4.8 Allusion: It is a passing reference, with no specific identification, to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage. In Thomas Nashe's 'Litany in Time of Plague' the reference to a 'Helen' in the last line of the following stanza is an allusion to 'Helen of Troy':

Brightness falls from the air,
Queens have died young and fair,
Dust hath closed Helen's eye…

In some cases, allusions are used to achieve an ironical effect. T.S. Eliot does this in 'The Waste Land' when he describes a woman at her dressing table and the allusion is to the queen Cleopatra:

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble…

Here, the ironic allusion is employed by echoing Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra in her magnificent barge.

2.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS - II

1. How are 'Similes' and 'Metaphors' different from one another?

A. How do poets achieve effects of imagery?

B. How is a 'Symbol' different from a signal?

C. Why do poets use 'Rhyme' in poems? What are the different popular forms of rhymes?

D. What are 'Hyperboles'?

E. Show your familiarity with the term 'Allusion'.

F. Match the following with the correct option:

a. A set of two rhyming lines	i. Quartrain
b. Meter which is determined by number of syllables	ii. Couplet
c. This poet introduced Rime Royal	iii. Syllabic
d. A stanza containing four lines	iv. Geoffrey Chaucer
e. A poem in which rules are not followed	v. Free Verse

G. Identify the following devices:

a. Life is but a walking shadow.
b. Her lips are red as a rose.
c. In mist of cloud, on mast or shroud.
d. The arm of the chair.

e. The grave's a fine and private place
But none, I think, do there embrace.

2.6. SUMMING UP:

The aim of this unit was to make the students familiar with the various literary devices used by poets in their creation. The use of such devices adds variety and colour to the poem. A thorough understanding of these devices should make the reading of poetry a much rewarding process. It is hoped that after understanding such devices and how they are used, students will appreciate the art of poetry more.

2.7 SUGGESTED READINGS:

1. The Routledge dictionary of literary terms by Peter Childs and Roger Fowler.
2. Collins dictionary of literary terms by Quinn Edward.
3. Literary terms by Moon Brian

2.8 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE:

2.8.1 Long Answer Questions

1. What are the different types of alliteration?
2. What are the different types of rhymes?
3. How does the use of symbols add to the depth of a work? Illustrate with an example.

2.8.2 Short Answer Questions:

1. What is the difference between Masculine and feminine rhyme?
2. What is an Eye rhyme?
3. How is hyperbole used to achieve certain effects?
4. What is the purpose of Allusion?

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)
Semester III
Course Code:BAB32302T
Reading Poetry

UNIT 3: POEMS-I

STRUCTURE:

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Poem 1: 'All the World's a Stage'

3.1.1. About the poet

3.1.2. About the poem

3.1.3. Text of the poem

3.1.4. Explanation of lines

3.1.5. Glossary

3.1.6. Summing up

3.1.7. Check your progress

3.1.8. Questions for practice

3.2 Poem 2: 'Kubla Khan'

3.2.1. About the poet

3.2.2. About the poem

3.2.3. Text of the poem

3.2.4. Explanation of lines

3.2.5. Glossary

3.2.6. Summing up

3.2.7. Check your progress

3.2.8. Questions for practice

3.3 Poem 3: 'Ode to the West Wind'

3.3.1. About the poet

3.3.2. About the poem

3.3.3. Text of the poem

3.3.4. Explanation of lines

3.3.5. Glossary

3.3.6. Check your progress

3.3.7. Questions for practice

3.0. OBJECTIVES:

- The chief objective of this lesson is to familiarize the students with Shakespeare's 'All the World's a Stage', Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' and Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind'
- To introduce the learners to the literary forms/genres of the prescribed texts
- To acquaint them with the text and explanation of these works
- To help students critically analyze these poems
- To help them assess their understanding of the works through self help exercises
- To make them attempt exercises based on the prescribed texts

3.1. POEM 1: 'ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE' BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

3.1.1. About the poet:

William Shakespeare is regarded as the greatest names in the history of English literature. He was both a poet and a dramatist who was born on 24 April 1564 at Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire in England. He enrolled in the Stratford Grammar School but had to leave his education midway due to a financial crisis. He married Anne Hathaway in 1582 and had three children. Thereafter, he left for London and began his career initially as an actor, and then went on to writing plays. Soon, he made a mark for himself as a playwright. He penned thirty seven plays including tragedies, comedies, tragi-comedies, romantic comedies and history plays. He was also a prolific poet who wrote narrative poems, allegories and, most significantly, 154 sonnets which are ranked among the finest in English language. Many of his plays are also adorned with his poetic touch. Shakespeare was a great student of human nature and his works probe into man's psyche as well as the social and political conditions of his times.

Shakespeare is also known for ‘As You Like It’, ‘Twelfth Night’, ‘Julius Caesar’, ‘Othello’, ‘King Lear’, ‘Macbeth’, ‘Hamlet’, ‘Antony and Cleopatra’ etc.

3.1.2. About the Poem:

‘All the World is a Stage’ is an extract from a famous Romantic Comedy titled ‘As You Like It’ written by William Shakespeare, the noted playwright of the Elizabethan Age. These lines are uttered by a melancholic character Jacques in the presence of Duke Senior and his followers who, having been banished by his younger brother Duke Frederick, were living a simple life in the Forrest of Arden.

In this extract, the sad philosopher Jacques, a close friend of the exiled Duke Senior compares the world to a stage where all men and women, like actors and actresses, perform different roles. If the world is a stage, life is a play. Similarly, man’s birth and death resemble an actor’s entry and exit from the stage. According to Jacques, each individual plays several roles in his life. Just as each play is divided into different acts, similarly, human life can also be divided into seven stages.

The first stage of man’s life which begins from birth is that of infancy, is followed by his boyhood and then flamboyant youth. In the next stage, he goes on to become a soldier and then, in his middle age, a judge. The sixth stage sees man become old, weak and gaunt. The last stage of life which leads to his exit from the stage of life is like a second childhood. With the loss of his eyesight, teeth, sense of taste and other senses, man is as helpless and dependant on others as a child.

3.1.3. Text of the Poem:

All the World’s a Stage

William Shakespeare

And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms;
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad

Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion;
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

3.1.4. Explanation of lines:

William Shakespeare through the character of Jacques presents the idea that the whole world may be viewed as a stage on which the drama of life is enacted, while all human beings are players or performers. Each individual enters the stage, performs his role and exits the stage. Like an actor, he performs many roles. The drama of life may be divided into seven stages. The first stage is that of a tiny baby crying and vomiting in his nurse's arms. The stage of infancy is followed by boyhood when we see the little baby grown into a bright-faced school boy carrying his school bag but reluctant to go to school.

Gradually, the little boy grows up into an adolescent lover who is constantly sighing and penning poems in the praise of his beloved's beauty. The next stage is that of a brave young soldier, bearded like a leopard, who swears hard and is ready to give up his life for the sake of honour. He quarrels at the slightest provocation, and guards his reputation zealously in the battlefield. In the next stage of life we see a middle aged, confident and experienced well-dressed man in the role of a judge. His youthful personality has turned fat due to overeating

of meat. He bears a severe expression in his eyes and supports a beard of formal cut. He is full of wisdom and plays a dignified role.

As man enters the sixth stage, he grows weak, thin and old. His eyesight betrays him and his clothes hang loosely upon his shrunken body. His manly voice turns into a "childish treble" and resembles "pipes and whistles." In the last stage that takes the eventful journey of human life towards its end, man enters a pitiable state. He loses his manliness, vitality and strength. Deprived of his teeth, sight, sense of taste, memory and other sensory faculties, he is reduced to a state of abject helplessness which is not very different from a second childhood. With this approaches the end of the eventful drama of man's life.

Thus, the journey of man's life can be divided into seven stages namely, infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, maturity, old age and second childhood.

3.1.5. Glossary:

Pard: leopard

Capon: male chick, poultry

Wise saws: wise sayings

Youthful hose: Close-fitting garment worn in youth

Shank: Part of the leg between the knee and the ankle

Oblivion: forgetfulness

Sans: without

3.1.6. Summing Up:

'All the World's Stage' is a monologue of 28 lines in which Shakespeare through Jacques presents an insightful analysis of the different stages that a man has to pass through during the journey of his life. Through the course of his life, starting from his birth, man performs several roles just as an actor performs several roles on the stage. By comparing life to a stage and man to actors or performers, Shakespeare has accorded a place of eminence to the dramatic art. John Keats' 'Human Seasons' also compares the different stages of life to the different seasons in a year.

3.1.7. Check your progress:

Fill in the blanks in the following with correct options:

1. 'All the World's a Stage' is an extract from a play titled _____.

2. 'All the World's a Stage' is written by _____

3. The lines in the extract are uttered by _____

4. The last stage of life is compared to a _____

5. The drama of human life is divided into _____ stages.

3.1.8. Questions for practice:

Long Questions:

1. Trace the development of thought in the poem 'All the World's a Stage.'

2. Describe the different stages of human life as conveyed in the poem 'All the World's a Stage.'

Short Questions:

1. What does the poet compare human life and human beings to?

2. What are the first two stages of human life?

3. How does the poet describe the third and fourth stage of life?

4. What is the condition of man in the last two stages of life?

3.2. POEM 2: 'KUBLA KHAN' BY S T COLERIDGE

3.2.1. About the Poet:

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, hailed as the greatest representative of the Romantic sensibility which dominated the literary world in the post-Augustan era, was born on 21 October, 1772 in Devonshire, England to a parish vicar. An imaginative, sensitive and introspective child, Coleridge preferred books to human company in his school days after the death of his father in 1781, and found solace in reading Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare and *the Bible*. His wide range of reading and amazing eloquence won him both, an admission in Jesus College, Cambridge and the admiration of fellow students. Though he was a diligent pupil, his political liberalism, religious atheism and revolutionary zeal aroused by the French revolution offended the authorities and he was forced to abandon his studies in December, 1794 without completing his degree.

It was in 1797 that Coleridge became friends with another towering figure of the Romantic era, William Wordsworth. Regarded as one of the most famous and fruitful literary associations, it allowed Coleridge's creative genius to bloom and won him wide recognition. The collaboration of these two temperamentally different poets who esteemed each others'

poetic genius led to the composition and contribution of Coleridge's finest works including 'Kubla Khan', 'Christabel' and 'The Rime of Ancient Mariner' to the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) at the young age of 25 years.

It is believed that the finest poetic output of Coleridge belonged to the first year of his association with Wordsworth. From 1810-16, Coleridge delivered lectures, wrote for newspapers and prepared another edition of his poems before penning his magnum opus -- a literary biography called *Biographia Literaria* (1817) which contains his critical views on the Romantic ideals of art. He passed away in 1834 due to complications caused by his dependence on opium.

3.2.2. About the Poem:

'Kubla Khan is one of the most celebrated and anthologized poems of S T Coleridge and is known for its imaginative appeal. It was described as 'A Vision in a Dream' by him. It is said that once Coleridge fell asleep under the impact of opium (an intoxicant/pain reliever) while reading about the grand palace of Emperor Kubla Khan, the grandson of Gengiz Khan, a great conqueror of Central Asia. The poet saw a vision of the magnificent palace and penned more than 200 lines on it in his dream. On waking up, he recollected the entire poem distinctly and sat down to write it but was interrupted by the arrival of a person from Porlock who detained him for an hour. When he returned to complete the poem, he realized that it had vanished from his memory. He had only a faint recollection of the vision. The result was a fragmented poem called 'Kubla Khan.'

3.2.3. Text of the Poem:

Kubla Khan

S T Coleridge

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round;
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!
  The shadow of the dome of pleasure
  Floated midway on the waves;
  Where was heard the mingled measure
  From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

  A damsel with a dulcimer
  In a vision once I saw:
  It was an Abyssinian maid
  And on her dulcimer she played,
  Singing of Mount Abora.
  Could I revive within me
  Her symphony and song,
  To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

3.2.4. Explanation of lines:

Lines 1-10: The poem opens with a beautiful description of the magnificent palace which Kubla Khan had ordered to be built for him in Xanadu. This pleasure dome was situated on the bank of Alph, a sacred river which flowed through immeasurably deep caves and then sank into a dark subterranean sea where the sun's rays didn't penetrate. A very fertile and green land of ten square miles in area, surrounding the palace was enclosed with walls and towers. Beautiful gardens, meandering and tall trees laden with sweet-smelling flowers adorned this place. There existed a forest as ancient as the hills nearby which enclosed many sunny and green spot within it.

Lines 12-16: In these lines, the poet describes the deep and mysterious gorge/ravine that ran down the side of a hill. There existed a wood of Cedar trees across it. It was indeed a strange, mysterious and awe-inspiring place. Ironically, it appeared both holy and savage. What adds an element of mystery to it is the appearance of a young woman in the dim light of the waning moon, wandering about in search of her lover who seemed to be a demon rather than a human. An atmosphere of mystery and supernaturalism dominates these lines.

Lines 17-24: These lines show the creativity of nature. Coleridge draws a vivid picture of a fountain gushing out of the chasm which seemed to be bubbling with a lot of activity in its depth. It appeared as if the earth was panting, gasping for breath and was in deep agitation. Suddenly, a huge fountain burst out of the gap and threw up large pieces of rocks which struck the ground with force and rebounded like the hailstones or grains struck with a stick by a farmer to separate them from the chaff.

Lines 25-30: For five miles, the sacred Alph followed a meandering and winding path through the wood and valley till it reached the deep measureless caves and never visited by any man and sank noisily into a clam and deep ocean. Amid this noise created by the gushing waters of the Alph, Kubla Khan heard the voices of his forefathers warning him about an impending war. Thus, Coleridge further heightens the atmosphere of mystery, suspense and supernaturalism.

Lines 31-35: These lines describe the matchless beauty of the pleasure dome which is reflected in the sparkling waters of the river. One hears the mingled music of the bursting fountain and the waters of the river gushing down the caves. The pleasure dome was indeed a marvel of architectural skill. Built on the foundation of icy caves, the high dome shone brightly in the sunlight.

Lines 36-47: Moving on from the description of the enchanting palace, Coleridge seems to recall his wonderful dream about a young girl from Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia) who played a dulcimer (a stringed instrument) and sang a sweet song about Mount Abora. But the poet is unable to remember her song. He says that if he could remember her melodious music and song, he would be filled with such delight and poetic inspiration, that he would recreate the beauty of the sunny pleasure dome and its icy caves for everyone to see.

Lines 48-53: In the last lines of the poem, Coleridge presents a picture of a poet in a poetic frenzy. He says that if he could recall the song of the Abyssinian girl, he would seek inspiration from it. As his inspiration rises, his eyes flash, his hair floats and there appears a halo round him. He is like a divine being, a God with the magical powers to create anything. In this state, he would arouse fear and awe in the hearts of people. To escape his power of magic, they would draw three circles around him. They would believe him to be a divine being with supernatural powers who has come down from the Heaven and has been fed on heavenly food and milk. Coleridge shows how a moment of inspiration arouses the creativity of a poet.

3.2.5. Glossary:

Xanadu: a town in Tartary, in the Chinese province of Shantung now.
Kubla Khan: a Mongol Emperor and conqueror, ruled from 1257-94
Alph: an imaginary river
Sinuous rills: streams flowing in a zig-zag manner
Athwart: across
Waning moon: fading moon
Seething: boiling
Pants: breathes heavily, gasping for breath
Meandering: following a zig-zag or meandering course
Dale: valley
Damsel: a young unmarried woman
Dulcimer: a stringed musical instrument
Vision: dream
Abyssinian maid: a young woman from Abyssinia, modern Ethiopia
Mount Abora: an imaginary mountain in Abyssinia
Flashing eyes: poetically inspired eyes

Honey-dew: food of the dwellers of Heaven

Milk of Paradise: divine drink

3.2.6. Summing Up:

'Kubla Khan' or 'A Vision in a Dream' transcends the world of reality and carries us into a realm of dreams. It is marked by an atmosphere of wonder, strangeness and mystery. Coleridge creates a magical world where anything and everything seems possible. In this imaginative world of the pleasure dome, the Alph, the chasm, fountain, the woman, the Abyssinian girl with a dulcimer and finally, the poet in a frenzied state of poetic inspiration – everything is shrouded in mystery. All these contribute significantly in creating a romantic atmosphere in the poem. An element of suspense, eeriness and wonderment pervades the entire poem and this is what makes it unique.

3.2.7. Check your progress:

Fill in blanks with appropriate words:

1. Coleridge called his poem 'Kubla Khan' _____.
2. Kubla Khan ordered his pleasure dome to be built in _____.
3. The sacred river that flowed near the pleasure dome is _____.
4. Amid the noise of the river and the fountain, Kubla Khan heard the voices of his _____.
5. In his dream Coleridge saw an _____girl playing a _____.

3.2.8. Exercises for Practice

Long Questions:

1. Write a critical assessment of the poem 'Kubla Khan.'
2. Describe the supernatural elements in the poem 'Kubla Khan.'

Short Answer questions:

1. Describe the beauty of the pleasure dome.
2. What makes the place both "holy and savage?"
3. Describe the origin of river Alph.
4. Why does the poet wish to recall the song of the Abyssinian girl?
5. How does the poet describe a poet in his creative frenzy?

3.3. POEM 3: 'ODE TO THE WEST WIND' BY P B SHELLEY

3.3.1. About the Poet:

Percy Bysshe Shelley occupies s place of great eminence among the Romantic Poets. He is regarded as the finest lyric poet in English. Born in Sussex in 1792, Shelly was educated first at Eton and then at Oxford from where he was expelled for preaching atheism. Shelley was a strong rebel and a great reformer who championed the cause of human liberty, dignity, social justice and peace. He rejected the social norms, political systems and religious institutions. He dreamt of an ideal world for the entire mankind. Though he was unhappy and pessimistic about the existing times, he was extremely hopeful about a bright future for the entire world. His rebellious ideas, pessimism and optimism are all reflected eloquently in his poetry. Shelley spent his last years in Italy and died by drowning in 1822.

'The Cloud,' 'Prometheus Unbound,' 'Adonais,' 'The Cenci' are the other important works of Shelley.

3.3.2. About the Poem:

An **Ode** is a long lyric, somber in theme/subject, dignified in style and elaborate in structural design. It generally begins with an address. The origin of the ode is associated with the great Greek poet Pindar who wrote in the 5th century BC. Some of the finest examples are John Keats' 'Ode to the Nightingale;' Andrew Marvell's 'An Ode to George Orwell on His Return to England;' William Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode' and P B Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind.'

'Ode to the West Wind' is one of the finest and most anthologized Odes in English poetry. Written in 1820, this lyric is matchless in its structural excellence, original imagery and musical quality. It is an inspirational poem in which the West Wind is visualized as a symbol of power, hope and rebirth. The poem displays Shelley's imaginative quality at its best and presents him as both, a poet and a prophet. The last line – "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" -- echoes Shelly's invincible optimism for the future of the entire mankind.

3.3.3. Text of the Poem:

Ode to the West Wind

Percy Bysshe Shelley

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

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

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

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

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

II
Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

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

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

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

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

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

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,

And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

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

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

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

IV

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

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

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

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

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

V

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

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

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

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

3.3.4. Stanza-wise Explanation:

Stanza I: The poem, being an Ode, begins with an address to the West Wind which is personified as a living entity – wild, strong and uncontrollable, but invisible. Addressing it as the "breath" of Autumn season during which it generally blows, Shelley describes various activities of the West Wind in the first stanza. Though invisible, the wind exercises a great power over the dead leaves- yellow, black, pale and red in colour – as if stricken with some disease, and lie scattered on the ground. With its force, it carries them along and deposits them in depressions. There are driven here and there by its force just as ghosts are driven away by a magician.

Similarly, it carries various seeds which seem to have developed wings, and deposits them in low lying beds where they lie throughout the winter under a thick blanket of snow. However, when the Spring arrives and warm winds begin to blow, these seed sprout and give forth beautiful flowers which fill the entire valley with sweet smells and enchanting colours. Addressing the West Wind as a wild spirit, Shelley urges it to listen to him.

Analysis: The Ode begins with the customary **Apostrophe** or address to the West Wind – "O wild West Wind." Shelley personifies the wind and grants it power, swiftness and speed. There are several similes in the opening stanza e.g. the dead leaves are driven by the wind "like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing." Similarly, the seeds lie "cold and low/Each like a corpse within its grave" and the colourful buds emerging from the new plants in the spring season are "like flocks to feed in the air." The West Wind is, quite paradoxically, presented as both a destroyer and a preserver. While it destroys the withered and dead leaves, it also preserves the life-giving seeds.

Stanza II: In the second stanza, the poet displays the power of the West Wind in the air wherein it is seen carrying on its surface loose clouds which resemble the withered leaves shed by trees in the autumn season on the earth. The gathering clouds and the west wind cause a great tumult in the sky, leading to the development of stormy conditions. Shelly calls these thick clouds messengers of rain and lightning. As the dark clouds spread across the sky, rising to the zenith from the horizon, they resemble the bright dishevelled hair of Maenad, a semi-divine priestess of Bacchus, God of Wine.

When darkness covers the entire sky, it looks like the dome of a huge tomb. The collective strength of the dark clouds is like a vault or the arched roof of the tomb, and the strong wind seems to sing the funeral song of the dying year as thunder, hail and lightning burst from it.

Analysis: In this stanza, Shelley makes use of several devices to paint beautiful images of various activities going on in the sky. He uses a **simile** to show how loose clouds resemble the shedding of withered leaves on the earth. Another **simile** is employed when the "locks of the approaching storm" are likened to the uplifted hair of Maenad, a figure from mythology. Shelley employs a metaphor when he calls the west Wind "dirge of the dying year."

Stanza III: This stanza describes the impact of the West Wind's power on the water bodies. With its loud noise and speed, it seems to wake up from its peaceful and deep slumber the blue Mediterranean, which had been soothed to a peaceful sleep by the gentle movement of streams in its depth beside a volcanic island in Baiae's Bay. Just like a child, the sea had been dreaming of beautiful old palaces and towers which had once adorned its shores but now lie hidden under its blue waters. The clear and bright surface of the Mediterranean Sea reflects these old structures which are covered with moss and flowers of such intoxicating sweetness that the mere thought of them makes one dull and drowsy.

However when the West Wind blows across the Atlantic, its calm waters turn tumultuous. Waves begin to rise from one end to the other, and the wind, while crossing it seems to break the plain surface of the sea into troughs. Such is the might of the West Wind that the sapless water plants which grow in the depth of the sea begin to tremble and shed their leaves out of fear on hearing its loud noise (just as the trees shed their leaves on the earth). The poet calls out to the wind and urges it to listen to him.

Analysis: Shelley uses personification to lend human qualities to the Mediterranean Sea who is woken from his deep sleep and dreams, and the Atlantic which cleaves its surface into furrows to let the wind pass. The "sea-blooms and oozy woods" also grow pale with fear and drop their leaves. The stanza pays a tribute to the matchless power of the West Wind on the waters of vast seas, and its abject submission to its might.

Stanza IV: In this stanza Shelley introduces a personal note. He compares himself to the West Wind and recalls how in his boyhood, he was as swift, energetic and uncontrollable as the West Wind. In fact, he could match its vitality and even dare to out speed it. However, trials and misfortunes have crushed his spirit, weakened his energy and forced him to plead with the wind for assistance. The poet wishes that he had been a leaf, a cloud or a wave to be

carried by the West Wind so that he could share its power and freedom once again. The poet laments that he has fallen upon the thorns (adversities) of life and is bleeding. In his distress, pain and loss, Shelley seeks inspiration and help from the West Wind.

Bent under the cumbersome burden of life, he wishes to re-live those times when he was as "tameless", "swift" and "proud" as the West Wind, and regain his strength and confidence.

Analysis: This stanza brings out a contrast between the unlimited power of nature as against the helplessness of man. Shelley realizes the might of the West Wind and submits to its supremacy. He also draws attention to the hard and bitter experiences of life which have broken his spirit. He also identifies himself as a young boy with the West Wind. This affinity encourages him to appeal to it for help.

Stanza V: The last stanza is Shelley's ardent prayer to the West Wind to turn him into its lyre and treat him as a musical instrument just as it treats the forest. The poet suggests that when the strong wind passes with great force through the forest, it produces a musical sound. Moreover, just like the forest, he too is passing through the autumn of his life. He is losing his vitality and energy just as the trees are losing their leaves. He urges the West Wind to blow him like a lyre and scatter his dead thoughts away just as it would scatter sparks and ashes from a hearth or withered leaves to create new life. He would like it to spread his prophecy about the beginning of a new and golden era in the history of mankind.

Shelley requests the West Wind to act as his mouthpiece and announce to the suffering mankind that just as the cold winter is always followed by a warm summer, similarly, this era of suffering, misery and exploitation shall be followed by an era of happiness, prosperity, beauty and love.

Analysis: These lines convey Shelley's invincible idealism and optimism with regard to the arrival of a Golden Age in the history of mankind, and an unshakable faith in the triumph of good over evil forces. The winter and spring become symbols of bad and good times.

3.3.5. Glossary:

Hectic red: red or flushed as in high fever

Pestilence stricken: suffering from a deadly disease

Azure: blue

Sister of the spring: wind in the spring

Commotion: hectic activity

Clarion: a trumpet call

Maenad: Priestess of Bacchus, the God of Wine and revelry

Pumice Isle: a volcanic island in Baiae's Bay. Volcanic eruptions had destroyed the palaces on this island.

Sapless foliage: plants at the bottom of the sea, their leaves are without sap/fluid

Pant: breathe with difficulty

Thorns of life: problems/ miseries of life

Weight of hours: burden of age

3.3.6. Check your progress:

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

1. In the opening lines of the poem, the West Wind is addressed as the _____

2. The poetic device used in the expression "Each within its corpse like a grave" is _____

3. The locks of the approaching storm are compared to the bright hair of _____

4. The waters of _____cleave themselves into chasms.

5. In the poem, Shelley _____, _____, _____ and _____ as adjectives for the West Wind.

3.3.7. Exercises for Practice

Long Questions:

1. Trace the development of thought in P B Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind.'

2. How are the earth, sky and ocean influenced by the power of the West Wind?

Short Questions:

1. How is the West Wind both a destroyer and a preserver?

2. Describe briefly the activities caused by the wind in the sky.

3. How do the Mediterranean and the Atlantic react to the power of the West Wind?

4. How does the poet compare himself to the West Wind?

5. What favour does Shelley seek from the West Wind in the last stanza?

6. What message does Shelley want to be conveyed by the West Wind?

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)
Semester III
Course Code:BAB32302T
Reading Poetry

UNIT-4 POEMSII

STRUCTURE:

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4.1.2. About the poem

4.1.3. Text of the poem

4.1.4. Explanation of lines

4.1.5. Glossary

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4.2.2. Defining the Ballad

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4.3 Poem 3: 'My Last Duchess'

4.3.1. About the poet

4.3.2. About the poem

4.3.3. Defining a Dramatic Monologue

4.3.4. Text of the poem

4.3.5. Explanation of lines

4.3.6. Glossary

4.3.7. Summing up

4.3.8 Check your progress

4.3.9. Questions for practice

4.0. OBJECTIVES:

1. To acquaint the students with the works of John Keats, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning, major poets in the 19th Century English Literature.

2. To introduce the students to various poetic genres used by these poets.

3. To familiarize the learners with various devices employed by the poets.

4. To make the students aware of the evocative imagery or word pictures to enable them appreciate the beauty of the poetic language.

5. To enable the students to assess the meaning hidden in the prescribed poems.

4.1.POEM 1: 'LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI' BY JOHN KEATS

4.1.1. About the Poet

John Keats is one of the greatest Romantic poets whose poetry is known for its sensuousness and pictorial imagery. A lover of beauty and nature like other Romantics, Keats also had a special fondness for Greek myths and medieval romances. Born in 1795 to poor parents in London, John Keats trained to become a doctor as a young man. However, he gave up medicine to pursue poetry.

Keats' first publication came out in 1816 and the next few years of his poetic career were extremely productive and he wrote some of the finest lyrics in English. However, by 1820 Keats fell seriously ill with consumption while tending to his brother who also died of the same disease. When his health began to fail, he sailed to Italy and reached Rome in November, 1820. Keats died there at the age of 26.

"Hyperion", "Eve of St. Agnes", "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", "Ode to Autumn", "Ode to a Grecian Urn", "Ode to Psyche", "Ode to the Nightingale" are the other important works of John Keats

4.1.2. Defining the Ballad

A Ballad may be defined as a narrative poem written generally in a simple language to tell some story tersely through dialogue and action. The ballad is a form of traditional narrative poetry which was widespread in Europe and has had a long past. Majority of English ballads date back to the 15th century, however there are some which describe even earlier events. It is derived from a Latin word *ballare* which means 'to dance.' According to J A Cuddon, "The

ballad poet drew his raw material from the community life, from local and national history, from legend and folklore. These tales are usually of adventure, war, love, death and the supernatural" (Cuddon 73).

There are generally two kinds of ballads -- the Folk/Traditional ballad which is anonymous and transmitted orally from one generation to the next over centuries. Some of the traditional ballads include *The Elfin Knight, The Demon Lover, The Cruel Mother* and *The Two Sisters*. The other kind is called the Literary Ballad which is not anonymous and is written by a poet in its typical narrative style and is inspired by the themes and structure of folk ballads. Ballads were popularized in the 18th century include by Romantic poets. The most significant ones are S T Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner;* John Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol.*

4.1.3. About the Poem:

The poem is a ballad which presents a simple but sad tale of love and deception. Its title is in French and it means 'a beautiful lady without pity.' It refers to a beautiful lady who entices young men in her love and destroys them. She is a *femme fatale* – a mysterious, attractive and seductive woman who captures lovers with her charms into deadly traps. She seems to have some supernatural powers with which she binds them in her spell. Written in 12 stanzas of four lines each and a rhyme scheme of ABCB, the poem is remarkable for the impact it creates through its simple language.

4.1.4. Text of the poem:

La Belle Dame sans Merci

by John Keats

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.

4.1.5. Stanza-wise Explanation:

Stanza 1: The poem begins with a question posed by the poet to a knight who seems lost and miserable in the bleak landscape on a cold winter day. The poet enquires about the cause of his sadness and lonely wanderings near the lake in the dead of winter when not a single blade of grass is visible, nor is any bird singing.

Stanza 2: The poet repeats his earlier query and wonders why the knight looked so sad and grief-stricken in such a cold weather when even the squirrel has hidden itself in a burrow after collecting sufficient grains, and even the harvest is over.

Stanza 3: The poet notices the pale complexion of the knight's face. It appears as white as a lily. Drops of sweat and expression of pain on his forehead reveal that he is sick. The fading brightness of his face makes it look like a withered rose.

Stanza 4: In the fourth stanza, the knight finally answers the questions raised by the poet and begins to share his story. He informs that he had met in the meadows a beautiful lady with lovely long hair, fair complexion and passionate eyes. In her beauty, she resembled a fairy's child.

Stanza 5: The knight further tells the inquisitive knight that he fell instantly in love with that beautiful woman. As a token of his ardour, he gifted her with a garland, a bracelet and a belt of flowers to deck her waist. The lady too reciprocated by looking at him with lovelorn eyes and sighed sweetly.

Stanza 6: Thereafter, he took her along with him on the horseback and they spent the entire day in each other's company. Merrily she sang melodious songs of love for him.

Stanza 7: In the evening, the lady offered him sweet juices, fruits and honey to eat. All these appeared magical in taste. Though he could not understand her language, yet from her gestures he could make out that she too loved him as much as he did.

Stanza 8: As darkness fell, the lady took him to her small fairy cave. There she began to cry bitterly and sighed heavily. Though he could not understand the reason behind these, he soothed her gently to calmness by shutting her teary eyes with sweet kisses.

Stanza 9: At night, the lady lulled the knight to sleep. In his sleep he had a nightmare. The dream was so terrible that ever since he has not been able to sleep.

Stanza 10: In his nightmare, the knight saw several kings, princes and great warriors who looked pale as if dead. All of them seemed to warn him against the beautiful lady without mercy. They asked him to beware of her, for she had destroyed them all and would do the same to him.

Stanza 11: In the fading light, the lips of the deathly pale kings, princes and warriors appeared parched, starved and gaping wide to warn the knight. The terrible scene shook him out of his sleep and he found himself all alone on the cold hill side. The lady and her little cave had vanished.

Stanza 12: In the last stanza, the knight-at-arms confesses that to the poet that ever since that terrible night and the sudden disappearance of his lady love, he has been wandering there alone in a miserable condition looking for her in the thick of winter when all greenery along the lake has withered and there are no birds to sing.

4.1.6. Glossary

La Belle …: the beautiful lady without mercy

Ails thee: troubles you

Palely: looking pale

Loitering: wandering aimlessly

Sedge: grass growing on the edge of water

Haggard: worried, tired

Woe begone: sad and grief stricken

Lily on the brow: looking as pale as a lily

Anguish: deep mental suffering

Fever dew: drops of perspiration due to fever

Withered: dry, decaying

Fragrant: sweet smelling

Zone: belt of flowers

Moan: sigh

Manna dew: Juice of some magical fruit

Elfin grot: a fairy's cave

Woe-betide: alas!

In thrall: under a magical spell

Gloam: twilight

Gaped: opened

Horrid: horrible, dreadful

Sojourn: stay

4.1.7. Summing Up:

This ballad is said to have been based on John Keats' own unreciprocated passion for Fanny Brawne. The poem conveys a poignant tale of a knight's true love and a beautiful lady's deceit. Set in a landscape remote from the real world, the poem is marked by an element of suspense, mystery and magic. It also draws our attention to contrast between the knight's true love and the fickleness of the love of the lady without mercy. Deceived by her, he is left alone to languish in the fire of love for a heartless and merciless woman. The poem is matchless in its simplicity and imaginative appeal apart from its supernatural atmosphere which is filled with mystery and suspense.

4.1.8. Check your progress:

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

1. The French title of the poem ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci’ means _____.

2. The poem ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci’ is a literary _____.

3. The season described in the opening stanza is _____.

4. The beautiful lady resembled a _____.

5. The knight gifted the lady a garland, a _____ and a _____ zone for her girdle.

6. In the evening, the lady took the knight to her _____.

7. In his nightmare, the knight saw death pale _____, _____ and _____.

4.1.9. Exercises for Practice:

Long Questions:

1. Narrate the story of the knight in your own words.

2. Bring out the character of the knight in Keats’ ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci.’

Short Questions:

1. Whom does the poet meet and where?

2. Describe the condition of the knight as seen in the opening stanzas.

3. How does the knight describe the lady?

4. Which instances show that the knight and the loved each other?

5. Describe the nightmare seen by the knight.

4.2. POEM 2: ‘ULYSSES’ BY ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

4.2.1. About the Poet:

Alfred Tennyson was born on 6 August 1809 and educated in Trinity College, Cambridge. He is, generally, considered the most representative of all the Victorian poets. He is known for a rare lyrical intensity in his poetry and a use of highly evocative poetic language. Tennyson’s poetic career spanned nearly half a century during which he wrote many poems which voiced the anxieties of his generation. After the death of William Wordsworth in 1850, Tennyson was appointed the Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom by Queen Victoria. He died on 6 October 1892.

Apart from ‘Ulysses’, Tennyson is known for ‘The Lady of Shallot’, ‘The Lotus Eaters’ and ‘The Princess’, a satire on women’s education. After the death of his friend, Arthur H Hallam, Tennyson was emotionally devastated and his overwhelming grief found expression in the long elegy ‘In Memorium’ which was published in1850.

4.2.2. About the Poem

Tennyson’s poem **‘Ulysses’** is based on the Homeric legend of Odyssey who was the hero of the Trojan War. Ulysses is the Latin name for the Greek Odysseus and refers to the same

mythological character. After the end of the Trojan War, Ulysses is sad as the thrill of adventure is missing from his life as the ruler of Ithaca, an island in Greece. This reflective poem lays bare the anguish of Ulysses for rusting from idleness. He struggles to break free from his listless and uneventful existence in Ithaca. He recalls nostalgically the adventurous expeditions which he had undertaken as a warrior. The poem offers a psychological insight into Greek hero's heart which yearns for a life of action. The poet has used highly evocative imagery in order to depict Ulysses' restlessness.

4.2.3. Text of the Poem

Ulysses

Alfred Tennyson

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!

As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

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

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:

The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,

'T is not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite

The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths

Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:

It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,

And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'

We are not now that strength which in old days

Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,

Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

4.2.4. Stanza wise Explanation

It little profits…….not me.

Ulysses, the King of Ithaca, is back from the Trojan War which ended with a glorious triumph of the Greeks. Back home, this great warrior is disillusioned with his mundane existence as a ruler of Ithaca because life here offers him no thrill. Having experienced an eventful life, full of action, adventure and honour, he is uncomfortable in his present state. Sitting by the cold hearth in the company of his aged wife Penelope, offers him no joy. He feels that as the king of Ithaca, he rules over uncivilised and uncultured people whose sole purpose in life is to eat, horde and sleep. They are absolutely unaware of the greatness of their king. Ulysses is tired of his present life of inaction and wishes to escape it. He seems driven by a compelling urge to embark on a series of thrilling expeditions.

I cannot rest….vext the dim sea:

Ulysses has a passionate desire to undertake new adventures and he longs to free himself from the shackles of boredom and langour (listlessness). He craves for thrill and wants to experience whatever challenges life can offer. He is constantly reminded of the bygone days when he, along with the fellow-sailors, travelled far and wide. In those days he was held in high esteem by his mariners because they knew that he was a warrior par excellence. Nothing seemed to dissuade them from undertaking their thrilling voyages. They confronted bravely all the dangers such as the tumultuous waves of the sea when the drifting clouds rained terror

from Hyades, the group of stars which brings hail and rain. Ulysses craves for a life brimming over with knowledge, excitement and exploration.

I am become a name……plains of windy Troy.

Ulysses was one of the greatest names in the Trojan War. His fame has reached far and wide. Tennyson draws a poignant picture of his longing to break free from the life of bondage and inaction in Ithaca. Ulysses' travels to the various parts of the world have instilled in him an insatiable desire to seek even more knowledge and experience. He has met people belonging to the distant places and diverse cultures, and this has given him an insight into the subtleties of human nature across geographical boundaries. His skills as a warrior have also been widely recognized. He has always revelled in his victory in the raging battle of Troy. Having experienced the pinnacle of success, Ulysses finds it suffocating to be confined to an unexciting and monotonous existence in Ithaca.

I am a part of …….when I move.

Ulysses believes that all the varied experience he has got in the course of his life have shaped his personality. But he yearns for much more in life. He asserts that his experiences as a warrior are like an arch through which the unexplored world of adventures shines and beckons him. He finds it impossible to resist his urge to go to the sea once again. It seems to stretch endlessly in front of him and lures his hungry spirit.

How dull……human thought

We have seen that Ulysses craves for a life of adventure and feels that it is futile to let one self be constrained by worldly or material considerations. A passive existence leads to the sterility of the spirit just as iron starts rusting when it is not used. Life is not a mere mechanical process of breathing. It is only adventure that adds value, vigour and joy to human life. Ulysses realizes that he is at the fag end of his life. Yet he longs for another voyage which will instil a fresh lease of life in his spirit. He wishes to live every moment of life and wants to make the most of the remaining years before death overpowers him. For him, each day brings a fresh morning full of hope and enthusiasm. He yearns for unravelling the world of knowledge and visit uncharted lands which seem to lie beyond human reach.

This is my son…I mine.

As Ulysses resolves to chase his dream, he introduces us to his son Telemachus, who would take over the reins of his empire in his absence. He knows that his son will help the people of Ithaca become civilised so that they contribute to the good of their homeland. Ulysses is confident that Telemachus will prove to be a capable ruler who would pay due respect to the local gods and rituals after Ulysses is gone. Thus, nothing can deter Ulysses from undertaking another adventurous trip to the distant lands.

There lie …….with Gods.

It seems evident that Ulysses has an irresistible desire to travel to the unexplored corners of the world. The sight of the port and the ship puffing up her sails to set off on an adventurous voyage tempts him. The dark and immense sea beckons him. Ulysses calls upon his mariners who have confronted the challenges and perils of sea with unmatched grit and courage during

their adventurous trips, and exhorts them not to be dissuaded by their old age. He feels that even at this ripe age, one can achieve an honourable feat, for eventually death devours all. This adventure will be as glorious as their heroic battles with the gods in the Trojan War.

The light……until I die.

Ulysses is unable to resist the call of the sea any longer. As the lights shimmer through the rocks, a long day of inaction and insipidity draws to a close and the moon begins her journey upwards in the sky. When the sea makes a rumbling sound, Ulysses urges his fellow mariners to accompany him in this glorious expedition since it is never too late to tread the unfamiliar paths. He longs to sail to the farthest boundaries of the world, beyond the western stars. In Greek mythology, the abode of the souls of warriors and the blessed men is supposed to be in the west.

It may be …….not to yield.

Ulysses warns his fellow mariners that the world of adventures is beset with uncertainties and dangers. The turbulent waters of the vast sea may wash them all away or they may reach the land of the blessed souls in the farthest end of the western land. If so, there they will meet the great Greek heroes who fought in the Trojan War. Ulysses realizes well that they have achieved enough in their lives, but thinks that there is still a lot more to aspire for even at this age. They may not be as energetic as they were in their glorious years when they could move heaven and earth. But their spirits are as young and heroic as they were in their youthful days. They are ready to strive for new honour and glory as their spirits cannot be bowed down by the burden of age.

4.2.5. Glossary

i) Barren: a dry and bare land

ii) Crags: steep rocky cliff or a part of a mountain

iii) Savage: animal-like, uncivilised

iv) Scudding drifts: roaming clouds

v) Drink life to the lees: experience life to the hilt

vi) Hyades: a group of stars supposed to bring rain

vii) Sceptre: an ornamental rod carried by a king, a symbol of power

viii) Prudence: carefulness, caution

ix) Adoration: praise

x) Frolic welcome: face all the odds happily

4.2.6. Summing Up:

'Ulysses' by Alfred Lord Tennyson is about the invincible spirit of Ulysses, a great Greek of the Trojan War and the King of Ithaca. Having lived a life of war, adventure and exploration which won him great honour and recognition, Ulysses refuses to lead a life of stagnation after the war. He wishes to seek more knowledge, explore new lands and live every moment of life in thrill undeterred by his advancing age. Only death can put an end to his overwhelming desire to go to the sea and discover distant lands and cultures. The last line of the poem epitomises the goal of Ulysses' life – "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

4.2.7. Check your progress:

Fill in the blanks:

1. Ulysses is the King of _____

2. The aged wife of Ulysses is named _____

3. Ulysses compares his idle life to a _____

4. Ulysses wishes to leave his kingdom in the care of _____

5. Ulysses urges his fellow sailors to accompany him to seek _____

4.2.8. Exercises for Practice

Long Answer Questions

1. Trace the development of thought in the poem Ulysses.

2. What is the theme of Tennyson's poem 'Ulysses'.

3. Write a note on the character of Ulysses on the basis of your reading of 'Ulysses'.

Short answer Questions:

1. What kind of life is Ulysses leading in Ithaca?

2. How does Ulysses view his life on sea?

3. Why does Ulysses feel that it is dull to pause?

4. What does Ulysses say about his son Telemachus?

5. How does Ulysses justify that age cannot come in the way of his adventurous spree?

6. How does Ulysses exhort/ motivate his mariners to join him in the adventurous voyage?

4.3. Poem 3: 'My Last Duchess' by Robert Browning

4.3.1. About the Poet

Robert Browning was born on 7 May 1812 in a wealthy English family. He received his early education at home and later studied at the University of London. He started writing poetry at an early age and went on to become a prominent poet of the Victorian age. At a time when the Victorian society was passing through a rough phase due to the clash between faith and science, Browning wrote poems which reaffirmed his faith in Christian values. His robust optimism shines through all his work. He married Elizabeth Barrett, a noted poet in her own right. He is best known for writing dramatic monologues. He died in Venice on 12 December 1889.

Browning was a student of human nature but he was regarded as an obscure poet by his contemporaries because many his poems dealt with the eccentricities of man's behaviour. His work 'Sordello' was dismissed as incomprehensible. 'Men and Women' brought him some credit but 'The Ring and the Book' brought him recognition as a dramatic poet. He wrote many love poems as well. 'The Last Ride Together', 'Fra Lippo Lippi', 'Grammarian's Funeral' and 'My Last Duchess' are his most well known dramatic monologues.

4.3.2. About the Poem

This poem 'My Last Duchess' is a dramatic monologue which first appeared in 1842. It is presumed to be based on Alfonso II, the Duke of Ferrara, a state in the Renaissance Italy. The poem is a strong manifestation of the aristocratic vanity and social pretence which the nobility stands for. The complex character of the Duke and also his dead wife come alive in his pompous speeches as he tries to show his dead wife down and, in the process, exposes his own greed, jealousy and brazenness.

4.3.3. Defining a Dramatic Monologue:

Robert Browning introduced the dramatic monologue in English literature. A dramatic monologue begins *media res*, that is, in the middle of an action. Even though there is only one speaker throughout the piece, the reader can feel the presence of another person as the speaker refers to his gestures in the course of his monologue. This feature makes it a dramatic monologue. A very important feature of this genre is that the innermost layers of the speaker's soul are laid bare before us.

4.3.4. Text of the poem:

My Last Duchess

Robert Browning

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.

Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
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 the 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 whate'er
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 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 have not—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you 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 choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense

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, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

4.3.5. Stanza wise Explanation:

Line 1-13: That…ask thus.

Browning's dramatic monologue begins *medias res* or in the middle of an action. A visitor has come to meet the widowed Duke of Ferrara, Italy. The visitor is a messenger of a foreign Count and has come to seek the Duke's hand for the Count's daughter. The Duke draws the visitor's attention towards the portrait of his dead Duchess. He eulogises the Renaissance painter Fra Pandolf who had painted that life-like masterpiece. It is important to note that the painter was a Friar, a religious man committed to celibacy. The Duke informs the visitor that strangers were not allowed to catch a glimpse of the Duchess' passionate glance. That is why the portrait remained behind the curtain.

The poet reveals the complex character of the Duke who must have been a jealous husband to the last Duchess.

Line 13-21: Sir…of joy.

He points to the flush of colour in the cheek of the Duchess and says that it was not caused by the Duchess' bashful grace in the presence of her husband but due to the compliment that Fra Pandolf happened to pay while recreating her beauty. The Duke suspects that perhaps, the artist asked her to bare her wrist as the cloak covered her feminine charm. Or, perhaps, he had complimented her beauty by saying that art could never capture her faint blush or complexion as it reached close to her throat. She took such words as courtesy and blushed at the compliments offered by others.

Line 21- 31: She had …at least.

These lines depict the jealous Duke in his true colours. He resents the fact that the Duchess was an uninhibited person, brimming over with the joy of life. In fact, being a simple hearted girl, she was capable of enjoying each and every moment without conforming to the distinction of ranks. She had a genial temperament which the Duke did not appreciate as he was a vain and arrogant snob. He complains that she was easily made glad, and could not distinguish between the favour of being loved by the Duke or the joy of receiving cherries from some disgusting fool.

Line 31- 43: She thanked ... stoop

The Duke conveys to the messenger of the Count that his former wife smiled at every one and took delight in everything around her. He is evidently not charmed by her spontaneity. Her way of thanking ordinary people for every small gesture irritated the proud and egoist Duke. His aristocratic lineage of nine hundred years seemed to be of no value to the Duchess

and it was beneath his dignity to correct her or reprimand her for her free and untamed behaviour.

Line 43- 47. Oh sir, ... alive.

The Duke informs the visitor that his last Duchess showered smiles at everybody. She should have been more guarded in her behaviour. In a masterly stroke of understatement, the Duke says that as this practice on her part continued to grow, he gave orders and all the smiles stopped. What he actually means to say is that he passed orders for her to be executed. But now she looked in the portrait as if she were alive. In other words her portrait was truly life-like.

Line 47-56. Will't ... for me.

The Duke having informed the visitor about his last Duchess, takes him out of his room. Towards the end of the poem, the reader is told about the purpose of the Duke's speech. The visitor is an emissary from the Count for a marriage proposal for the Duke. The motive for apprising the visitor about the last Duchess' untamed behaviour is primarily to warn the next Duchess. Though he professes otherwise, the greedy Duke is looking forward to getting a rich dowry from the generous Count.

The Duke is very courteous to the visitor as he escorts him downstairs. Very eloquently, he draws the emissary's attention towards the statue of Neptune (Sea God) taming the sea-horse. He tells him that this rare work of art was cast in bronze by a great sculptor, Claus of Innsbruck especially for him. This shows his love of art over human beings. It also reflects the boastful nature of the Duke as he proudly tells the visitor that it is a rare work of art. Secondly, the Duke wants to convey the idea that he likes to tame people and control them according to his whims and fancies.

4.3.6. Glossary:

i) Fra Pandolf: an imaginary Renaissance painter, in whose name Fra stands for friar who had taken a vow of celibacy.

ii) Countenance: face

iii) Mantle: cloak

iv) Stoop: bend

v) Exceed the mark: crossed the limit

vi) Munificence: generosity

vii) Pretence: deceit

viii) Avowed: affirmed

ix) Rarity: a rare work of art

x) Claus of Innsbruck: a famous sculptor

4.3.7. Summing Up:

Thus, we find that in this dramatic monologue, the speaker reveals his own character as well as that of his wife through his speech. We find him a proud, hard-hearted and jealous husband who does not appreciate the simple and generous nature of his wife. Being jealous by nature, he suspects her of misconduct. For him, the relationship of marriage is not between equals but between a master and a slave. Unable to tolerate or change her nature, he gets her killed. He also conveys to the visitor his expectations from his new wife. Browning offers us an insight into the innermost caverns of the arrogant and avaricious Duke's psyche. His last speech proves that he likes to control people by intimidating them. The poem becomes a profound study of human nature as the Duke exposes his jealous and greedy nature.

4.3.8. Check your Progress:

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:
1. The picture on the wall was of the Duke's _____.
2. The life-like painting was made by _____.
3. The speaker in the poem is the Duke of _____.
4. 'My Last Duchess' is a _____ _____.
5. The pink spot on the lady's face was caused by the compliment paid by _____.
6. The Duke chose never to _____(blame, smile, stoop)
7. The Duke gave commands for the Duchess to be _____ (felicitated, executed, painted)
8. The Duke appears to be a _____ husband. (happy, jealous, sad).

4.3.9. Practice Exercises

Long Answer Questions
1. Write a critical appreciation of the poem 'My Last Duchess'.
2. Write a Character sketch of the Duke of Ferrara.
3 Bring out the salient features of the Duchess' nature.

Short answer Questions:
Q1): Comment on the beauty of the painting.
Q2) What does the Duke think of the Duchess?
Q3) Why didn't the Duke advise the Duchess to behave in a guarded manner?
Q4) Why does the Duke believe that his claim for a rich dowry is justified?
Q5) What is the significance of Neptune's statue in the poem?

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)
Semester III
Course Code:BAB32302T
Reading Poetry

UNIT-5 POETRY-III

STRUCTURE:

5.0 Objectives
5.1 Poem 1: 'Say not the Struggle not Availeth'
- **5.1.1. About the poet**
- **5.1.2. About the poem**
- **5.1.3. Text of the poem**
- **5.1.4. Explanation of lines**
- **5.1.5. Glossary**
- **5.1.6. Summing up**
- **5.1.7. Check your progress**
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5.2 Poem 2: 'A Prayer for My daughter'
- **5.2.1. About the poet**
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5.3 Poem 3: 'The Road not Taken'
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- **5.3.3. Text of the poem**
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- **5.3.5. Glossary**
- **5.3.6. Summing up**
- **5.3.7. Check your progress**
- **5.3.8. Questions for practice**

5.4 Poem 4: 'Journey of the Magi'
- **5.4.1. About the poet**
- **5.4.2. About the poem**
- **5.4.3. Text of the poem**
- **5.4.4. Explanation of lines**
- **5.4.5. Glossary**
- **5.4.6. Summing up**

5.4.7. Check your progress
5.4.8. Questions for practice

5.0. OBJECTIVES:

The chief objective of this lesson is to familiarize the students with the prominent works of A H Clough, W B Yeats, Robert Frost and T S Eliot.

- To acquaint the learners with other important works of these poets.
- To help the students understand and analyze the meaning hidden in the poems

- To familiarize the readers with various devices used by the poets
- To enable the students to understand the relationship between poetry and life.

5.1. POEM 1. 'SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NOT AVAILETH' BY ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

5.1.1. About the poet:

Arthur Hugh Clough was born in Liverpool, England in 1819 but he shifted to South Carolina, USA, where he spent his early years. For his higher education, he joined the Oxford University and became a tutor as well as a Fellow of Oriel College. After a few years, he came back to the USA and taught at Cambridge, Massachusetts. During this period, he befriended several intellectuals and poets including Matthew Arnold, R W Emerson and Charles Norton. He returned to England in 1853 to serve as an examiner in the Education office. He died in 1861 at Florence, Italy.

Clough published only two volumes of poetry and 29 short poems during his lifetime and remained neglected for long. His poetry has recently won recognition for its lyrical quality and its presentation of Victorian anxiety.

5.1.2. About the poem:

'Say not the Struggle not Availeth' is a short inspirational lyric which celebrates the value of hard work, labour and struggle. It asserts that no effort goes waste. So we should never give it up, nor ever lose hope. Constant and determined endeavour always leads to success. We should not be afraid of failure nor let it deter us or disappoint us. Courage and persistent hard work surely leads to success.

5.1.3: Text of the Poe:

Say not the Struggle not Availeth

Arthur Hugh Clough

Say not the struggle nought availeth,s
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

5.1.4. Explanation:

Stanza 1: The poet says that one must not say that hard work does not bear fruit. One must not believe that all effort and wounds suffered in the battlefield would yield nothing. Temporary setbacks or failures must not make us feel that the enemy or problems would never weaken or be overcome. Nor should one think that the situation would never change. The poet asserts that one must have faith in one's labour. No effort goes waste. Struggles always bear fruit and all the wounds had in the battle ground lead one to defeat the enemy. All things can be changed with a determined effort.

Stanza 2: At times, hope deceives us and we feel disappointed in life. But if hope is a deception, so is our fear of failure. Mostly, our fears are baseless and false. Sometimes, in a battle field, when we are overcome with a fear of defeat or failure, we do not realize that far away, hidden behind the thick smoke, our companions have chased the fleeing enemy and won the battle for us. Thus, it is very important to shun fear and embrace hope.

Stanza 3: This stanza conveys the idea that no effort goes in vain through an example of sea waves which seem to be striking against the rocks on the sea shore without gaining any ground. It appears to an onlooker that they are striking the shore uselessly as they do not seem to gain even an inch of ground. But the same little waves make inlets in the distant

creeks through which eventually, the sea water comes gushing during the high tide and covers a large area of land.

Stanza 4: The poet says that hope sustains life. One must not give up an effort believing it to be useless. To a man waiting for sunrise through the eastern window, the sun seems to rise very slowly and darkness appears to persist in the east. But when he looks towards the sky in the west, he realizes that the light of the sun has already lit up that side and brightened the entire firmament even though the sun itself is not visible to the eye in the east. Similarly, our efforts may appear to be slow in bearing results, but we must not lose hope.

5.1.5. Glossary:

Naught: nothing

Availeth: bears, results in

Faints: weakens

Dupe: deception

Yon: that

Concealed: hidden

Comrades: companions, fellow soldiers

Fliers: those fleeing the battle field

Possess the field: win the battle

Vainly: uselessly

Main: sea

5.1.6. Summing Up: The poem is a motivational lyric which conveys the idea that no effort is worthless, and no attempt goes waste. Consistent and sincere efforts always lead to success. We must not lose heart or hope if our immediate efforts do not lead to the desired result. Moreover, the fear of failure is unfounded. It weakens us. Courage and persistent effort contain the key to success.

5.1.7. Check your progress:

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

1. No effort ever goes _____.
2. If hopes are dupes, fears are _____.
3. Concealed by _____, your comrades may have won the battle for you.
4. The sun rises in the _____ but it lights up the _____ first.
5. The _____ strike against the rocks on the shore to make way for the _____ to flood the land.

5.1.8. Practice Exercises:

Long Answer Type:

1. Write the central idea of the poem.

2. What is the message of the poet in the poem 'Say not the Struggle naught Availeth'?

Short Answer Type:

1. What does the opening line of the poem mean?

2. What are the poet's views about hope?

3. What message does the example of sea waves convey?

4. What lesson is hidden in the rising sun?

5.2. POEM 2. 'A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER' BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

5.2.1. About the Poet

William Butler Yeats is regarded as one of the most prominent poets in English language in the first half of the twentieth century. He was the most significant figure in the Irish Cultural Movement who led to the revival of the ancient Irish literature. He played a pivotal role in establishing the famous Abbey Theatre in Dublin to promote Irish drama. Yeats was born in 1865 in Dublin, Ireland but went to London to pursue a literary career. Most of his poems were based on the themes of Irish mythology, legends and folklore and were marked by a dreamy, romantic and lyrical quality. However, as Yeats grew in age and experience, his style also became direct and dramatic. By the end of his long and fruitful career, Yeats came to be ranked among the most important Modern poets such as Ezra Pound, T S Eliot and W H Auden.

Yeats was also actively involved in the Irish freedom struggle against the British rule and wrote several poems on the theme of Nationalism. He also became a senator in the Irish Free State in 1922. Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1923. He died in 1939.

Some of Yeats' most well known poems include "Easter 1916", "The Second Coming", "A Prayer for My Daughter", "Sailing to Byzantium", "Two Trees", "Leda and the Swan", "Among School Children" etc.

5.2.2. About the Poem:

"A Prayer for My Daughter" is a Yeats' prayer for his infant daughter Ann Butler Yeats who was born on 24 February, 1919, a month after he wrote his renowned poem "The Second Coming."

Written in a deeply personal tone, this poem expresses Yeats' concern for his little daughter's future. He wants his daughter to grow up into an ideal woman – wise, noble and virtuous. He wants her to be beautiful but not so much as to distort her nature and destroy the gifts bestowed by God. He wants her to know how to win hearts and keep friends. Yeats prays

that his daughter should stay away from strong opinions, distrust and hatred. He hopes that when she marries, her husband's house would be full of rich traditions, custom and love. In reality, Yeats wishes his daughter to grow up like her mother, George Hyde Lees, rather than like Maud Gonne—a beautiful, strong-willed, radical and opinionated woman whom he had hopelessly loved for many years. Thus the poem presents to us Yeats' image of an ideal woman and his desire of a daughter who is ideal and virtuous in every way.

The poem consists of 10 stanzas, with 8 lines in each stanza. The rhyme scheme used by Yeats is aabbcddc.

5.2.3. Text of the poem:

A Prayer for My Daughter

W B Yeats

Once more the storm is howling, and half hid
Under this cradle-hood and coverlid
My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle
But Gregory's wood and one bare hill
Whereby the haystack- and roof-levelling wind,
Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;
And for an hour I have walked and prayed
Because of the great gloom that is in my mind.

I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour
And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,
And under the arches of the bridge, and scream
In the elms above the flooded stream;
Imagining in excited reverie
That the future years had come,
Dancing to a frenzied drum,
Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.

May she be granted beauty and yet not
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught,
Or hers before a looking-glass, for such,
Being made beautiful overmuch,
Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness and maybe
The heart-revealing intimacy
That chooses right, and never find a friend.

Helen being chosen found life flat and dull
And later had much trouble from a fool,
While that great Queen, that rose out of the spray,
Being fatherless could have her way
Yet chose a bandy-leggèd smith for man.
It's certain that fine women eat
A crazy salad with their meat
Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.

In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;
Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned
By those that are not entirely beautiful;
Yet many, that have played the fool
For beauty's very self, has charm made wise,
And many a poor man that has roved,
Loved and thought himself beloved,
From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.

May she become a flourishing hidden tree
That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,
And have no business but dispensing round
Their magnanimities of sound,
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,
Nor but in merriment a quarrel.
O may she live like some green laurel
Rooted in one dear perpetual place.

My mind, because the minds that I have loved,
The sort of beauty that I have approved,
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,
Yet knows that to be choked with hate
May well be of all evil chances chief.
If there's no hatred in a mind
Assault and battery of the wind
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.

An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman born
Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind?

Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
The soul recovers radical innocence
And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;
She can, though every face should scowl
And every windy quarter howl
Or every bellows burst, be happy still.

And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
For arrogance and hatred are the wares
Peddled in the thoroughfares.
How but in custom and in ceremony

Are innocence and beauty born?
Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

5.2.4. Explanation of the Poem:

Stanza I:

As the title suggests, this poem is a father's prayer for his infant daughter's bright, peaceful and prosperous future. The poet begins by comparing the restless weather outside with the peaceful sleep of the baby inside the house. A violent storm, born in the Atlantic Ocean is raging outside. Nothing seems capable of controlling its wild power or hindering its passage except the wood around Lady Gregory's estate and a hill which has no tree or shrub on it. The storm is so furious that it has shattered many roofs and haystacks. This restless weather represents not only the poet's state of mind but also the disturbance caused by the Irish war of independence and the political conditions prevailing in world in 1919, the year of the baby's birth and ending of the First World War. The child however, is unaware of the tumult outside and sleeps on peacefully in its cradle. The poet on the other hand, is worried about the dark future that he foresees.

Yeats' use of personal pronouns as in "my child', "I have walked" and "in my mind" shows that the personal tone and subjectivity of the poem.

Stanza II.

The second stanza of the poem is an extension of the first in the sense that the poet continues to describe the rough storm that has engulfed the entire landscape including the tower of his house Thoor Ballylee, the arches of the bridges and the elm trees growing along the flooded stream. He is pensive because he fears that the dreaded violent times of the future have already arrived and the noise of the wind which resembles the wild beating of a drum seems to announce the same. The beating of the drums is associated with a call for the members of a tribe to assemble and prepare for a battle. In the poem however, the "wild beating of the drum" refers to the fierceness of the rough winds rising from the sea.

Yeats applies the poetic device of **Oxymoron** in "murderous innocence"- two words with opposite import. The sea is seen as murderous because it has given rise to a dangerous storm, yet it is innocent because it bears no personal ill-will against anyone.

Stanza III

In the third stanza, the poet hopes that his little daughter would grow up to be a beautiful woman, but not excessively so (like Maud Gonne). It is because excessive beauty can distract a stranger's eye or lead to heart ache by making a stranger fall in love with her. Moreover, he feels that beauty can lead to conceit and pride. The poet does not want his daughter to regard beauty as a sufficient end in itself. She should not feel that there is nothing else to achieve in life. He fears that vanity (excessive pride) would make her lose her natural kindness and

emotional warmth. Without these virtues she would never be able to find a sincere friend or true love in life.

It is evident that Yeats values qualities like innocence, calmness, compassion and emotional warmth as more important than beauty in a woman. For him virtue is primary and beauty, secondary.

Stanza IV

In this stanza, Yeats offers examples from history and Greek mythology to prove his point made in the previous stanza. In these lines, he shows how three beautiful women, blinded by their pride, took wrong decisions in life and suffered endlessly. First, he cites the example of Helen of Troy, an extra-ordinarily beautiful woman who loved Paris but married Menelaus, a great Greek warrior. Menelaus admired and loved her only for her unmatched beauty. Bored with her married life, Helen eloped with her lover. This decision resulted in a terrible war between the Trojans and Greeks that lasted for years and caused immense destruction.

The second example Yeats offers is of Aphrodite, the Goddess of love and beauty who is said to have emerged out of sea foam. Being fatherless, she was free from all paternal control or authority, and enjoyed complete liberty to marry any man of her choice. However, led by her whims, she foolishly chose to marry an inferior man – a lame blacksmith. No wonder she suffered an unhappy marriage.

The third woman whom Yeats refers to is Maud Gonne – the amazingly attractive, fire brand revolutionary and Irish freedom fighter -- who also made a mistake by marrying McBride. The marriage didn't last and she lived a lonely life after their separation.

The poet does not want his daughter to make similar mistakes in her youth. He displays how women of beauty, talent and culture make wrong choices of partners in life because of their pride. Consequently they lead unhappy lives. He fears that instead of taking wholesome meat, such women prefer to take some "crazy salad" (i.e. prefer mates of inferior qualities) leading to the ruin of the Horn of Plenty and their joys. The "Horn of Plenty" or Cornucopia, according to a Greek myth, is a goat's horn which is forever overflowing with flowers, fruit and grains. This gift of God Zeus is a symbol of plentifulness and prosperity.

What he means to say through "the horn of plenty is undone" that women such as Helen, Aphrodite and Maud Gonne, who were gifted with unmatched beauty, talent, grace and prosperity, wasted these gifts away by marrying foolishly. Their pride in their own beauty blinded them to the virtues of others. Yeats wishes his daughter not to do so.

Stanza V

Yeats wants his daughter to be courteous because he knows that only courtesy can help one win hearts. Hearts are not offered as gifts. They have to be won with kindness and goodness, especially by "those that are not entirely beautiful". The obvious reference here is to Yeats' wife George Hyde Lees who was not as beautiful as Maud Gonne, yet she won the poet's heart with her gentle, caring and pleasing nature. He therefore pities all those men, including his own self, who fall hopelessly in love with beautiful women and never get their love in return. Such men, he confesses, have learnt their lesson from kind women who offered them kindness, courtesy and their unconditional love.

Thus, Yeats wants his daughter to grow up into a kind and gentle woman like her mother rather than a beautiful but proud woman like Maud Gonne. He confesses that he had fallen in love with her and foolishly believed that she too reciprocated his feelings. However, it was not so. With time he realized that his love was of no value to her, and that he was merely wasting his time. Thereafter he acted wisely and married George Hyde Lees who offered him love, care and a "glad kindness."

Stanza VI

In this stanza, Yeats wishes his daughter to grow and prosper like a flourishing tree, in quiet and peaceful environs away from public gaze. He wants her thoughts to be as bright, pleasant and sweet as the songs of the linnet bird that scatters the beauty of its sweet voice all around. He does not wish her to possess an argumentative or irritable nature because these arouse conflicts and friction. Instead, he wants her to be blessed with a generos spirit. He would not want her to enter into any competition out of jealousy, or get involved in any conflict except in amusement. In fact, Yeats wants his daughter to resemble a laurel tree which is evergreen and rooted firmly to a spot. In other words, he wants her to be stable, steady and firm in her life like a laurel tree.

In this stanza Yeats uses **Similes** to draw comparisons between his daughter and a linnet ("That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,") and a laurel tree (O may she live like some green laurel).

Stanza VII

In these lines, the poet seems to introspect (i.e. look into himself) and confesses that in the past, he used to admire and love those people who caused him great pain and disappointment later on. The conduct of such people has withered his spirit and filled his heart with deep dislike. However, he asserts emphatically that hatred is destructive and therefore it must be avoided. A person who stays away from such strong feelings is capable of overcoming all storms and challenges of life. No harm can touch him. Thus, Yeats wishes his daughter to stay away from all kinds of negative and regressive feelings.

Stanza VIII

Elaborating upon the idea conveyed in the earlier stanza, Yeats observes that "intellectual hatred", the kind that Maud Gonne had in her heart against the British, is the worst kind of hatred. He does not want his daughter to have such a strongly opinionated mind because it leads to unhappiness and misery. Yeats gives the example of Maud Gonne once again to show how one of the loveliest women born into an affluent and aristocratic family bartered (i.e. exchanged) her prosperity, nobility of birth and breeding to become a revolutionary. As a political activist she was always busy shouting angrily against those she hated i.e. the British.

What these lines suggest is that the poet wants his daughter to use all the gifts of nature wisely and stay away from hatred.

Stanza IX

Dwelling upon the ill effects of hatred, Yeats observes that if all hatred is driven from the human heart, the soul regains its childlike innocence, the original state of purity. One realizes that the seeds of both, joy and sorrow lie within one's own self. Moreover, a soul free from

hatred is always guided by God's own will. It is therefore able to find eternal joy despite all criticism, opposition, and hostility that may surround it.

What Yeats suggests is that if his daughter nurtures love and kindness in her heart, no criticism can ever trouble her. She would always be happy.

Stanza X

In the final stanza we find Yeats thinking about his daughter's marriage. He wishes that when she grows up, she should marry a man whose family believes in custom and ceremony instead of harbouring arrogance and hatred. He wants the groom's family to be refined and cultured so that it is able to value his daughter's virtues. He believes that joy, beauty and innocence are born only in the care of custom and ceremony. Yeats was an admirer of aristocratic life style and had a great regard for courtesy, etiquette and refinement of conduct. These qualities, according to him, distinguished the cultured from the ordinary. As a typical loving father, he wishes his daughter to marry into a rich and prosperous family where customs and traditions flourish forever like the evergreen laurel tree.

5.2.5. Glossary

Howling : crying

Cradle hood: the crib in which the baby is sleeping.

Bare hill: barren hill

Obstacle: impediment, hurdle

Lady Gregory: a dear friend of Yeats

Haystack and roofs: fierce wind strong enough to level stacks of hay and rooftops

Bred : born

Elms: a kind of trees

Reverie: day dreaming

Frenzied drum: loud noise of drums announcing the arrival of a new era

Murderous: dangerous, hostile

Distraught: distract, divert

Intimacy: closeness to heart

That chooses right: which makes the right choice

Helen: Helen of Troy, a very beautiful woman who was married to Menelaus, but she eloped with Paris, her lover. This led to the Trojan War

Great Queen: Venus/Aphrodite who married Hephaestus, the ironsmith of Gods.

Rose out of the spray: Venus is said to have risen from the sea

Crazy salad: strange, eccentric behaviour

Horn of plenty: a Horn gifted by Zeus to Cornucopia which could fulfil all the wishes of the holder, symbol of prosperity and pleny

Roved: wandered about

Glad kindness: cheerfulness

Flourishing hidden tree: growing without showing itself off

Linnet: a little bird

Dispensing around: spreading

Magnanimities of sound: greatness of music

Chase: follow, run after

Laurel: an evergreen tree associated with knowledge and wisdom

Perpetual place: same place

Prosper: grow, flourish

Choked: suffocated

Assault and battery: physical attack

Accursed: blighted with a curse

The loveliest woman: Maud Gonne, whose beauty had bewitched Yeats

Plenty's horn: the Horn of Plenty

Opinionated: having very strong opinions

Barter: exchange

Radical: original, immediate

Self appeasing: self satisfying

Self affrighting: self controlling

Scowl: make angry face

Howl: shout loudly

Bellows: an instrument to pump air

Accustomed: used to

Ceremonious: full of ceremony

Arrogance: rudeness, emerging from pride

Wares: objects

Thorough fare: public road or street

Spreading laurel tree: prospering evergreen tree

5.2.6. Summing Up:

W B Yeats prays that his daughter grows up into an ideal woman, wise and virtuous, in an atmosphere safe from political disturbance. He wants her to be beautiful but not so much as to distort her nature and destroy the gifts offered by God. He wants her to learn how to win hearts and keep friends. She should stay away from strong opinions, distrust and hatred. He

hopes that when she marries, her house would be full of custom and love. Yeats wishes her to grow up like her mother, and not harbor hatred, radical thoughts and strong opinions in her heart. The poem presents to us Yeats' image of an ideal woman and his dream of having a daughter who is ideal and virtuous in every way.

5.2.7. Check your progress:

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

1. What is howling in the opening lines of the poem?
_____(A tempest, A child, A storm)

2. The mood of the poet is _____(grave, happy, disinterested)

3. Yeats compares the noise made by the wind to the sound of a _____.

4. He wants his daughter to be _____(extremely beautiful, tolerably beautiful, beautiful but not over much)

5. According to Yeats, beautiful women ate a crazy salad whereby _____ was undone.

6. The poet wanted his daughter to be chiefly learned in _____(courtesy, cookery, beauty)

7. He wanted her to be firm and flourishing like a green _____ tree. (peepal, pine, laurel)

8. According to Yeats, _____hatred is the worst evil. (physical, emotional, intellectual)

9. A pure heart, free from _____is led by God. (beauty, hatred, jealousy)

5.2.8. Practice Exercises:

Long Answer Type Questions

1. Comment upon the main idea of the poem.
2. Write a critical appreciation of the poem "A Prayer for my Daughter."

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Describe the storm as presented by the poet.
2. What kind of beauty does Yeats wish for his daughter?
3. Which examples are cited by Yeats to show how extremely beautiful women land in trouble?
4. What does "Horn of Plenty" stand for?
5. Why does Yeats compare his daughter to a laurel tree?
6. Why does Yeats want his daughter to learn courtesy?
7. What happens to the soul once "intellectual hatred" is driven from it?
8. What kind of a groom and house the poet wish his daughter to have?

5.3. POEM 3. 'THE ROAD NOT TAKEN' BY ROBERT FROST

5.3.1. About the Poet:

Robert Frost was born in 1874 in San Francisco, USA and is ranked among the most prominent American poets. After the death of his father in 1885, Frost was forced to quit his studies and support his family by teaching. However, the untimely deaths of his wife, son and daughter pushed him into a deep depression. In 1912, he moved to England and published his first two collections of poems titles *A Boy's Will* (1913) and *North of Boston* (1914) which were well appreciated. His friendship with noted literary figures of the times such as Ezra Pound and Edward Thomas widened his exposure. He returned to the USA in 1915 and settled in a farm in New England; a region with which his poetry identifies. Most of his poems are short lyrics written in simple language. They explore man's efforts to make sense of the world, or study the relationship between man and God in the modern world. He was the first poet to be awarded the coveted Pulitzer Prize three times in his poetic career.

Other important works: 'Mending Wall', 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening', 'Birches', 'The Onset', 'Neither Out Nor Far in Deep', 'Death of the Hired Man' etc.

5.3.2. About the poem:

'The Road Not Taken' is ranked among one of the most well known works of Robert Frost. Published in 1916, this poem pertains to the condition of everyman. Its apparent simplicity hides complex and multiple meanings. The poet lends a touch of ambiguity by leaving it open ended for interpretation. The poet asserts that all human beings have to make certain choices in life. His eventual success or failure depends on his decision made in the past. It is only future that can tell whether the choices made earlier were right or wrong. The speaker in the poem was faced with a choice between two roads, and he chose the one less travelled by - a decision which impacted his life and "made all the difference." He does not however, clarify whether that decision was right or wrong.

5.3.3. Text of the Poem:

The Road Not Taken
Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

5.3.4. Explanation:

Stanza 1: Once the poet while crossing a wood reached a turning point where two roads bifurcated in front of him. Since he could not walk on both the roads, he had to choose one. He took some time to take his decision and tried to assess both options before making his choice.

Stanza 2: The poet faced a dilemma as both looked equally attractive. After giving a thought to the pros and cons of both, he decided to take the one less travelled by. It looked green, attractive and un-trodden. However, after travelling on that passage for some time, he realized that it wasn't as un-trodden as it had appeared to be.

Stanza 3: He recalls the morning when both the roads lay in front of him, covered with freshly shed yellow leaves in the autumn wood. This had made it difficult for him to make the right choice. He chose to take the second one, thinking that he would come back one day and take the first one. However, he soon realized that the road of his choice would take him to new lands and destination. It would become impossible for him to come back and reverse his decision.

Stanza 4: The last stanza takes us into the future when the poet, after reaching the destination the road leads to, would be able to tell whether his choice made in the past was right or wrong. It is only in the future that while recounting the story of his life to his future generations, he would be able to comment on the aptness of his decision. Here, the poet ceases to be an individual. He becomes a representative of the entire mankind, an everyman. The use of 'sigh' is ambiguous. We do not know whether it is a sigh of relief that follows a

successful journey or a sigh of dejection that follows failure and heartbreak. The last three lines are a repetition of the opening lines, thus ending the poem where it began. This lends it a circular structure. The last line "And that has made all the difference" carries the essence of the poem.

5.3.5. Glossary:

Two roads: two choices or options

Yellow wood: forest in autumn when the leaves turn yellow

Long I stood: he took a long time to take his decision

Ages and ages hence: a long time in future

I shall: the tense changes from past to future

5.3.6. Summing Up:

It is a truth of human existence that everyone has to make certain choices in life. It is not certain whether he will make the right choice or not. Man has his own limitations and cannot foresee the future. Hence, he is bound to make mistakes in his decisions. But once a choice is made, he cannot reverse it. Once you have taken a road, you will go where it leads. The road decides your destination. Just as you cannot go back to your childhood, you cannot travel back in time to reverse or change your decision. In fact, the difficulty in making a decision arises from the fear of not knowing if the choice is right or wrong. Only the future holds the key to it.

5.3.7. Check your progress:

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

1. 'The Road Not Taken' has been written by _____.
2. The season described in the opening lines is _____.
3. The poet took the _____road because it was _____.
4. He kept the first road for _____.
5. He will be telling his progeny with a _____in the _____ about his decision.

5.3.8. Exercises for Practice:

Long questions:

1. Trace the development of thought in the poem 'The Road Not Taken.'
2. Write the central idea of the poem 'The Road Not Taken.'

Short questions:

1. Describe the two roads that lay in front of the poet.
2. Which road did the poet finally take and why?
3. What did he realize after travelling some distance on it?

4. What does the poet come to know in the future?

5.4. POEM 4. 'THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI' BY T S ELIOT

5.4.1. About the Poet:

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born at St. Louis, Missourie, USA in 1888 into a renowned family of educators. He studied at Harvard and then at Oxford in England. After shifting his base to London, he rose to eminence. Eliot was a great poet, critic and playwright who played a very prominent role in moulding (giving shape to) the modern poetry. His own poems are marked by the use of myths, and allusions to the great works of the past which make his style complex and difficult.

Eliot's other major works include "The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock", "The Waste Land", "The Hollow Men", "Ash Wednesday", "Gerontion", "Four Quartrets" etc. Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1948 for his unique contribution to English poetry. He died in 1965.

5.4.2. About the Poem:

"The Journey of the Magi" was published in August, 1927. Its story has been borrowed from the Gospel of St. Mathews in 'The New Testament' of *The Bible*. The poem describes the arduous (difficult) journey undertaken by three wise men or three kings of the East, called the Magi. Led by a bright star these wise men set out to pay their respects and rich gifts to the newly born Jesus Christ. The poem is a dramatic monologue in which one of the travelers gives an account of the difficulties faced by them during this long, dangerous and tiring journey.

5.4.3. Text of the poem:

The Journey of the Magi

T S Eliot

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,

And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.
Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.
All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death."

5.4.4. Explanation of the Poem:

The opening lines of the poem, which are uttered by one of the Magi, three Wise Men from the East, describe the beginning of the arduous journey which they undertook on the day of Christ's birth, 25th of December, the coldest time of the year. This long and difficult journey started in an extremely cold, unkind and rough weather. It was unbearable even for the camels who got afflicted with painful sores on various parts of their bodies including their feet. Due to their suffering they refused to obey their riders and instead lay down in the melting snow.

The journey was so difficult that it shook the confidence of the travelers. At times these wise men were overcome with doubts and regret at having embarked upon it. They were reminded of other beautiful places with lovely summers and palaces on the hill slopes where beautiful young women in soft silken dresses offered sherbet to tired travelers like them.

In the second stanza, the speaker gives a further account of the problems faced by the travelers on their way to Bethlehem. The camel men/drivers of the Magi, unhappy with their situation, grumbled and complained, and at times ran away as they wanted liquor and women. On many occasions the Magi could not find suitable shelter and the fire would die out soon. Moreover, the city and town dwellers whom they passed on their way were unfriendly, hostile and refused to help them. The villages they crossed were dirty yet costly. Since they were having a very rough time during the day, they decided to travel all through the night and slept either in parts or by turns. They would hear strange voices ringing in their ears telling them their decision to undertake this journey was indeed foolish.

At last after travelling throughout the night the travelers reached a temperate (gentle) valley at the break of dawn. For the first time they saw water in place of snow, green vegetation, a running stream and a water mill signifying a village nearby. They also came across three trees which represented three crosses on which Christ and two thieves were crucified. Later they also saw an old white horse that ran in the grassland symbolizing Christ riding on a white stallion in his second arrival.

The Magi then reached an inn with vine leaves decorating its doors and window lintels. Inside they saw three men playing dice for 30 pieces (coins) of silver. The reference here is to the betrayal of Christ by one of his followers named Judas who had deceived him for 30 silver coins. Finally, they saw a group of drunken men kicking the empty wine–skins (bags made of animal skins which were used to contain wine/water) signifying their rejection of the worn out (old) practices and faith. Thus, the Wise Men came across varied signs which predicted Christ's betrayal and crucifixion but they did not get any clear information about the exact location of the place of Christ's birth. However, they managed to reach there in the evening well in time and realized that the place was absolutely unsuitable and unimpressive. Nevertheless, the Magi paid their respects and offered gifts which they had brought with them to the baby Christ and started their return journey.

The last 12 lines of the poem bring out the psychological transformation in the Magi after seeing baby Christ, and the strange symbols associated with him on the way. The speaker is one of the Magi, who remembers this arduous journey and other related events of the past, confesses that though they had to face many hardships on the way, yet he has no regrets. In fact, he asserts that he is ready to undertake the same journey once again but is yet to decide or settle the purpose of the journey. He is still confused if they had seen the birth or death of Jesus Christ. This was as agonizing as the journey they had undertaken. He agrees strongly that they witnessed the birth of Christ, a symbol of the birth of a new order. But they also saw his death, his crucifixion which was extremely painful, as painful as one's own death.

So, the Magi returned to their native places and kingdoms which still practised old religious practices. This made them restless and uncomfortable. The sight of these people who clutched on to their traditional order and modes of worship disturbed these men. Since they had witnessed the birth of a new order, it was painful for them to adjust to the old system. Only death, they felt, would perhaps relieve them of this suffering so that their transformation into true Christians is complete. Thus, the journey turned out to be a spiritual quest for these Wise Men.

5.4.5. Glossary:

Magi: Wise men

"A cold coming …winter" : Words of Bishop Lancelot Andrews in the presence of King James I on Christmas Day, 1622.

Sharp: inhospitable, unkind

Galled: suffering from sores

Refractory: disobedient, reluctant to obey

Silken girls: girls dressed in silk

Grumbling: complaining

Hostile: inimical, unfriendly

Snatches: short spells

Temperate valley: a valley with mild climate

Voices: inner voice discouraging from undertaking the journey

Three trees: suggesting the three crosses on Cavalry where Christ along with two thieves was crucified

Old white horse: signifying Christ riding a white horse in glory

Meadows: grasslands

Tavern: inn

Vine leaves: leaves of a creeper

Lintel: horizontal wood on a door or front window as a support

Dicing: playing the game of dice

Pieces of silver: coins of silver

Wine-skin: containers made of animal skin filled with wine

Agony: pain, suffering

Birth and Death: reference to Christ's birth and execution

At ease: comfortable

Dispensation: order

Alien: strange

5.4.6. Summing Up:

For T S Eliot, the journey of the Magi is symbolic of a spiritual quest (search) which is always difficult and dangerous. It is so as it leads to the death of old faith and the adoption of a new one. The poem reminds us of Eliot's own conversion to Anglicanism and the difficulties he faced in his spiritual re-birth. The poet also conveys the idea that the journey towards spiritual goals is an arduous one and fraught with impediments, distractions and perils. The poem is full of hidden meanings.

5.4.7. Check your progress:

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

1. 'The Journey of the Magi' is about the _____(physical, spiritual, emotional) quest of three wise men.

2. When they began their journey, the weather was _____ (extremely cold, extremely hot, extremely pleasant)

3. On the way, the travellers were reminded of _____(their homes, summer palaces, mountains)

4. They found the towns and cities on the way _____ (friendly, hostile, courteous)

5. They had a _____time. (hard, wonderful, pleasant)

6. At dawn they reached a _____ valley. (polar, tropical, temperate)

7. In the tavern, they saw signs of Christ's _____. (birth, betrayal, death)

5.4.8. Practice Exercises:

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Give an account of the difficulties faced by the Magi during their journey.
2. Discuss the journey of the Magi as a spiritual quest.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Describe the purpose of the journey undertaken by the Magi.
2. Describe the weather conditions during the journey of Magi
3. Where did the Magi reach at dawn?
4. What did the Magi see in the inn?
5. What did the Magi experience on reaching their destination?
6. Why is the birth of Christ described as painful for the Magi?
7. What did the Magi experience on coming back to their native places?

UNIT 6- LITERARY TERMS

STRUCTURE

6.0 Objectives

6.1 Introduction to Literary Terms

6.2 Metaphysical Poetry

6.2.1 Questions for Comprehension

6.3 Romantic Poets

6.3.1 Questions for Comprehension

6.4 Pre-Raphaelite Poetry

6.4.1 Questions for Comprehension

6.5 Reading Suggestions

6.6 Check Your Progress

6.0 OBJECTIVES:

After a careful reading of this Unit you will be able to:

- **Write explanation of given literary terms**
- **Analyze different ways of understanding poetry or other literary texts**
- **Appreciate the writing style of the poets**
- **Identify the devices used by the writers/ poets to create a particular style**

6.1 INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY TERMS

Dear readers, literary terms are used to refer to eras, techniques, styles and formatting used by writers from time to time. It includes powerful figurative language that writers use to summon emotions in newer ways. Literary terms have a wide range of applications, from the text's aesthetics to persuasion to development. They allow writers and speakers to make comments on society, politics and trends. Literary terms are created or coined by historians/ philosophers/ critics/writers to classify a certain type of a text that becomes an identifiable marker for them. Here are some for you.

6.2 METAPHYSICAL POETRY

Literary critic and poet Samuel Johnson first coined the term 'metaphysical poetry' in his book *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1179-1781). In the book, Johnson wrote about a group of 17th-century British poets that included John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell, Cleveland, Traherene and Henry Vaughan. He noted how the poets shared many common characteristics, especially wit and intricate style. According to the Mariam Webster Dictionary, "Metaphysical poetry is highly intellectualized poetry marked by bold and ingenious conceits, incongruous imagery, complexity and subtlety of thought, frequent use of paradox, and often by deliberate harshness or rigidity of expression".

The word 'meta' means 'after or beyond' so the literal translation of 'metaphysical' is 'after or beyond the physical.' Basically, metaphysics deals with questions that cannot be explained by science. It questions the nature of reality in a philosophical way. Some common metaphysical questions challenge; the existence of God, natural appearance of things, reality and perception, free choice and consciousness of the human brain. Metaphysics covers a broad range of topics from religion to consciousness; however, all the questions about metaphysics primarily ponder on the nature of reality.

Metaphysical poetry was at its peak during the seventeenth century in England. During this period poets relaxed their previously strict use of meter and explored new ideas. Perhaps the most common characteristic of metaphysical poetry is that it contained large doses of wit, sought to shock the reader in order to question the unquestionable. The poetry often mixed ordinary speech with paradoxes and puns. The results were strange, comparing unlikely things, such as lovers to a compass or the soul to a drop of dew. These weird comparisons were called 'conceits-an external metaphor'. It became the characteristic feature of Metaphysical poetry. For example in John Donne's poem 'The Flea', he compares the flea to a marriage bed, having noted that it has sucked the blood from both himself and his mistress: "Oh stay, there lives in one flea spare, Where we almost, yea more than married are, This flea is you and I, and this our marriage bed, and marriage temple is the flea". Donne rejected forceful interference of the sun in the lover's mutual time saying, "... Must to thy motions lover's seasons run? Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide late school boys and sour prentices, go tell them court huntsmen that the king will ride, call country ants to harvest offices...". It is

one of Donne's most celebrated poems and chastises the sun for peeping through the curtains and rousing him and his beloved.

Observe Richard Crashaw's description of tearful eyes of the repentant Magdalene in the poem 'Saint Mary Magdalene "two faithful fountains, two walking baths, two weeping motions, portable and compendious oceans". Andrew Marvell (1621-78) in 'The Definition of Love' mentions, "As lines, so loves oblique may well, themselves in every great; But ours so truly parallel, though infinite, can never meet."

These poets have had admirers in every age, but beginning with the neo-classical period of the later seventeenth century, they were by most critics and readers regarded as interesting but defiantly imaginative and 'obscure exponents of false wit'. The term received a re-emphasis in the 1930s and 40s, largely because of T.S. Eliot's influential essay "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), a review of Herbert J.C. Grierson's anthology *Metaphysical Lyrics & Poems of the Seventeenth Century*. In this essay Eliot argued that the works of these men embody a fusion of thought and feeling that later poets were unable to achieve because of a "dissociation of sensibility," which resulted in works that were either intellectual or emotional but not both at once. Some of the great metaphysical poetry works by metaphysical poets include: *The Flea, The Sun Rising, A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning, Death Be Not Proud,* by John Donne, *The Collar, The Pulley,* by George Herbert, *The Retreat,* by Henry Vaughan, *The Definition of Love, To His Coy Mistress,* by Andrew Marvell, etc.

Metaphysical poetry is to be read and comprehended with a broader perspective as it is interplay between the world of the mind and the playful world. It is not purposely trying to convince readers to think in a certain way but it propounds a newer philosophy. The challenging approach of such poetry develops the concentration of readers on the things that exist beyond this physical world. It also permits the poets to state their inner thoughts in the poetry though higher cognitive skills are required to comprehend the abstract ideas and concepts coined in metaphysical texts of poetry. To conclude, metaphysical poetry is concerned with the whole experience of man, the intelligence, the learning about love, romantic and sensual about man's relationship with God and the eternal perspective.

6.2.1: Questions for Comprehension

1. Explain the term Metaphysical Poetry.

2. How did the metaphysical poets use conceits?

.....
.....

6.3 ROMANTIC POETS

Romantic poetry is the poetry of the Romantic Era, an artistic, literary, musical, intellectual and legendary movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the 18th century. It was partly a reaction against the prevailing industrial revolution and, the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment ideas of the 18th century, and lasted approximately from 1800 to 1850. Romanticism was nothing short of a revolution in how poets understood their art, its attribution, and its credits. It was also a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature.

In Britain, Romanticism was not a single unified movement, consolidated around any one person, place, moment, or manifesto, and the various schools, styles, and stances. Yet all of Romanticism's products exploded out of the certain similar set of contexts: revolutions in the United States (1776) and the French Revolution (1789). Emboldened by the era's revolutionary spirit, Romantic poets invented new literary forms and argued radical ideas. Romantic poets also did justice to the disadvantaged, to those marginalized or forgotten by an increasingly urban and commercial culture—rural workers, children, the poor, the elderly, or the disabled, simply by foregrounding the poet's own subjectivity at its most idiosyncratic or experimental.

Romantic poets, the most famous ones being John Keats, William Wordsworth, Percy B. Shelley Robert Frost, William Blake, Lord Byron, Mary Shelley, Robert Burns, validated strong emotions as an authentic source of aesthetic experience, placing new emphasis on imagination, untamed nature and feelings. To William Wordsworth poetry should be 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'; in order to truly express these feelings, the content of art must come from the imagination of the artist, with as little interference as possible from 'artificial' rules dictating what a work should consist of.

In contrast to the usually very social art of the Enlightenment, romantic poets had a close connection with human world and nature and they addressed their audiences/readers so frequently that the reader could identify with the protagonists/poets. According to Isaiah Berlin, Romanticism embodied 'a new and restless spirit, seeking violently to burst through old and cramping forms, a nervous preoccupation with perpetually changing inner states of consciousness, a longing for the unbounded and the indefinable, for perpetual movement and change, an effort to return to the forgotten sources of life, a passionate effort at self assertion both individual and collective, a search after the means of expressing an unappeasable yearning for unattainable goals'. To validate the same, here are some examples of romantic poets and their exemplary work:

a. William Wordsworth, '*My heart leaps up*'.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die …

This simple poem describes how the poet is filled with joy when he sees a rainbow, and a joy that was there when the poet was very young, is still there now he has attained adulthood, and – he trusts – will be with him until the end of his days. The poem contains Wordsworth's famous declaration, 'The Child is father of the Man', highlighting how important childhood experience was to the Romantics in helping to shape the human beings they became in adult life.

b. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ***The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*****.**

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

'God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?'—With my cross-bow
I shot the ALBATROSS …

Written in 1797-8, this is Coleridge's most famous poem – it first appeared in *Lyrical Ballads*. The idea of killing an albatross bringing bad luck upon the crew of a ship appears to have been invented in this poem, as there is no precedent for it. The poem is one of the great

narrative poems in English, with the old mariner recounting his story, with its hardships and tragedy, to a wedding guest. Variously interpreted as being about guilt over the transatlantic slave trade, about Coleridge's own loneliness, and about spiritual salvation, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* remains a challenging poem whose ultimate meaning is elusive.

c. Percy B. Shelley, *To a Skylark*.

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art …

Shelley completed this, one of his most famous poems, in June 1820. The inspiration for the poem was an evening walk Shelley took with his wife, Mary, in Livorno, in north-west Italy. Mary later described the circumstances that gave rise to the poem: 'It was on a beautiful summer evening while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the skylark. Shelley asks the bird to teach him just half the happiness the bird must know, in order to produce such beautiful music. If the skylark granted the poet his wish, he – Shelley – would start singing such delirious, harmonious music that the world would listen to him, much as he is listening, enraptured, to the skylark right now.

d. John Keats, '*Ode to a Nightingale*'.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

...
that thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease …

From its opening simile likening the poet's mental state to the effects of drinking hemlock, to the poem's later references to 'a draught of vintage' and 'a beaker full of the warm South'. 'Ode to a Nightingale' is about the poet's experience of listening to the beautiful song of the nightingale. By the nightingale's heartbreakingly beautiful song, he feels as though he'd drunk the numbing poison hemlock or the similarly numbing (though less deadly) drug, opium. He is forgetting everything: it's as though he's heading to Lethe ('Lethe-wards', as in 'towards Lethe'), the river of forgetfulness in Greek mythology. The contrast between

mortality and immortality, between the real world and the enchanted world has been brought about by the nightingale's song.

e. **William Wordsworth, '*I wandered lonely as a cloud*'.**

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze …

Often known simply as 'The Daffodils' this lyric enjoys the status of being one of the most famous poems of English Romanticism, and sees the poet celebrating the 'host of golden daffodils'. The poem was actually a collaboration between Wordsworth, his sister Dorothy (whose notes helped to inspire it), and Wordsworth's wife, Mary. One fine day they were walking around Glencoyne Bay and they came upon a 'long belt' of daffodils, and this became a muse for the poet. Wordsworth spun it in this phenomenal poem and since then it has been relished by one and all. The simplicity yet extraordinariness of the poem have earned it a place in almost every curriculum around the world and is relished by one and all.

Romanticism was arguably the largest artistic movement of the late 1700s. Its influence was felt across continents and through every artistic discipline into the mid-nineteenth century and many of its values and beliefs can still be seen in contemporary poetry. Romantic poets cultivated individualism, originality, regard for the natural world, social idealism, physical and emotional passions and a keen interest in mysticism and supernaturalism. Romantic poets set themselves in opposition to the order and rationality offered by the classical and neo-classical poets to embrace freedom and revolution in art and literature. Romantic ideals set deep roots and never died out in poetry but were largely absorbed into the percepts of many other surreal movements.

6.3.1 Questions for Comprehension

1. Explain the term Romantic Poetry?

2. What makes the Romantic poets different from the others?

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6.4 PRE-RAPHAELITE POETRY

The Pre-Raphaelites were a secret society of young artists (and one writer), founded in London in 1848. They were opposed to the Royal Academy's promotion of the ideal as exemplified in the work of Raphael (Fifteenth century Italian painter and architect of the High Renaissance). The name Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood referred to the groups' opposition to the Royal Academy's promotion of the Renaissance master Raphael. They were also in revolt against the triviality of the immensely popular genre painting of time. The Pre-Raphaelites' commitment to sincerity, simplicity, and moral seriousness is evident in the contemplative but uncomplicated subjects of its poetry and in the religious, mythical, and literary subjects depicted in its paintings. While a relatively short-lived movement, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had a profoundly influential effect on the course of Victorian literature and art.

The Pre-Raphaelite movement during the Victorian era was an idealistic reaction against the didacticism moral fervor, and pre-occupation of poets and novelists with contemporary society. In the reign of Queen Victoria there was a growing tendency to make literature a handmaiden social reform and an instrument for the propagation of moral and spiritual ideas. Literature became the vehicle of social, political, and moral problems confronting the Victorian age. Ruskin, Carlyle, Dickens were engaged in attacking the evils rampant in the society of their times. So the movement was against these pre-occupation of poets, prose writers, and novelists with the mundane problems of their times, that a set of high -spirited artists formed this group.

Inspired by the theories of John Ruskin, who urged artists to 'go to nature'; the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood believed in an art of serious subjects treated with maximum realism. Their principal themes were initially religious, but they also used subjects from literature and poetry, particularly those dealing with love and death and also explored modern social problems.

Its principal members were William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. After initial heavy opposition the Pre-Raphaelites became highly influential, with a second phase of the movement from about 1860, inspired particularly by the work of Rossetti, made major contribution to symbolism. Pre-Raphaelite art and poetry had a considerable influence on the nineteenth century, particularly on the Aesthetics and

Decadents, in the latter part of the century, who worshipped beauty and disdained the growing materialism of the age.

Pre-Raphaelitism began in 1848 when a group of seven young artists banded together against what they felt was an artificial and mannered approach to painting taught at London's Royal Academy of Arts. They called themselves the 'Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood' (PRB), a name that alluded to their preference for late medieval and early Renaissance art that came 'before Raphael'. The painters were: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, James Collinson and Frederic George Stephens. Their aims were vague and contradictory, even paradoxical at times, and this was expected from a youthful movement made up of strong-minded individuals who sought to modernize art by reviving the practices of the Middle Ages. Here is an illustration for you.



The Blue Closet (1857) by Dante Gabriel Rossetti is a prime example of the Pre-Raphaelites's use of medieval imagery.

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In 1850 the Pre-Raphaelites also produced a literary and artistic magazine, *The Germ*, which was something of a manifesto for their artistic concerns and ran for only four issues. The group's debates were recorded in the Pre-Raphaelite Journal. The Pre-Raphaelite passion for modern writing was reflected in this journal, which contained not only pictures, but also reviews, essays and original poetry. Though *The Germ* only survived for four issues, but this experimental periodical was an important forerunner of the Modernist 'little magazine'. Its eagerness to explore the interactions between words and images set a precedent for subsequent high-profile Pre-Raphaelite projects; Rossetti's, Millais's and Hunt's illustrations

for an edition of Tennyson's poems brought a collaborative spirit and a new respectability to the commercial art of book illustration.

From the first, the Pre-Raphaelites aspired to paint subjects from modern life. In 'The Awakening Conscience' (painting made in 1854), Hunt represented a kept woman realizing the error of her ways, and in 1852, Madox Brown began the most ambitious of all Pre-Raphaelite scenes from modern life, Work (1852–1865). Although the brotherhood included no women, Christina Rossetti, sister of Dante and William, pioneered a Pre-Raphaelite style in poetry, and Elizabeth Siddall—model, muse, and eventually wife of Dante Gabriel Rossetti—produced distinctive watercolors and drawings that went unrecognized in her lifetime but received critical attention after the advent of feminist art history in the late 1970s.

Literature was always as important as fine art to the Pre-Raphaelites; their paintings are often inspired by subjects from the bible, medieval romances, Arthurian legends, Ovid, Chaucer and Shakespeare. However, it is in their relationship to contemporary poetry that their avant-garde (ahead of the times) spirit is indisputably evident. In 1848, Rossetti and Holman Hunt drew up a list of 'Immortals', or artistic heroes, which included not only canonical writers such as Homer, Dante Alighieri and Boccaccio, but also recent predecessors and contemporaries such as Lord Byron, John Keats, P. B. Shelley, Longfellow, William Emerson, Edgar Poe, Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett-Browning, Robert Browning and William Thackeray. The group continued to accept the concepts of history painting and mimesis, imitation of nature, as central to the purpose of art. The Pre-Raphaelites defined themselves as a reform movement and were able to create a distinct name for their form of art. Interested in the beauty and sound of language, Pre-Raphaelite verse experimented with forms such as the ballad, lyric and dramatic monologue.

The Pre-Raphaelites were a loose collective of Victorian poets, painters, illustrators and designers whose tenure lasted from 1848 to roughly the turn of the century. Drawing inspiration from visual art and literature, their work privileged atmosphere and mood over narrative, focusing on medieval subjects, artistic introspection, female beauty, sexual yearning and altered states of consciousness. In defiant opposition to the utilitarian ethos that formed the dominant ideology of the mid-century, the Pre-Raphaelites helped to popularize the notion of 'art for art's sake'. Generally devoid of the political edge that characterized much Victorian art and literature, Pre-Raphaelite work incorporated elements of 19th-century realism in its attention to detail and in its close observation of the natural world.

The first characteristic of the Pre-Raphaelite Poetry is that it was a revolt and reaction against the conventionality of poetry represented by Tennyson. The poets of this school revolted against the harshening use of poetry to the service of social and political problems of the age. Tennyson concentrated on social, religious, and political life of the age. It was against this age bound poetry that the Pre-Raphaelite raised their revolt and introduced the new standard of the glorification of art rather than the glorification of fleeting and temporary values of mundane life. The second characteristic is that the Pre-Raphaelites above all, were artists and their poetical works were artistic creations. Art was their religion. The poetry of this movement had no morality to preach and no reforms to introduce to the correctness of societal life. Life of beauty was their creed, and if in glorifying beauty they had to be sensuous, the feared not the charges of the moralists and orthodox puritans.

Important literary developments of this period included a volume of William Morris's poems, *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858), and George Meredith's *Modern Love* (1862), a scandalous sonnet sequence about marital breakdown. Christina Rossetti's poetry collection, *Goblin Market* (1862), was the first unqualified Pre-Raphaelite literary success. Illustrated by her brother Dante Gabriel in a style that would become widely imitated, it was also a landmark publication in terms of Victorian book illustration. Critical reaction against Algernon Charles Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads 1866*, whose subjects included necrophilia, and blasphemy, caused the publisher to withdraw the volume. Championed first by the Pre-Raphaelites and later by the Aesthetes of the *fin-de-siècle*, Swinburne's controversial ideas about poetry's purpose evolved into an aesthetic philosophy that elevated artistic quality over moral, political or social content. The movement lasted for a small period of time but left an indelible impression on literary and art history.

6.4.1 Questions for Comprehension

1. Explain the Pre Raphaelite Movement in detail.

2. Who were the proponents of Pre-Raphaelite Movement and how were they instrumental in shaping the movement?

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6.5 READING SUGGESTIONS

1. Rosemund Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (1947)

2. M. H. Abrams, ed. English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism (1960)

3. William E. Freedman, Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study (1965)

6.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions in 150 words:

1. Explain the term 'Metaphysical Poetry'.

2. Who are Romantic Poets? Give examples of romantic poetry.

3. Discuss Pre-Raphaelite Movement and its exponents.

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)
Semester III
Course Code:BAB32302T
Reading Poetry

UNIT 7- INDIAN ENGLISH POETS

STRUCTURE

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction to Indian English Poetry

7.2 Rabindranath Tagore: An Introduction

- **7.2.1 Text: *I cast my Net into the Sea***
- **7.2.2 Glossary**
- **7.2.3 Analysis of the Poem**
- **7.2.4 Questions for Comprehension**
- **7.2.5 Text: *When I go alone at Night***
- **7.2.6 Glossary**
- **7.2.7 Analysis of the Poem**
- **7. 2.8 Questions for Comprehension**

7.3 Nissim Ezekiel: An Introduction

- **7.3.1 Text: *Night of the Scorpion***
- **7.3.2 Analysis of the Poem**
- **7.3.3 Glossary**
- **7.3.4 Comprehension**
- **7.3.5 Text: *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.***
- **7.3.6. Glossary**
- **7.3.7 Analysis of the Poem**
- **7. 2.8 Comprehension**

7.4 Reading Suggestions

7.5 Check Your Progress

7.0 OBJECTIVES:

After a careful reading of this Unit you will be able to:

- **Understand and appreciate Indian Poetry**
- **Analyze different ways of understanding poetry**
- **Appreciate the writing style of the poets**
- **Identify the devices used by the poets to create a particular style**

7.1 INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN ENGLISH POETRY

Dear Readers, Indian English poetry carries the message of Indian sensibility, culture and heritage with a meaningful approach and perception. The journey started in the eighteenth century and has continued till date with all other major Indian languages. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to regard Indian English Poetry as a limb of the larger body of Indian poetry. Indian poets in English display comfortable control on universal themes. Most of the Indian poets in English have also been bilinguals or translators. The list of these poets starts from Toru Dutt, Manmohan Ghose, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Puran Singh, Sri Ananda Acharya, and Nissim Ezekiel up to Dilip Chitre and more. In this section you will be introduced to two Indian poets from two different centuries, nineteenth and twentieth respectively giving an overview of the long journey that Indian Writing in English has traversed.

7.2 RABINDRANATH TAGORE: AN INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore, a Nobel Laureate, was a prolific and accomplished poet, story-writer and playwright and is known for his literary output, a massive corpus comprising superb writing both in Bengali and English. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for *Gitanjali,* a cycle of prose poems. Tagore was also a prominent educator who laid the foundation of Visva Bhararti University at Shantiniketan, a university noted for its internationalism and strength in arts. Tagore is well known as a philosopher and poet who contributed greatly to Indian Writing in English in the early twentieth century. He participated in the Indian National Movement in his own non-sentimental visionary way and was a devoted friend to Gandhi. Though he wrote successfully in all literary genres, he was first of all a poet. Here are two of his famous poems for you.

7.2.1: I Cast my Net into the Sea

In the morning I cast my net into the sea.
I dragged up from the dark abyss things of strange aspect and strange beauty –

some shone like a smile, some glistened like tears,
and some were flushed like the cheeks of a bride.

When with the day's burden I went home,
my love was sitting in the garden idly tearing the leaves of a flower.

I hesitated for a moment, and then
placed at her feet all that I had dragged up, and stood silent.

She glanced at them and
said, 'What strange things are these? I know not of what use they are!'

I bowed my head in shame and thought, 'I have not fought for these,
I did not buy them in the market; they are not fit gifts for her.'

Then the whole night through I flung them one by one into the street.
In the morning travellers came; they picked them up and carried them into far countries.

7. 2. 2 Glossary

abyss : a very deep hole or wide space that seems to have no bottom

aspect : appearance

flushed : red with some strong emotion

dragged up : caught

7. 2. 3 Analysis of the Poem

This is poem number three from Tagore's collection *The Gardener*, published in 1903. According to Tagore, a poet's mission shouldn't be to open his inner ears to whatever intimations might come from God and the realm beyond but to remain attentive to this world and the needs and aspirations of men close to him.

You will notice that the poem begins in morning and the poet has wasted no time: his net is already full of the "dark abyss things" which it has lifted from the sea last night. What things were they? From the description one can imagine that they could possibly be pearly shells, rare fish, coral and whatever trifling tit-bits that come out from the sea. He then winds his way home, and, after a moment's hesitation, puts the strange sea-things in front of his loved-one, who is idly tearing petals from a flower. She is shown doing this because she is affectedly checking her lover's attention to her. However to the poet’s misfortune, she doesn't welcome his gift with a very warm appreciation: "What strange things are these? I don't know what use they might be". Please note here that there is a hint of expressing herself in utilitarian terms.

The readers are then introduced to the poet/fisherman's reaction. He realizes the gifts aren't suited to her, because they come neither from the battlefield, nor from the market, whence perhaps she was expecting some finery? He's ashamed not to have taken her real needs into consideration, and brought her objects which he probably knew she wouldn't like, and this explains why he had hesitated at first. So what should he do; get rid of the miserable things, which alienate him from his beloved. And he does the same; one by one, he flings them into the street. And the next morning, they're no more, as ‘travelers’ from across the world have taken them and whisked them away to their own countries.

The poem brings to our attention, that like the sea one can drag up to the surface some strange and beautiful things until then hidden in the dark abysses. They have gone through the process of depth and darkness, and now have been brought to the surface.

In this poem the sea-things which emerge from the net, embarrass the poet in front of his idle love at home. His wife or partner disdains what he brings her! And then, ashamed, he gets rid of those ‘things’ and the greedy passers-by whisk them away. Note how long this took: "the whole night through", and the violence involved: "I flung them in the street" - it *does* seem that he's unwilling to part with such treasures, and only does it out of spite and shame, but without any pleasure. The indication "far countries" could also mean either his regret that he will never see them anymore, or his enragement, because too far will mean no hope of being able to travel there one day and see them once again. This also helps us see that his loved one is detached; as detached as the leaves of the flower that she is negligently tearing apart. The rest of the poem describes his disillusionment, and his only recourse is to write down his poetic findings on the incident.

In the poem, the speaker is ashamed to realize that he tried to express his devotion to his God by offering Him things that belong to the physical, transient world. He says that he did not make an effort to acquire these things (‘I have not fought for these’) nor has he forsaken anything for them (‘I did not buy them in the market’). They have simply come to him as a part of being born in this physical world. Therefore they are not befitting offerings to God. The implication is that what matters to God are the sentiments of true devotion and spirituality. When the speaker discovers that what he considers beautiful is of no importance in his spiritual journey he throws them out of his window. Metaphorically, it suggests that he gave up the belief that the material world is the ultimate reality. But who are the people who pick up these things? They are those who are still caught in the web of *maya*, that is, in the

materialistic and selfish world. When you interpret the poem in this sense, you will realize that one has to transcend many emotions and events in order to realize God in one's life.

7. 2. 4 Questions for Comprehension

Q1. Write briefly how the poem shows the difference between important and unimportant things?

Q2. Write a short note on the similes and rhythm of the poem?

Q3. How does the poet speak of devotion to God?

7.2.5 When I go alone at night

When I go alone at night to my
love-tryst, birds do not sing, the wind
does not stir, the houses on both sides
of the street stand silent.

It is my own anklets that grow loud
at every step and I am ashamed.
When I sit on my balcony and listen
for his footsteps, leaves do not rustle
on the trees, and the water is still in
the river like the sword on the knees
of a sentry fallen asleep.

It is my own heart that beats wildly
—I do not know how to quiet it.

When my love comes and sits by
my side, when my body trembles and
my eyelids droop, the night darkens,
the wind blows out the lamp, and the
clouds draw veils over the stars.

It is the jewel at my own breast
that shines and gives light. I do not
know how to hide it.

7.2.6 Glossary:

Tryst (here): a secret meeting between lovers

still: not moving

draw veils over : cover

7.2.7 Analysis of the Poem

Dear readers, the poem appears to be about two lovers. One of them, probably the woman, is speaking these lines and is trying to describe how she feels when she goes to meet her lover, when she waits for him, and when he comes to her. On a closer reading of similar poems by Tagore (as the one before this), you will realize that the poem is not really about two lovers but about the relationship between humans and God. In a great deal of devotional literature of our country God has been represented as a lover and the devotee as His beloved. You can think of the poems of Mirabai in which she describes Lord Krishna as her beloved; we have a similar symbolism in the present poem.

The opening movement describes how the devotee feels when he thinks of God. It is like a beloved going to meet her lover. There is silence all around. She goes alone; there are no birds singing, there is no sound of any wind, and there are quiet houses on the two sides of the street. There is only the sound of her anklets that disturbs the silence and she is scared that someone will hear her going to meet her lover. The sound of her anklets stands for the fact that it is the beloved herself who is disturbed. She is unable to calm her mind that is necessary if the devotee wants to realize the presence of God in her life. The next movement presents the image of the beloved waiting for the lover to come to her. Again there is total silence as there is no rustling of leaves. The river flows quietly as if it were a sentry who has fallen asleep with his sword across his knees. But again, it is the furiously beating heart of the beloved that she does not know how to be quiet. When understood in terms of a devotee trying to pray to God the poem suggests that the devotee needs to put his heart to rest in order to be able to experience the presence of God in his life.

The third movement presents the image of the lover coming to the beloved. When it happens, her body trembles and her eyelids droop. The night becomes dark and the wind blows out the lamp. The clouds cover the stars and there is total darkness everywhere. This darkness represents the complete surrender of the devotee to the will of God. As in the earlier movements of the poem, it is only the jewel at her breast that shines and disturbs the darkness. The beloved does not know how to hide that brightness. Again, the brightness of her jewel represents the emotional disturbance in the devotee. The poem suggests that if a devotee is unable to become one with God, it is because he fails to get rid of his insignificant self and his ego. The ego is represented by the sound of the beloved's anklets, the beating of her heart and the brightness of the jewel at her breast. When you consider the images in the poem you will see that there is a contrast between complete silence symbolizing a total

surrender to God's will and various sounds representing the emotional disturbance in the devotee. The poem says that a devotee should pray to God in a spirit of total surrender. As long as he is aware of himself as an entity separate from God, a complete communion with the divine is not possible.

Tagore, through his poems wishes to deliver the message that though God is everything, everything is not God. The whole universe is regarded by Tagore as an expression of God but different things express his divinity in varied ways. Tagore makes the soul of man the highest manifestation of divinity. In the heart of mankind, God shapes his will and therefore He needs man as much as man needs His love. God reveals his beauty in all his creation so that man may be forever in love with it and thereby with him.

7. 2. 8 Questions for Comprehension

Q1. What happens when the beloved is waiting for her lover on the balcony?

Q2. How should a devotee pray to God?

Q3. Why is the beloved so scared of the night?

7.3 NISSIM EZEKIEL: AN INTRODUCTION

Dear readers, we will now move from one century to another, from divinity to practicality. We now proceed to read the works of another celebrated Indian English Poet Nissim Ezekiel, who is known for his practical every-day themes that the readers can effortlessly connect with.

7. 3.1 Nissim Ezekiel: An Introduction

Nissim Ezekiel, a Bene-Israelite settled in India, was educated in Mumbai and London. Returning home, he took up teaching and retired as Professor of English at the University of Bombay. A poet with a professional attitude, his poetry is chiefly introspective and self-analytical and expresses modern concerns in a contemporary voice and manner. The distancing of emotions and iconic perception are the major features. Widely travelled, he has been a cultural ambassador through his poetry readings in many countries. Ezekiel's *A Time to Change* heralded the modern, realistic and critical poetry of intellectualism. He never wearied of experimentation and so no two his poems are alike. Here are two of them for you to appreciate.

7. 3. 2 Night of the Scorpion

I remember the night my mother
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours
of steady rain had driven him
to crawl beneath a sack of rice.

Parting with his poison - flash
of diabolic tail in the dark room -
he risked the rain again.

The peasants came like swarms of flies
and buzzed the name of God a hundred times
to paralyze the Evil One.

With candles and with lanterns
throwing giant scorpion shadows
on the mud-baked walls
they searched for him: he was not found.
They clicked their tongues.
With every movement that the scorpion made his poison moved in Mother's blood, they said.

May he sit still, they said
May the sins of your previous birth
be burned away tonight, they said.
May your suffering decrease
the misfortunes of your next birth, they said.
May the sum of all evil
balanced in this unreal world

against the sum of good
become diminished by your pain.
May the poison purify your flesh

of desire, and your spirit of ambition,
they said, and they sat around
on the floor with my mother in the centre,
the peace of understanding on each face.
More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours,
more insects, and the endless rain.
My mother twisted through and through,
groaning on a mat.
My father, sceptic, rationalist,
trying every curse and blessing,
powder, mixture, herb and hybrid.
He even poured a little paraffin
upon the bitten toe and put a match to it.
I watched the flame feeding on my mother.
I watched the holy man perform his rites to tame the poison with an incantation.
After twenty hours

it lost its sting.

My mother only said
Thank God the scorpion picked on me
And spared my children.

7.3.3. Glossary

Stung: bitten (with poison), harmed

Diabolic: having the qualities of a devil

Paralyze: disable, immobilize

Skeptic: disbeliever, cynic

Hybrid: mixture, variety

7. 3. 4 Analysis of the Poem

Dear readers, the poem was published as a part of *The Exact Name, and it* demonstrates a new and emerging aesthetic in Ezekiel's and Indian English poetry. Here, the speaker tells about an incident from his childhood in which his mother was stung by a scorpion. The scorpion had entered the speaker's house probably because it wanted to hide from the rain. When it bit the speaker's mother, it was hiding beneath a sack of rice.

The speaker describes the incident in which the scorpion stings his mother, he focuses on the scorpion and what he did immediately afterward: "Parting with his poison—flash / of diabolic tail in the dark room— he risked the rain again" (5-7). Rather than stick around and look at the scene he had caused, the scorpion ran back outdoors. After the speaker's mother was bitten, the speaker notes that poor people went to his mother's side "like swarms of flies," bustling with Christianity in them and hoping to kill one of their visions of Satan. The peasants look for the scorpion on their hands and knees with lanterns. Their wish is to find the scorpion quickly because they believe that every movement the scorpion makes without getting killed affects the speaker's mother. The peasants begin to share good wishes for the speaker's mother, hoping that the scorpion will die that night, or at least sit still, that the sins of her past life will be burned away, and that she may return to an even better life in her next life because of her suffering.

The peasants continue making wishes for the speaker's mother, wishing that the forces of evil might be diminished by the speaker's mother's pain. They sat on the floor around the

speaker's mother, hoping that the scorpion's bite would "purify" her. More people come to visit the speaker's mother but oblivious to it all, she spent this time suffering and twisting on a mat.

The speaker turns his attention to his father, who he describes as a skeptic and rationalist. The speaker notes that even his father is making an effort to help his mother in any way that he knows how, which means turning towards that which he wouldn't otherwise believe. The speaker's father even lit the bite on fire in an attempt to remove the poison. The speaker's mother suffered for twenty hours. Her only response at the end of it all was her gratitude that it didn't happen to anyone else in their family and the children were spared.

While the personal crisis is clearly on the surface of the poem, the mocking social commentary is evident through the speaker's tone. The speaker in the poem, who inhabits a perspective between the little boy watching his mother suffer and the older man looking back upon that memory, relays the events of the crisis in a calm and detached manner. The casualness with which the speaker relays this scene is incongruous and even alarming for the reader. This emotional detachment lets the poem speak directly to the reader, who understands right away what Ezekiel means without having to juggle emotional pain over the suffering mother.

In this poem, Ezekiel's irony dramatizes the peasant's, as well as the speaker's father's, superstition in their desperate attempts to save the speaker's mother. The speaker does not see the peasants in a positive light and instead compares them to "swarms of flies" in their desperation to help his mother. Their mixture of Christianity and Hinduism allows for slight confusion, as they pray to God for the mother's wellbeing yet also hope for the best in her reincarnations. The speaker highlights how futile their spiritual efforts were in helping his mother: "My mother twisted through and through / groaning on a mat" . Finally, this poem communicates a tension between urban living and the natural world that Ezekiel returns to again and again in this work. The speaker's community, which lives close together and keeps itself informed about its residents, rose up in this work to surround the mother as she burned. The antagonist of the poem is the scorpion, who is forgiven by the speaker very early on since he was indoors simply for survival. In this way, the true force of chaos and evil is the rain, which drove the scorpion indoors and beats down upon the speaker and his family throughout their ordeal.

Superstition is an imperative topic that is canvassed in this verse. He investigates certain aspects of the Indian life that are so frequently addressed and thought about out of date, yet at the same time pervasive. The poem depicts a circumstance that is illustrative of the rustic Indian ethos and draws out the commonness of such a circumstance. The poem is an Indian poem by an Indian writer whose enthusiasm for the Indian soil and its customary human occasions of everyday Indian life is sublime. According to the poet, in Indian villages a decent number of people are ignorant and are indiscriminately superstitious. In any case, they are straightforward, adoring and adorable. They endeavour to spare the casualty by doing whatever they can. The poem ends with a 'sting in the tail' as the reaction of the mother stupefies everyone. The last line reflects the spirit of motherhood for she is happy that the scorpion had picked her and spared her children! It is a brilliant narrative poem that employs a typically Indian situation. The poem is remarkable for its simplicity and uniqueness of theme.

7. 3. 5 Questions for Comprehension

Q 1. How does the poet describe his mother in pain?

Q 2. How do the villagers handle the situation?

Q 3. How does the poet's father try to help his mother?

.....

7.3.6 Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.

Friends, our dear sister
is departing for foreign
in two three days, and
we are meeting today
to wish her bon voyage.
You are all knowing, friends,
What sweetness is in Miss Pushpa.
I don't mean only external sweetness
but internal sweetness.

Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling
even for no reason but simply because
she is feeling.

Miss Pushpa is coming
from very high family.
Her father was renowned advocate

in Bulsar or Surat,
I am not remembering now which place.
Surat? Ah, yes,
once only I stayed in Surat
with family members
of my uncle's very old friend-
his wife was cooking nicely…
that was long time ago.
Coming back to Miss Pushpa
she is most popular lady
with men also and ladies also.

Whenever I asked her to do anything,
she was saying, 'Just now only
I will do it.' That is showing
good spirit. I am always
appreciating the good spirit.

Pushpa Miss is never saying no.
Whatever I or anybody is asking
she is always saying yes,
and today she is going
to improve her prospect
and we are wishing her bon voyage.
Now I ask other speakers to speak
and afterwards Miss Pushpa
will do summing up.

7. 3. 6 Glossary:

Bon voyage: a greeting to someone meaning a happy journey

Prospects: chances of success

Good spirit: friendly

Departing: leaving

7. 3. 7 Analysis of the Poem:

In this comical poem by Ezekiel, Miss. Pushpa is portrayed as a satisfying identity. Towards the start of the poem, the speaker clarifies that Miss Pushpa is heading off to another nation and states that she is a sweet individual. He clarifies that the lady originates from a conspicuous family and gets diverted to his own particular recollections. Amidst the poem the poet discusses Miss Pushpa`s father and his activity appears as immaterial and comprises of multiple redirections from thoughts. The tone of the poem is hilarious however mocking is

destitute. The speaker calls her as sister and demonstrates that she holds a respectable position in office.

From this poem, it is clear that Ms. Pushpa is excellent both internally and externally in appearance and attitude. There is an absence of clearness in this poem in view of insignificant points of interest yet the poet talks about the Indian English with clarity. Subsequent to straying, the speaker expresses that Miss Pushpa is a well-known individual who is thoughtful and continually eager to help other people. He then tells that she comes from a reputed family. Her father is a renowned advocate. The narrator doesn't remember the place and guesses that it could be Bulsar or Surat. He then starts talking about himself. According to him long ago he had stayed in Surat with his Uncle's friends' family and his wife used to cook very delicious food.

Toward the end of the poem, the speaker asks the others at the gathering to give their own particular speeches. The poem may be straightforward one yet it talks about a genuine subject. The artist ridicules the manner by which semi-taught Indians compose their sentences. He disparages the blunders in sentence structure, linguistic structure and expressions which numerous Indians confer while communicating in English. The poem is very interesting and the writer impersonates the Indian method for communicating in English with such a significant number of deficiencies.

This is one of Ezekiel's most famous poems, both because of its subject matter and the way in which it was written. There are two abundant sources of humor in this poem: Ezekiel's use of Indian English and the character of the speaker, who seems to be lacking certain public speaking skills. Ezekiel uses a type of register and style of speaking that many people in India use while speaking English, particularly when English is their second language. This type of English deviates from Standard English, but it is spoken by a large number of Indians. Additionally, this realism adds a bit of humor to the overall message of the poem, since the ability to speak English is a huge marker of status in India and the characters in this poem struggle with the language without even seeming to notice. For those with a keen eye, the ability to speak English indicates and establishes social status more promptly than many other markers, such as material wealth, titles, or names. The speaker makes several mistakes that are humorous for a speaker more familiar with Standard English.

The narrator uses Babu English which can be considered as a mix of English and Hindustani, e.g. ample use of -ing and funny terms like, ‘two three days’, ‘what sweetness is Miss Pushpa’, ‘external and internal sweetness’, ‘smiling and smiling’, ‘simply because she is feeling’ and many more. The narrator is trying to exaggerate to demonstrate his love and respect for Miss Pushpa. The poem is considered a mellow assault on Indian English Speakers. The poem may be straightforward, yet it talks about a genuine subject. The tradition of over praising the one who is about to leave or retire is common in India. The artist utilizes Pidgin or Colloquial English as it satisfies the requirement for an exceptional dialect in a bilingual circumstance and the artist could likewise mirror the idiolect highlights of English utilized by the speakers of various local dialects.

The poem starts with present continuous tense as to the ridiculing of Indian Speakers, which can be seen throughout the poem. The speaker and the gathering of people at the goodbye party don’t realize that his English is linguistically incorrect. The poet ridicules how insufficiently trained Indians talk or compose the English dialect. He disparages the blunders in sentence structure, linguistic structure and expressions which numerous Indians confer while communicating in English. The poem is very interesting, and the writer impersonates the Indian method for communicating in English with such a significant number of deficiencies. Hence, the poem is all about the use of English by some Indians and the reflection of Indian culture in their expression. It is in the form of a dramatic monologue. The poem is in free verse, typical of modern poetry. The speaker stands for every speaker in Indian context. He uses free and dented language to share his opinions and emotions. The poet mocks at literal translation. Behind the facade of humour, however, one may recognize certain worrying issues in our social structure. The use of unrhymed diction, a colloquial tone and the ‘speaking voice’ are essential for the nature of the poem. The poem is another validation of his experimentation with themes.

7. 3. 8 Questions for Comprehension

Q1. How does the poet use language to create humour?

Q2. How is the poet being sarcastic in his descriptions?

Q3. Pick out the grammatically incorrect phrases in the poem.

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7. 4 READING SUGGESTIONS:

1. *A History of Indian English Literature* by M. K. Naik (New Delhi:Sahitya Akademi, 1982)

2. *The Later Poems of Tagore* by Sisirkumar Ghose (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961)

3. *The Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel* by M Belliappa and R. Taranath (Calcutta: Writer's Workshop, 1966)

4. *The Role of English Language in Free India* by Mulk Raj Anand(Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1947)

7.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer the following questions in 150 to 200 words:

1. Tagore's lyrics are songs of Devotion. Discuss.

2. Ezekiel's experimentation with themes is the reason of his poetic magnitude. Elaborate.

UNIT 8- WOMEN POETS

STRUCTURE

8.0 Objectives

8.0.1 Introduction to Women Poets

8.1 Sarojini Naidu: An Introduction

- **8.1.1 Text: Cradle Song**
- **8.1.2 Glossary**
- **8.1.3 Summary**
- **8.1.4 Analysis of the Poem**
- **8.1.5 Questions for Comprehension**

8.2 Annie Walker: An Introduction

- **8.2.1 Text: Women's Rights**
- **8.2.2 Glossary**
- **8.2.3 Summary**
- **8.2.4 Analysis of the Poem**
- **8.2.5 Questions for Comprehension**

8.3 Maya Angelou: An Introduction

- **8.3.1 Text: I Know why the Caged Bird Sings**
- **8.3.2 Glossary**
- **8.3.3 Summary**
- **8.3.4 Analysis of the Poem**
- **8.3.5 Questions for Comprehension**

8.4 Reading Suggestions

8.5 Check Your Progress

8.0 OBJECTIVES:

After a careful reading of this Unit you will be able to:

- **Understand and Appreciate Poetry written by Women**
- **Analyze different ways of understanding poetry**
- **Appreciate the writing style of the poets**
- **Identify the devices used by the poets to create a particular style**

8.0.1 Introduction to Women Poets

If poetry is spontaneous overflow of feelings, then women have held fountains for long and released rivers later. From early Greek writers to Mirabai in India, women have had their small share of writing poetry. It received serious attention with Elizabeth Barret Browning and Emily Dickinson in the eighteenth century and in India, Sarojini Naidu became the flag bearer of India's struggle for freedom and women's emancipation. From Anna Akhnatova of Russia to Denise Levertov from Vietnam, from Soma Sanchez of the Black Arts Movement to the African-American poet Maya Angelou, from the psychoanalyst Jenny Znag (Chinese American immigrant) to the confessional poet Sylvia Plath, from the political Activist Annie Walker to the realistic romantic Rupi Kaur, from the feminist Adrienne Rich to Pulitzer winner Rita Dove, women poets have come a long way and there is more to traverse. Throughout the last three centuries, women poets faced the challenge of being unaccepted in the literary world but their spirit to write remained undeterred. They often had to prove the worthiness and importance of their works, as they were being categorized in ways different than men and were subjected to more criticism. Their struggle has been long and they had to travel an extra mile to be published and recognized. They challenged every boundary and fought tooth and nail to gain a deserving place in the literary and social circles. Despite all odds, some of them made a mark in history and here are some of these famous poets and their work for you.

8.1 SAROJINI NAIDU: AN INTRODUCTION

Sarojini Naidu was a prominent Indian freedom fighter and a poet. She went to England on a scholarship where she studied at King's College, London and then at Girton College, Cambridge. While in England, she came in contact with English scholars and critics like Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse. On her return from England, she married Dr. Naidu and became Sarojini Naidu from Sarojini Chattopadhyaya. Later, she joined the Indian National Congress. Her first collection of poems was titled *The Golden Threshold* (1905). About her first book, The Times Literary Supplement, London wrote, 'Her poetry seems to sing itself as

if her swift thoughts and strong emotions sprang into lyrics of themselves'. Her poetic works include *The Bird of Time* (1912), *The Broken Wing* (1917), *The Sceptred Flute Songs of India* (1946) and *The Feather of the Dawn* was published posthumously in 1961. Her images are very powerful and haunting and there is a spontaneous movement in her verse leading to a natural magnificence. The Renaissance marked in her poetry shows a revival of interest in the great philosophical, intellectual and literary tradition of India. Her poetry impressed poets and thinkers like Sri Aurobindo who said of her work, 'Some of her lyrical work is likely, I think, to survive among the lasting things in English literature.' He was absolutely correct and you will relish and validate the same while reading her work. Here is one for you:

8.1.1 Text: The Cradle Song

From groves of spice,
O'er fields of rice,
Athwart the lotus-stream,
I bring for you,
A glint with dew,
A little lovely dream.
Sweet, shut your eyes,
the wild fire-flies
Dance through the fairy neem;
From the poppy-bole
For you I stole,
a little lovely dream.
Dear eyes, good-night,
In golden light
The stars around you gleam;
on you I press
With soft caress,
a little lovely dream.

8.1.2 Glossary

Grove: orchard, woods

Athwart: crossways, diagonally

Glint: sparkle, shine

Poppy-bole: poppy plant

Caress: embrace

8.1.3 Summary

A cradle song is a lullaby that a person, usually the mother, sings to her child to sleep and the mother in the poem seems to do the same. She wishes her child to have beautiful dreams. She says that she has gathered many lovely things from various places so that all of them can combine into a beautiful dream for the child. She says to her child that she has picked up from 'groves of spice' the fragrance that will pervade the dream world of the child. When she says that she has carried that fragrance over 'fields of rice' she adds the scent of rice fields and their bright green colour to the fragrance of spices like cardamom and cinnamon. She articulates that while bringing fragrance and colour for the dreams of her child she will cross bright streams full of lotus. From that world she will bring for her child a dream shining with dew drops. Thus, you find that the poet has suggested the fragrance of spice groves, the sweet smell and bright green colour of rice fields, the sound of flowing streams and the white, red and pink colour of lotuses in the same image. This sensuous image represents the beautiful world of the child's dreams.

The next stanza depicts another beautiful dream. It is a scene in which there stands a *neem* tree with fairies on it, or the *neem* tree itself is a fairy. Glow-worms flit through the leaves of the tree making it a favorite place for the fairies. Then the mother says that she has stolen a dream from a poppy plant. Poppy from which opium is derived has a sleep-inducing property. Thus, the stanza suggests that the baby will sleep peacefully and see a beautiful dream. In the last stanza the baby is probably asleep. The mother wishes him/her good night. The night sky is full of stars with golden light. The mother kisses the baby's eyes and leaves a lovely dream there.

8.1.4 Analysis of the Poem

In the initial part of the poem, the poet creates imagination from different and beautiful places. According to her, she has brought a little lovely dream with glittering dew drops in the form of a melodious song. She has fetched this melody from a group of trees

(groves) of spice, the field of rice and from a running stream with lotus flowers in it. All these places appear as picturesque and alluring to the reader; the garden of spices seems uniquely aromatic, the field of rice is golden and the stream is full of blushing-pink lotus flowers; all these are a part of the magical wishes that a mother has for her child wishing him or her a great future ahead. Moving further, the mother asks the child to shut his/her eyes and dream of glow worms that dance through the fairy neem. The neem is probably described as a fairy for it is a medicinal and sacred plant that holds a great deal of socio- cultural significance in India. The mother/poet tells the child that she has stolen a lovely little dream from poppy flowers that are bright and colourful. The poppy plant has a sleep-inducing effect and therefore is used as a metaphor for a deep and peaceful sleep. In the final stanza the mother bids the child good-night laden with glittering stars around him probably an indication or wish of a bright and successful prospect of the child.

8.1.5 Questions for Comprehension

1. Describe in your own words the kind of dream the mother wants her child to see.
2. How does the poet introduce a note of fantasy in the poem?
3. Explain how does the 'Cradle Song' help establish a mother-child relationship?
4. Write a small note on Sarojini Naidu as a poet.

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After reading the lyric from the 'Nightingale of India', dear readers let us proceed to understand the expression of the English and Canadian author Annie Louisa Walker.

8.2 ANNIE LOUISA WALKER: AN INTRODUCTION

Annie Louisa Walker was born in 1836 in Staffordshire, England. She came to Lower Canada as a child with her family. In the year 1858 Annie and her sisters, Isabella and Frances, opened a private girls' school, a one of its kind. In 1861 Annie, who had been publishing poems in periodicals and newspapers since her teens, brought out a collection by subscription, *Leaves from the Backwoods*. Shortly thereafter she returned to England with her parents, who soon died. Between 1873 and 1881 Walker brought out five novels and a volume of plays for children. Following her marriage to a wealthy widower and move to Staffordshire, Annie did not give up writing completely; she published one more novel, and a

second book of poetry. Her poems are largely about religion or nature. The most effective are those characterized by unpretentious phrasing and directness of expression, but most are conventional in diction, form, and subject matter. Walker's writing career began in Canada and her most telling poems are the Canadian nature poems and the ones that speak about women emancipation. Here is one for you.

8.2.1 Text: Women's Rights

You cannot rob us of the rights we cherish,
Nor turn our thoughts away
From the bright picture of a "Woman's Mission"
Our hearts portray.

We claim to dwell, in quiet and seclusion,
Beneath the household roof,--
From the great world's harsh strife, and jarring voices,
To stand aloof;--

Not in a dreamy and inane abstraction
To sleep our life away,
But, gathering up the brightness of home sunshine,
To deck our way.

As humble plants by country hedgerows growing,
That treasure up the rain,
And yield in odours, ere the day's declining,
The gift again;

So let us, unobtrusive and unnoticed,
But happy none the less,
Be privileged to fill the air around us
With happiness;

To live, unknown beyond the cherished circle,
Which we can bless and aid;
To die, and not a heart that does not love us
Know where we're laid.

8.2.2 Glossary

Dwell: reside, live, settle

Inane: childish, immature

Deck: adorn, decorate

Hedgerow: shrubs

Ere: before

Yield: surrender, give in

8.2.3 Summary

Annie Louisa addresses society at large and says that society should allow women to pursue the kind of life that they value. It should also not convince them to think of anything other than what they believe is women's duty to the world. This sense of duty is not a burden to women, but rather it cheers them and provides a bright vision for their future. It is also a call that comes to them directly from their hearts. Hence it is natural and instinctive and cannot be suppressed. Annie Louisa acts as a representative for all women of Victorian English society and speaks on their behalf. She says that women stay within the domestic sphere, away from the harsh world of men, in peace and quiet. This world of men is what lies outside the threshold of the house and is in direct contrast with the world of women. Instead of tranquility and silence, what you find in the world of men is discordant noises and many arguments and battles. Women choose to stay away from all this trouble and concentrate instead on making the home a welcoming and peaceful environment. She defends Victorian English women's lifestyle from the way in which it can be misconstrued. She says that women may choose to live separate from the difficult world outside, but this is not any form of escapism on their part. It is not that staying in the house is a convenient excuse to while away their time doing nothing. They don't just relax or sleep the whole day. Instead, they decorate their houses with brightness and vigor, in the same way that the morning sun greets humans with a new day. Just as the sun does away with the darkness of night, and provides vitality to men, so do women help men forget the dangers and inhospitality of the world outside as soon as they enter the homestead.

Annie Louisa compares Victorian English women with plants. She says that plants have no pride whatsoever. They just grow next to rows of shrubs in the rural countryside, but they are very resourceful despite this. They store up the water from the rainfall that showers down on them. They do not then waste this water but give it back to the earth in the form of the scent they give off all day and the role of women is just the same. They take whatever little is given to them, by way of what is available to them in nature (like cotton) and use that to create beautiful things (like cloth and dresses). She elaborates on what kind of activities women constructively engage in. She says that women do not crave a public audience, as men do. Rather they remain out of sight, doing their work without expecting or desiring any prizes for

the same. According to the poet, they also believe that it is their special advantage that they are allowed to spread happiness to the world around them. Annie Louisa shows what noble life Victorian English women have. In doing so, she sets up a contrast between men and women of her time. She says that it is men who are valued in society and women, on the other hand, only serve those who are valued. However, Annie Louisa doesn't think women should resent this kind of service that they provide.

8.2.4 Analysis of the Poem

Women's Rights' by Annie Louisa Walker is an influential poem that communicates the freedom and rights of women. Poetic techniques such as sensory imagery, figurative language and symbolism are used in the poem to portray that women's rights should be respected and they should be treated fairly. Walker has used sensory imagery in the poem to provide a vivid image to the reader, which gives them a greater insight on Walker's views on women's rights. Another poetic technique that is used in the poem is figurative language. Figurative language has been used to draw the reader's attention and express the mood and atmosphere Walker is trying to convey. Symbolism is another technique that is used in the poem and it has also been used to give the reader a greater insight on Walker's views on women's rights, which then captures the reader's attention.

Walker has used all three poetic techniques - sensory imagery, figurative language and symbolism where it says, "As humble plants by country hedgerows growing, that treasure up the rain". In this line, Walker has conveyed that women's rights have been oppressed and only recently have women begun to regain their freedom or rights and power. When interpreted figuratively, the rain symbolizes the oppression and the humble plants symbolize the women's rights. At first, the rain oppresses and damages the growth of the plants, but over time the plants have treasured the rain in order to grow and become more powerful. This informs the reader that Annie Walker believed that woman's rights were gradually becoming stronger and that eventually, they would have the same rights as men.

8.2.5 Questions for Comprehension

1. Annie Walker communicates the freedom and rights of women through this poem. Discuss.

2. How does the poet describe a noble life of Victorian English Women?

3. Some of you might find Walker's idea of feminism regressive. If so, build your argument with the help of the given poem.

4. Explain the symbolism offered in the poem 'Women's Rights' by Annie Louisa Walker.

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Dear Readers, from the Canadian and English understanding of the struggles of women, it is time now to move to the other part of the continent, and comprehend the sentiments of the American poet who fought a long battle against racism, Maya Angelou.

8.3 MAYA ANGELOU: AN INTRODUCTION

Maya Angelou was an African-American author and has brilliant essays, poems, plays and autobiographical notes to her credit. One of the most celebrated poets of her time; she won a lot of recognition and many awards for her phenomenal work. An acclaimed activist and litterateur, Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri. Angelou had a broad career as a singer, dancer, actress, composer, and Hollywood's first female black director, but became most famous as a writer, editor, essayist, playwright, and poet. As a civil rights activist, Angelou worked for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. She was also an educator and served as the Reynolds professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. **She is best known for her series of autotrophies which focus on her childhood and early adult experiences. The most highly acclaimed 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' reflects on the primary years of her life. She is known all over the world as a spokesperson for the black people and women, and her work speaks about struggle of the blacks and generates a demand of equality. Her themes revolve around the layers of family, identity and racism.**

Angelou attended George Washington High School in San Francisco and took lessons in dance and drama on a scholarship at the California Labor School. When Angelou, just seventeen, graduated from high school and gave birth to a son, Guy, she began to work as the first African American and first female street car conductor in San Francisco. As she explained in *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry like Christmas* (1976), the third of her

autobiographies, she also “worked as a shake dancer in night clubs, fry cook in hamburger joints, dinner cook in a Creole restaurant and once had a job in a mechanic’s shop, taking the paint off cars with my hands.” All the physical and mental agony that she and fellow black women suffered from can be read in her works. Angelou joined the Harlem Writers Guild in the late 1950s and met James Baldwin and other important writers. It was during this time that Angelou had the opportunity to hear Dr. Martin Luther King speak. Inspired by his message and dream, she decided to become a part of the struggle for civil rights. She worked as a freelance writer and was a feature editor at the *African Review in West Africa for some time.* When Angelou returned to the United States in the mid-1960s, she was encouraged by author James Baldwin and Robert Loomis, an editor at Random House, to write an autobiography. Initially, Angelou declined the offers, but eventually changed her mind and wrote *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.* The book chronicles Angelou’s childhood and ends with the birth of her son. It won immediate success and was nominated for a National Book Award. Please read a part of the memoir:

8.3.1 Text: I Know why the Caged Bird Sings

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze

and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

8.3.2 Glossary

Leap: jump, rise

Downstream: towards the mouth of the river

Current: (here) flow of air

Dare: to have courage, challenge

Stalk: follow, trail

Seldom: rarely, hardly ever

Rage: anger

Clipped: cut, shortened

Trill: shrill

Distant: remote, faraway

Nightmare: frightening, terrifying

8.3.3 Summary

The poem describes a 'Caged bird' that is trapped in iron bars with limited mobility and is only able to sing the song of freedom in her trill note. Aware of the fact that she will never be able to attain freedom she sings the song for the world to understand her longing for the same. The caged bird is an extended metaphor for the African-American community and its past, and also their on-going experience of race-based oppression in the United States of America. The metaphor captures the overwhelming agony of the

marginalized communities by equating it with the emotional suffering of the caged bird. It also denotes how the coloured people are emotionally and psychologically impacted by the physical and mental oppression. The fact that the poet mentions, 'They see through the bars' is descriptive of their limited opportunities of education and employment. The poem further describes the same as, 'bars of rage' hinting that anger and desperation cannot be separated from each other. The subjection to physical and mental violence doesn't just keep the bird captive; the captivity changes the bird and in doing so robs the bird of its natural self.

The bird is singing her African-American Experience, and though it may appear as a song of hope, it is born from a place of deep pain, misery and intolerable situations. The fact that songs are an expression of joy is also refuted by the poem as this particular bird-song brings a note of melancholy and anguish forced upon the black community for a very long time. In the further part of the poem, the poet compares the free bird to the caged bird bringing about the differences in their lives. Where the caged bird is a victim of race-based oppression, the free bird is open to all avenues of education, employment and experience. The free bird gets to eat fat worms which could possibly be their prospective lucrative future. The caged bird can only think of these concepts and therefore sings about the same, filled with emotional and intellectual exhaustion. The caged bird is completely immobilized, its wings are clipped, and its feet are tied, so even if she tries to escape from the cage she will never be able to fly. The official policies of America at that time did not allow the blacks to gain equal opportunities of education and employment as the whites, and therefore there was a long and brutal struggle to gain these rights.

The desire of the caged bird to gain freedom is an organic desire; there are things/concepts/phenomena that she is yet to experience and may never get the chance to do the same. There will always be longing for things unknown but the yearning and singing will go hand in hand to produce a legitimate movement with desired results.

8. 3.4 Analysis of the Poem

Angelou writes of both physical and conceptual freedom. The caged bird is not physically free—"his wings are clipped and / his feet are tied"—yet his desire for freedom is so powerful that his song of yearning is heard even "on the distant hill." Though freedom is

"unknown" to the caged bird, the poem suggests it is only natural for him to desire it, as all living creatures do. This inherent longing for freedom highlights the cruelty of the caged bird's imprisonment, particularly when juxtaposed with the free bird's happy obliviousness and sense of ownership over the sky through which he "leaps" and "floats." That one bird should be free and one needlessly caged is an injustice that remains unresolved at the poem's conclusion, pointing to the injustice and inequality that remain un-redressed in society.

The poem's elaboration on the multiple dimensions of freedom is achieved seamlessly through the descriptions of the birds, one in flight and the other with wings clipped. Birds are particularly suited to this metaphor, as the natural condition of most birds is to fly. Further, the symbol of the imprisoned bird's cage is connected to various negative emotions, particularly "rage." Through the plight of the caged bird, Angelou conveys the resilience, dignity, and power of the oppressed. The caged bird rages against the injustice of his physical imprisonment, but still he "sings of freedom." The repetition of this song (expressed in stanzas three and six) evokes the ongoing nature of the caged bird's struggle while also suggesting that he will continue to sing and persevere, no matter the hopelessness of his situation.

Though the caged bird is physically imprisoned, the poem does not suggest that he is powerless. Freedom of speech and expression are conveyed primarily through the word "sing," which is used four times, including the repeated phrase "sings of freedom." Singing, in this respect, can be seen as a symbol for free expression, especially free artistic expression. The use of the words "sing," "tune," and "trill," all words associated with music and help to convey the power of art to liberate. Further, even though the caged bird is himself imprisoned, the poem emphasizes that his song is able to go beyond his physical confines, even to the point of being heard "on the distant hill." The power of artistic creation to communicate—to move beyond a single consciousness, influencing and impacting others—is crucial, particularly to one whose physical body is confined.

8.3.5 Questions for Comprehension

Q1. How does the poet create a sense of enslavement in the poem?

Q2. Compare and contrast the birds in the poem- one free and the other caged.

Q3. I know why the caged bird sings is a narrative of struggle. Discuss.

Q4. Write a small note on Maya Angelou and her work.

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8.4 READING SUGGESTIONS

1. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by M. Angelou. Paperback, 2009

2. Works of Annie Louisa Walker (The Perfect Library: May 2013) Available as the Kindle edition at Amazon

3. The Sceptred Flute Songs of India - The Golden Threshold, The Bird of Time & The Broken Wing: With a Chapter from 'Studies of Contemporary Poets' by Mary C. Sturgeon

8.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Sarojini Naidu is a revolutionary poet who is rightly called the Nightingale of India. Discuss.

2. Annie Walker is a strong advocate of women rights and that can be read in her works. Illustrate.

3. Maya Angelou's poems are a reflection of her stand against racism. Validate the statement with examples from the text.