ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ
ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਟੇਟ ਓਪਨ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ
ਪਟਿਆਲਾ

JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV
PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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

The Motto of the University

(SEWA)

SKILL ENHANCEMENT EMPLOYABILITY WISDOM ACCESSIBILITY



SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL STUDY MATERIAL FOR JGND PSOU, ALL COPYRIGHTS WITH JGND PSOU, PATIALA

M.A. English
Semester – II
Course Code: MAEM23201T
Course: Poetry-II (Restoration to Modern Age)

ADDRESS: C/28, THE LOWER MALL, PATIALA-147001

WEBSITE: www.psou.ac.in

Faculty of School of Languages

Dr. Navleen Multani
Associate Professor in English
Head, School of Languages
Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala

Dr. Tejinder Kaur
Professor in English
Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala

Dr. Avtar Singh
Professor in English
Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala

Dr. Vinod Kumar
Assistant Professor in English
Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala

Mr. Gursandesh Singh
Assistant Professor in English
Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala

JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV

PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY PATIALA

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

M.A. English

Course Code: MAEM23201T

Course: Poetry-II (Restoration to Modern Age)

Programme Coordinator

Dr. Navleen Multani
Associate Prof. in English
Head, School of Languages

Course Coordinator and Editor

Dr. Vinod Kumar
Asstt. Prof. in English

Course Outcome

The Course is focussed on the study of prominent poets and their poetry from Romantic to the Modern age. The design of the course is an attempt to Familiarise students with the long tradition is an attempt to familiarise students with the long tradition of poetry writing and major shifts/changes and Developments in English poetry the following outcome is expected from the course.

- Introduction to the representative poets from Romanticism to Modern Times.
- Major changes/shifts in the poetry of this period have been traced
- Students will be able to critically examine and contextualise poetry

JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV
PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY PATIALA

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

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

M.A -English

MAEM23201T: POETRY-II (RESTORATION TO MODERN AGE)

Semester – II

MAX. MARKS: 100
EXTERNAL: 70
INTERNAL: 30
PASS: 40%
Credits: 5

Objective:

The aim of the course is to introduce the learners to English poetry and make them read important works, keeping the historical and social context in mind. Besides, the course has been designed to make the learners focus on the creative and technical aspects as well as enable readers to develop a critical sense to interpret poetry.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PAPER SETTER/EXAMINER:

1. The syllabus prescribed should be strictly adhered to.
2. The question paper will consist of five sections: A, B, C, D, and E. Sections A, B, C, and D will have two questions from the respective sections of the syllabus and will carry 15 marks each. The candidates will attempt one question from each section.
3. Section E will have four short answer questions covering the entire syllabus. Each question will carry 5 marks. Candidates will attempt any two questions from this section.
4. The examiner shall give a clear instruction to the candidates to attempt questions only at one place and only once. Second or subsequent attempts, unless the earlier ones have been crossed out, shall not be evaluated.
5. The duration of each paper will be three hours.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES:

Candidates are required to attempt any one question each from the sections A, B, C, and D of the question paper and any two short questions from Section E. They have to attempt questions only at one place and only once. Second or subsequent attempts, unless the earlier ones have been crossed out, shall not be evaluated.

Section - A

S.T. Coleridge: “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

Section - B

William Wordsworth: “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey”
Sonnet: “London, 1802”

John Keats: “Ode to Nightingale”
“Ode to Grecian Urn”

Section - C

Robert Browning: “Porphyria’s Lover”
“The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed’s Church”

W.B. Yeats: “The Second Coming”
“Easter 1916”

Section - D

T.S. Eliot*: The Waste Land*

Suggested Readings:

1. De Vance, W.C. : *A Browning Handbook.*
2. Flower, Betty S. : *Browning and the Modern Tradition.*
3. Drew, Philip ed., : *A Collection of Critical Essays on Browning.*
4. Bloom, Harold. : *T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land. Infobase Publishing, 2007.*
5. Reeves, Gareth . *T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land. Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994.*
6. Berryman, Charles. W. B. Yeats: *Design of Opposites : A Critical Study. Exposition Press, 1967.*
7. Ross, David A. *Critical Companion to William Butler Yeats: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work. Infobase Publishing,2009.*
8. http://swayam.gov.in/
9. http://edx.org formerly http://mooc.org/
10. http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/

M.A. (English)
MAEM23201T: Poetry-II (Restoration to Modern Age)
Section-A
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

UNIT I: Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Structure

1.0 Objectives

1.1 Introduction to the Poet

1.2 Selected Works

1.3 Characterstics of S.T. Coleridge's Poetry

1.4 Introduction to the Rime of the Ancient Mariner

1.5 Critical Reading of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

1.6 Question for Practice

1.0 Objectives

The first section of this lesson is focused on the life and works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, second on the characteristics of his poetry, and the third examines his long poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It is an attempt to introduce the students to the poet, his life, literary culture of the time. Besides this, critical appreciation of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is also given. After reading it , the student will be able to

1. Understand the Romantic Age
2. Understand the life and works of S. T. Coleridge
3. Understand the significance of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*
4. Attempt questions on Romantic Age, S. T. Coleridge, and his poetry

1.1 Introduction to the Poet

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (S. T. Coleridge) was one of the pioneers of romantic poetry in English. The two great personalities of poetic discipline, S. T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth laid the foundation of romantic poetry in English by writing *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Coleridge was born at Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, on Oct. 21, 1772 and died on July 25, 1834. His father was a well educated person and worked as a headmaster at a school. He died in 1781 leaving the child as a sizar to Christ Hospital, a charity school where S. T. Coleridge began studying and writing poetry. Here he developed a friendship with Charles Lamb. In 1791, he went to Jesus College Cambridge. Here he was introduced to the political,

theological, and radical poet Robert Southey. He left university without taking a degree in 1794. And immediately after leaving the university, he gets married to Sarah Frickers, a sister of Southey's wife. But his marriage with Sarah did not last long.

Coleridge settled down in Nether Stowey, Somerset in 1795. Here he developed an intimate friendship with Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. It gave him a chance to grow as a romantic poet. Although there are many contrary elements in the theories of poetry of these two poets, the two of them cannot be seen separately. The time he spent in Nether Stowey was the best time of his life. His poetic sense matured there. Both friends produced best of their writings during this period in the form of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Coleridge appeared in this volume. Although Wordsworth contributed more poems than Coleridge in this volume, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was a shining star.

During this time, Coleridge also started a tour through Germany with William Wordsworth. He was enchanted towards German Language, literature and philosophy. It enriched his sense of literature. He became critical of the literary environment and tastes of his contemporaries in England. On his return to England, in 1800, he translated the German poet Friedrich Schiller's trilogy into English. His health started to deteriorate due to some neurological problem. He started to take opium and gradually it became his habit. These physical and psychological problems darkened his career as a writer and critic. He used to plan writing projects but could never execute due to his illness or the overdose of the opium. But, till then his work in the field of literature and criticism was already remarkable.

With the passage of time, Coleridge's health was failing and he began planning to go to warmer climates to protect his nervous system. He went to Malta and joined as Public Secretary of Malta under the Civil Commissioner. He was well received by the English colony as a writer and a civil servant. It proved his capabilities as a man of versatile affairs. The climate of Malta helped him to recover but as he was far from his intimate friends and intellectual environment, life gradually became a burden for him.

Although life became very complex for Coleridge yet he tried to maintain his career. He started publication of a journal titled *The Fried*. But it was not possible to run it single-handedly; further the publication got crippled by financial crisis. Ultimately, Coleridge could not manage its regularity.

Coleridge was not only a great poet but a great speaker also. Nature blessed him with the art of beautiful speech. He started a series of lectures on various writers to earn his

livelihood. He became very popular for his lectures on William Shakespeare and John Milton. His art of imagination proved very useful in his poetry as well as in lectures.

Coleridge remained in virtual separation from his wife and children for a long time due to some marital problems. The illness and nightmares increased his habit of eating opium. Gradually he developed tensions with Wordsworth also. It resulted in his lack of confidence to write poetry which is evident in his *Dejection: An Ode*. He had to live under the care and treatment of a surgeon, Mr. Gillman at Highgate for the rest of his life. Highgate became a place of literary pilgrimage for the writers, particularly for Thomas Carlyle and Emerson.

Coleridge was not only a poet but a great critic also. During his stay at Gillman's house, he finished his most popular prose work, *Biographia Literaria*. The work is composed of twenty three chapters on autobiographical notes and insights on various subjects, including religion, politics, literature and criticism. It also throws light on Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction in a critical way. Besides this, his remarkable writings, such as *Youth and Age, Zapolya,* and *Law Sermons* also belong to his last phase of life. Although the complexities of his life did not allow him to complete what he used to plan, he held the minds of his contemporary writers and critics. His reputation as a poet or critic was remarkable. He was losing hold of his life day by day, but he never lost the poetic frenzy of his eye. He died on July 25, 1834 due to heart failure and is buried in the Highgate, London.

1.2 Selected Works

Coleridge was a versatile literary personality. He had done remarkable work on the various branches of literature and criticism. His works can be discussed under the three titles:

1. Poetry
2. Drama
3. Literary Criticism

Here it is worth mentioning that although Coleridge's poetic writings were very limited, they have a deep significance. Stopford Brooke writes: "all that he did excellently might be bound up in twenty pages, but it should be bound in pure gold." Let's start with his poetry.

1. Poetry: Romantic age is known for its remarkable poetry and there were two major pillars of English romantic poetry: S. T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth. Coleridge's poetry deeply influenced the contemporary as well as the future poets of English. He is called "meticulous craftsman" for his poetry. Wordsworth and Southey used to consult him on

various issues in writing poetry. Many critics appreciate Coleridge for his idea of "Conversational Poetry". His early poetry was published as *Poems on Various Subjects* in 1796. But more promising and enlivened with the characteristics, such as love and observations on nature were *The Song of the Pixies* (1793), *The Lines on Autumn Evening; Lewti* (1794) and *Religious Musings* (1794-96). Actual fertile period starts with his association with Wordsworth and Dorothy. Coleridge and Wordsworth planned to write unique poetry discarding the traditional ways of writing it. This association laid the foundation of romantic poetry in English with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. This volume includes Coleridge's masterpiece *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The Rime was followed by other remarkable poems such as *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* which were the product of his original sensibility, while *Dejection: An Ode* was for his disturbing married life.

2. Drama: Coleridge's first drama *The Fall of Robespierre* (1794) was written in collaboration with Robert Southey. It reflects Coleridge's thoughts on marriage, politics, and childhood. *Remorse* (1798) is a tragedy written in blank verse. *Zapolya* (1817) is a romantic tragedy written in two parts.

3. Literary Criticism: Coleridge is famous for his critical work *Biographia Literaria* (1817). It has a number of notes on personal life experiences. Further, it is focused on various important topics such as the form of poetry, the worth of a poet, and significance of philosophy in literature.

1.3 Characteristics of S. T. Coleridge's Poetry

Friendship of S.T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth is always seen with respect in English literature. They were the two great personalities of English literature who are known as pioneers of the Romantic age. They liberated English poetry from the eighteenth century traditions and introduced romanticism, a new road in creativity. They were romantics but their romanticism was different from each other. Their reaction to the French revolution was very enthusiastic to see life under the new light. There is no doubt Coleridge was more gifted with the art of poetry than Wordsworth but his physical, psychological, and materialistic conditions did not allow him to complete his many writings.

Yet, Coleridge's contribution to English poetry was the culmination of romanticism. His poetry consists of symbolism, flight of imagination, love of nature, love of music, creative dreams, humanitarian outlook which are all the major features of romanticism. He held a higher ideal of poetry against the traditional style of the previous times. The major

difference between the two romantics was that for Wordsworth, poetry was a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings while Coleridge opposed and objected to it. He believed that poetry is the production of powerful imagination and emotions. Wordsworth's major focus was on the natural objects in his writings while Coleridge focused on supernatural objects also. Coleridge is considered simpler in his style of writing than Wordsworth. Thus, Coleridge contributes to romantic poetry in a unique way.

It is notable that due to Coleridge's problem of nervous system and the habit of taking opium, most writings remain incomplete, they are available in fragments. Out of his best writings, only *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a complete poem. His significant poems *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* both are the incomplete pieces. Sometimes he lost content due to interruptions and sometimes lost inspiration.

Broadly, his poetry can be classified into three categories: romantic, personal, and political. The romantic poems include: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan*, and *Christabel*. The personal poems include *Frost at Midnight*, *The Eolian Harp*, and *An Ode to Dejection*. The political poems include *The Ode on the Departing Year*, *Fears in Solitude*, and *The Destruction of Bastille*. The other major characteristics of his poetry can be discussed under various sections

Romanticism: Coleridge was a co-founder of the Romantic Movement in the field of English literature. His romanticism is rich in imagination, symbolism, love of nature, love of supernatural, love of music, dreaming etc. Imagination is the key point in his romanticism; he could imagine earth to heaven. He perceives both natural and supernatural. The following stanza from *Kubla Khan* is the culmination of his rich imagination

> 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. . .

The medievalism and the supernatural have a combined effect in his poetry which he further transmits to the other romantic poets such as, John Keats and Tennyson. He colors the external nature with the moods of the observer in his poetry. The romantic portrayal of the psychological state of mind of the observer takes his romanticism to the culmination. He has

written a number of lyrics which are full of self-pity, self-analysis, and self-explanation. Romantic melancholy remains a constant feature in most of his poems. The words construct romantic images of the scenery that the poet beholds. Love for freedom, love for humanity, and love for all the creatures mark his poetry. He becomes an advocate of brotherhood of all creatures made by the god.

The Nature: Love of nature marks the essence of romantic poetry. If Wordsworth is the priest of nature, Coleridge is the lover of nature. He depicts nature as a painter in his poetry. Initially under the influence of Wordsworth, he finds pantheistic notes in nature but with the passage of time under the influence of German idealists his attitude towards nature gets changed. He states that the impressions one receives from nature does not have any independent existence; rather they are the reflections of human thought. In *Dejection: An Ode,* he writes

> "O Lady! We receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does Nature live:
> Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!"

In treatment of nature, his observation is more sensitive than William Wordsworth and comes very close to Shelley or Tennyson's perception of atmospheric light and colour. It is evident in the following lines from *Christabel:*

> A Damsel bright
> Drest in a silken robe of white
> That shadowy in moon light shone

Coleridge's early poems are full of the vivid descriptions of nature and its various objects: the sun, the mountains etc. Finally, he takes the universe of nature as an echo of the glory of God.

Supernatural Elements: Coleridge was a master in dealing with supernatural elements from the position of a romantic. Mystery remains the most important element of his supernaturalism. His fine dealing with the supernatural was perhaps because of his delicate psychology. He infuses the supernatural with the romantic successfully. He understood the nature of Gothic novels in which the supernatural used to be external machinery. It used to be

thrilling but not artistic. Many critics found it evident in the initial poems of Coleridge e. g. in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. There were a hundred companions of the ancient mariner who suddenly fall down and die while the mariner is alive who is left to see the curse. But in other poems *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* the mystery is unfolded in suggestive details and creative ways. In *Kubla Khan* mystery is added 'to the deep romantic chasm':

As e'er beneath the waning moon was haunted

By woman wailing for her demon-lover.

The artistic way of dealing with the supernatural, starts with Coleridge. It further opened up possibilities for the future poets and writers. He does not only create an atmosphere of horror as gothic writers used to do. Rather, he depicts the supernatural in a psychological and suggestive way.

Narrative: Coleridge's narrative was of the highest rank. He knows the art of telling stories in verse. He is a master psychologist who knows how to catch the attention of the listener and how to uphold the suspense. He does not describe things directly in his poetry but indirectly and in an interrogative manner. It makes the situation dramatic which makes the reader hold his breath with excitement. In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, he catches the attention of the wedding guest and introduces him to the events of his story dramatically. Expressions like Death and Life-in-Death are presented dramatically and significantly. This narrative technique also helps him to create suspense which makes him successful in his narratives. Further, with such techniques, the story never goes dull; there is a continuous interest in his poems and the message becomes more convincing. These are some of the unique features of narrative skills.

Dream Poetry and Imagination: Dream element in Coleridge's poetry is very strong. There are a number of poems in which he describes his dream like imagination. There is a strong depiction of memory and dream in his *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. He depicts strange birds and animals, phantom ships, haunted figures, sounds of unearthly instruments which are beyond the reach of reason. But all these descriptions are not useless; rather they generate an effect to attain the purpose of the poet. Sometimes this imagination becomes surrealistic in character. In *Kubla Khan* there is even a dream within a dream. It provides his poetry a unique quality. Actually, Coleridge was a great visualist who conceived all sorts of pictures as a great poet.

Man and Animal in his Poetry: Man was a primary concern for romantic poetry. The romantic poets were very sensitive towards man's hopes, fears, sorrows, and joys. Man and Nature are the basis of their poetry. Coleridge was a person with sympathies for animals

also. He does not like people who have no pity for animals. He considers man and animal on equal terms. Love is the guiding force for all. He believes that the spiritual world will be angry with the man who does not love all the creatures of god. To serve all the creatures of god means to serve the god itself for him. If one hates or kills the animals he will be punished as he has depicted in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.* The following stanza from this poem gives us an idea about his love for animals

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

Observations on Human life: Coleridge was a great psychologist. He was familiar with the world inside a human being. He depicts the inner mind of his characters remarkably. He also gives great observations on human life. For example, in his The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, he writes:

Life is but thought: So think I will
That youth and age are playmates still.

Talking about human nature and experience, again writes in the same poem

A spring of love gusht from my heart
. . . . . .
The self-same moment I could pray.

Thus, Coleridge understands human psychology and gives his insights on human life, experiences, and understanding.

Coleridge was a poet as well as a philosopher at the same time. He was more skilled than Wordsworth but could not maintain his literary career due to his psychological problems. He brout new experiments in the field of poetry. Most of the above discussed features were unique to his poetry. He also paved the way for metrical experiments in the future poetry also. He revives supernaturalism through his poetry. He depicted the supernatural in such a way that it appears to be natural. Actually, he tries to reveal the mystery of things through the supernatural.

Morality and Spirituality in his Poetry: Morality and spirituality is evident in Coleridge's poetry. The spiritual life of Coleridge can be divided into two phases taking 1798-99 as a point of division. He was a Necessitarian and a Unitarian in the first phase, and Christian in the second. Coleridge's most famous poems *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* are full of themes of morality and spirituality.

No doubt, there have been some defects also in Coleridge's poetry. The major noticeable defect is that most of his significant poetry is in fragments. It is said about him that he seldom finished what he began. Only *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a complete work of highest quality. The other great poems, such as *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* are incomplete. It can also be generally observed that there is a lack of human interest in his poetry. But, besides these defects, Coleridge can be considered as the premier poet and critic of modern English literature. He had a great innovative influence in the wake of the French Revolution which inspired a generation of writers rising from the middle class. His inspiration to the future poets and mastery in technical skills on meter, make him the poet's poet.

1.4 Introduction to *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

The publication of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) was a combined effort S. T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth. It was the book which marks the birth of romanticism in English. As discussed Coleridge, Wordsworth and Dorothy were friends. They used to spend a lot of time discussing nature, man, and poetry. The friendship of Coleridge and Wordsworth and their discussions about poetry paved the way for the birth of romantic poetry in English. Modifying the traditional poetic trends they introduced new ways of observing and presenting life. Working on this revolutionary understanding of life, Coleridge contributes *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* to the *Lyrical Ballads*. *The Rime* has a number of elements, such as a lot of images of nature, supernatural elements, deep sense of history, conversational language etc. which are later regarded as the essential elements of romanticism.

The poem is based on an incident of which Coleridge takes from a book titled *A Voyage around the World by the way of the Great South Sea* written by Shelvocke. The incident of killing a bird Albatross was recorded in this work and it is taken creatively by Coleridge to execute his ideas. The inspiration behind this poem was Coleridge's friendship with Wordsworth and Dorothy. One afternoon in 1797, the three decided to go for a trip but it was hard for them to meet with the expenses. So to raise the funds, they decide to write poetry for *New Monthly Magazine*. And Coleridge decided to write *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* based on one of his dreams and Shelvocke's work. It is also notable that *The Rime* was one of the pieces of Coleridge's plan to write a series of supernatural poems.

The poem executes the theme of love among all the living creatures and human beings by using the supernatural machinery. The Mariner commits a crime against the divine law by killing the bird named Albatross; it results in the disturbance in the external world of nature as well as in the inner world of the mariner. Coleridge presents the mariner, albatross,

natural, and supernatural symbolically. He inspires human beings to obey the divine law, the law of nature in which love is the guiding force. Mysticism is one of the most important characteristics of the poem as all the mariners start to realize that they have been caught by some angry spirits due to some sin. The poet presents the theme of organic oneness also. He suggests that man should maintain harmony with the divine and nature. Disturbing nature means devastation. The killing of the bird in the poem leads to the devastation of the whole crew and other members. The poem proceeds on various biblical themes with the help of imagination.

1.5 Critical Reading of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Part 1

The Rime begins with the following stanza

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The story starts to unfold, the ancient Mariner stops one of the wedding guests to listen to his story. It is the story which will execute the theme of the poem. The eyes of the Mariner are glittering while he stops the wedding guest. It gives a mysterious and supernatural effect at the very beginning of the poem. The wedding guest does not want to listen to him because he is in a hurry to attend the marriage. But the mysterious powers hypnotise the guest and he has to listen to what the Mariner wants to narrate. Coleridge writes

He holds him with his glittering eye-
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three-years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The poem starts to operate mysteriously. The Mariner, without waiting for the consent of the guest, starts to narrate the story.

'The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill
Below the light-house top,

Mariner describes how the ship departs happily. The good wishes of the friends and relatives were with them. The description of the moving ship, the light-house, the church, and

the hill is remarkable. As the description of the beauty of nature is an essential element of romantic poetry, Coleridge depicts it in the real sense. It gives wings to the imagination of the reader also as one starts to imagine harbour, hill, and the church before his or her eyes. It appeals to the senses of the reader.

The listener receives again a call from the wedding ceremony but he finds himself unable to move from the spell of the Mariner. The story seems simple but mysterious at this point. But the major tools used by romantic poets to write the poem are very much evident in the beginning of the poem.

The Mariner resumes the story by stating that the ship moves towards the South. After leaving the harbour, a furious storm came. It was so strong that it drove the ship towards the South Pole.

And now the Storm-blast came, and he

Was tyrannous and strong:

He struck with his o'ertaking wings,

And chased up south along.

Suddenly, they have to face the mist and snow. The cracking icebergs produced piercing sounds. It increases the cold and the whole environment becomes misty and dreamy. Suddenly, a bird named Albatross appears out of the mist. The mariners welcomed it in the name of God under the Christian faith.

At length did cross an Albatross,

Through the fog it came;

As if it had been a Christian soul,

We hailed it in God's name.

The arrival of the god's creature is welcomed. The mariners offer it a number of eatables. It flies around the ship by showing its love for the mariners. The arrival of the Albatross is like a blessing for the mariners as the icebergs start to depart and give way to the boat. A favourable wind starts to blow which helps the ship to move in the right direction. The love between the albatross and the mariners grows day by day. The bird sits on the rope and mast at the time of evening prayers at the ship. These descriptions execute the major themes of the poem; believe in god, love to all the creatures of the god, the symbolic co-existence of man and nature.

Suddenly, during the narration, the signs of pain appear on the face of Mariner. The guest gets worried and asks the Mariner what happened. The Mariner could not speak much, he only said: "I shot the Albatross". And with this statement of the Mariner the first part of

the poem ends. It was the most painful confession of the crime which leads to the dramatic ending of the first part of the poem.

Part 2

Now the ship was without the bird. The members at the ship condemned Mariner killing the bird and they believed that killing the bird would bring a curse upon them. But as the weather gets better, they change their opinion and start to think that the killing of the bird was right. Suddenly, the weather changes badly. Now, it is extremely hot and the sun at noon is blood red. There is no wind and the ship does not move. They got stuck for many days. There is shortage of drinking water on the ship although there is water all around.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink

The sea starts to rot in the extreme heat. The creatures in the sea could be seen crawling and rotting. The water looks muddy. The death-fires are all around. It seems that the ship is under a heavy curse. Some of the sailors see in their dreamy imagination that they have become the victims of revenge by the Polar Spirit which has followed them nine fathoms deep in the sea since the death of the bird. The most horrible incident takes place at the ship when they hung the dead albatross around the neck of the Mariner in place of the cross. This part of the poem is an effort of the poet to show that if humans must consider all the creatures of god sympathetically otherwise they will be punished by the divine for their crimes. It is made more effective by the use of dramatic techniques in the description and by the use of supernatural elements.

Part 3

They are passing through very difficult and painful times. They are hungry and thirsty. Their eyes look glassy. The Mariner sees an object in the West but cannot identify what it is. First of all it looks like merely a spot then a patch of mist. It moves in a zig-zag way trying to escape from some kind of mysterious spirit in the water. All were thirsty. They can neither cry nor laugh. The Mariner cannot bear his thirst and bites his arm to get his throat wet with his own blood. Suddenly, he notices a ship approaching them. All thank God for His mercy. Suddenly, a strange thing comes between the ship and the sun. It seems that the sun is behind the prison bars. The mariners start to pray to the Virgin Mary for giving them mercy. There is an attempt by the poet on each step to make human beings realize their position in the divine hierarchy and to obey the divine law.

The skeleton-like ship comes close to them. The sun peeped through the skeleton ship like a prisoner. The Mariner noticed only one woman on the coming ship. Then he notices another figure which looks like death. The poet gives a very vivid description of it.

Her lips were red, her looks were free,

Her locks were yellow as gold:

Her skin was as white as leprosy.

The Night-mare, Life-in-Death was she,

Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The term 'Life-in-Death' gives a very horrible picture of it, it is like a dreadful dream which freezes everyone's blood. Life in death means the man is living a very painful life. When the skeleton ship comes close to them, the Mariner notices that both of them are playing at dice. And one of them states: 'The game is done! I 've won!'. It indicates the loss of the soul of the Mariner. Evil wins his soul. She states it three times. Such a technique used by Coleridge generates a more terrifying environment. At night, the skeleton-ship disappeared quickly with whispering sounds. The whispering sound was also so frightening that the Mariner felt that someone is drinking blood from his heart as we drink coffee from a cup. The night grows darker but the face of the steersman seems whiter. All the members glance at the Mariner with curse but are not able to groan or sigh. Suddenly, all of them fell down dead silently. At the singular moment of their collective death, the Mariner comes to realize his crime. This was the motive of the poet to make the sinful human being realise his crime; crime towards nature and God. The passing of the souls of the dead men, men dead at his hands, remind him of his sin of killing the albatross. The poet writes:

The souls did from their bodies fly-

They fled to bliss or woe!

And every soul, it passed me by,

Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

Part 4

When the narrator tells of the death of his companions, the wedding-guest gets frightened that perhaps he is talking with the ghost.

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!

I fear thy skinny hand

. . . . .

I fear thee and thy glittering eye. . .

The Mariner tells him that he was the only person who was left alive and resumes his story by stating that he was all alone at the sea with two hundred dead bodies around him. He was in indescribable pain and no saint took pity on his condition. The beautiful human beings were dead while the ugly creatures in the sea were alive. The poet makes a contrast of the human world with the natural world which is alive forever. The scene was very horrible. The Mariner does not find peace. He looks towards the sky and tries to pray but he is unable to do so because his mind was captured by evil thoughts. He shuts his eyes and feels a heavy burden on his eyeballs. He finds a cold curse in the eyes of the dead. He has been condemned to see this curse for seven days, and even when that passes he does not get any relief. One night, under the light of the moon, he observes the colouful snakes under the water:

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

It is the beginning of recovery from the curse. He appreciates the beauty of these creatures which cannot be recorded into words. The green and black coloured snakes play in the water and produce tracks. The moonlight makes the scene more beautiful. Now, it seems that the divine has taken pity on the Mariner which makes him enable to bless these creatures. Now, he is able to pray. The dead Albatross hanging in his neck falls into the sea. The Mariner feels relieved.

Part 5

The first stanza of this part focuses on the significance of sleep. Coleridge describes sleep as death as well as rebirth as it refreshes the human mind. It starts as:

O sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

Thus, sleeping becomes a blessing for the mariner. It refreshes his mind and soul. He dreams that now the empty buckets are full of rain-drops. The rain-drops signify the new life. He felt that his thirsty soul drank the rainy water as blessings of the god. When he gets up he finds that the weather changed from negative to positive. The ship starts to move slowly. There is movement in the dead bodies of his companions. The ship goes on to move and the

men go on to perform their duties on the ship. Even the nephew of the Mariner who was already on the ship starts to work on the rope silently. The narrator states that it was "a troop of spirits beneath".

Early in the morning all get together around the mast. They all are inspired by heavenly spirits. They all feel and listen to the sweet sounds of nature. The Mariner listens to the sweet song of the skylark. He feels that all the birds of the world are together and they are singing sweet songs. It is the culmination of romanticism in the poem. The celebration of the beauty of nature and sweet music, both appeal to the senses of the reader. The ship, life moves in the lap of nature. Although there is no wind, the ship moves. The poet writes:

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made ship to go.

He states that it is due to the Polar Spirit working under the water. Due to a sudden jerk in the ship the Mariner falls down and faints and after sometime he gets recovered. After his recovery from the unconscious, he realizes that he heard two voices in his mind during the unconscious state of mind. The first voice asked the Mariner in the name of the Christ that is he the person who killed the Albatross. The bird loved him but in return Mariner killed it. Secondly, the Polar Spirit living alone in the land of mist and snow loved the Albatross. The second voice was the voice of Mercy and it states that he had committed a crime and he has to undergo more suffering for it. These two voices in the poem are very significant as they execute the idea of God, love, and nature in the poem.

Part 6

The dialogue between the two voices Justice and Mercy continue in this section also. The first voice requests Mercy to answer two questions: How is the ship able to move and what the ocean is doing? The reply comes that the ocean is the slave of its master. It is the moon which directs to the sea in thick and thin. Mercy further states that the ship is moving because the air pressure decreases in the front of the ship and increases behind. After this dialogue both the spirits fly. The Mariner wakes up and finds that that ship is moving slowly in calm waters. All the members are standing in a group with the impression of pain still on their faces and the Mariner is still unable to pray; he feels that he is being followed by some evil spirit.

At last, the spell breaks and the Mariner once again sees the sea in its natural colour. The ship starts to move fast but in a gentle way. In his imagination, he sees a lighthouse, a

hill, and a church before his eyes. He enjoys the scene and feels as if he reached his native land. He prays to God that what he has seen either must turn real or he must remain in dreams forever. Suddenly, he realizes that all the dead bodies are lying on the deck and there is a bright angel near each dead body. The angels with waving hands give the impression of heavenly blessings. It is a divine message for the earthly men. In the deep silence, the Mariner listens to the sound of oars; they start to work. The ship moves to another direction where there is a boat. The boat carries the Pilot, the Pilot's boy, and a Hermit also. The Hermit composes and sings hymns which give the Mariner hope that he can confess his crime and get the relief. This section of the poem depicts the mental state of the Mariner. The poem becomes psychological also as the inner workings of the mind or thoughts of an all alone character are portrayed.

Part 7

The Hermit is from the forests. He prays to God for humanity and likes to talk with the travelers. He prays thrice in a day. He encourages the Pilot to move ahead near the ship. When the boat approaches near the ship, there is a loud and dreadful sound under the water. Suddenly, there is an opening near in the water and the ship sinks. The Mariner does not drown but floats like a decomposed dead body, then he is taken in the boat. There is a whirlpool where the ship sank. The pilot gets frightened and falls down unconscious. The Hermit immediately starts to pray. The boy gets mad due to the fear of the presence of the devil on the boat. Ultimately, the Mariner reaches his homeland safely. All the happenings during the journey are so terrifying that the Hermit is not able to stand properly on their arrival.

Now, the Mariner had to tell his story to get relief from his mysterious pains. He tells the wedding-guest that he has acquired mysterious skills in story-telling and he can recognize the person who will listen to his story. He has told the story to the wedding-guest and taught the morals he wished to convey. A sound of music is heard as the wedding ceremony is in conclusion. The Church bell invites the Mariner for evening prayers. He tells the wedding-guest that it is better to go to the church than attending a marriage. He adds:

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
. . . . . .

He prayeth well, who loveth well. . .

He gives the message that we must love all the creatures of God and love equally. The bright eyed and grey beard Mariner leaves. The wedding-guest goes to the church. The next day the guest wakes up as a wiser person.

1. 6 Questions for Practice

Long

1. Discuss S. T. Coleridge as a poet of the Romantic Age.
2. Discuss the life of S. T. Coleridge and his contribution to English literature.
3. Critically assess S. T. Coleridge's contribution to English Poetry and literary criticism.
4. Discuss various themes of the poem.
5. Discuss the use of supernatural elements in the poem.

Short

1. Write a short note on Romanticism
2. Write a short note on Romantic Poetry
3. List the major works of S. T. Coleridge
4. Write a short note on the significance of *Lyrical Ballads*
5. Write a short note on the friendship of S. T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth.
6. Trace the major difference in the romanticism of S. T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth.
7. Who are the pioneers of English Romantic Poetry?

Section-B
William Wordsworth

UNIT II: William Wordsworth

Structure

Unit I

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction to the Poet

2.2 Selected and Important Works

2.3 Romantic Age and Literary Criticism

2.4 Poetic Philosophy of willian Wordsworth

2.5 Critical Examination of the "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"

2.6 Critical Examination of the Poem "London 1802"

2.7 Questions for Practice

2.0 Objectives

In this unit an attempt has been made to introduce the poet, William Wordsworth; his life and life conditions which make him a unique poet of English. Further, the discussion moves to the major works of Wordsworth. The section traces his contributions to the world of English literature. Then, his two major poems “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey” and “London 1802” have been examined.

After reading, the student will be able to:

1.Understand life and life conditions of the poet.

2.Understand the major features of Wordsworth’s poetry.

3.Understand the significance of Wordsworth’s contributions to English poetry.

4.Attempt questions on Wordsworth and his poetry.

2.1 Introduction to the Poet

William Wordsworth was born in the Lake District of northern England in 1770. He grew up to be one of the most prominent personalities in the history of English literature, not only becoming world famous for his romantic poetry, but also laying the foundation stone of Romanticism in English literature in association with S. T. Coleridge. The foundation text of Romanticism *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) was a combined effort of both the poets.

Wordsworth's father was a law expert and he was frequently away from home due to his responsibilities concerning his work. This gave Wordsworth plenty of time to spend on studies. Although his father could not give his children sufficient time, he used to send his children the works of John Milton, William Shakespeare, and Herbert Spencer to read. This also led to Wordsworth spending a lot of time at his mother's parents' house in Cumberland, which is where he started to come very close to nature. Being a sensitive child, he could not associate with his grandparents and uncle there as he found the domestic environment distressing and turned towards nature. As a child, Wordsworth had good association with his sister Dorothy. Both of them were sensitive and understood each other's feelings.

Primarily, Wordsworth was taught by his mother. Later on, he was sent to a school of low quality but soon shifted to a school of upper-class students where he was taught the *Bible* and the *Spectator*. He met Mary (his would be wife) for the first time, at this school in Penrith. After his mother's death in 1778, he was sent by his father to a school in Lancashire, and his sister Dorothy to relatives in Yorkshire. It led to a long separation between brother and sister, lasting nine years.

The life experiences had a deep impact on the sensitive and emotional Wordsworth and he made a debut as a writer by publishing a sonnet in *The European Magazine* in 1787. He completed his graduation in 1791. The most significant learning experience during his college time was that he devoted his summer vacations in 1790 to a long walking tour. He went to revolutionary France during these vacations and he formed early political ideas and developed more love for humanity against the prevailing tyranny. These experiences changed his vision of life.

In the year 1795, he was reunited with his beloved sister Dorothy. They lived together and moved to Alfoxden House near Bristol, where the brother and sister encountered and developed a friendship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, also living at Alfoxden House. This trio gave birth to unexpected new possibilities, and it changed not only the lives of both the poets Wordsworth and Coleridge, but also gave birth to a new era of English Literature. The three Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Dorothy were creative persons and their discussions give new life to contemporary literature. They spent a lot of time discussing literature, art, philosophy and politics. They liked to travel to understand and enjoy life fully. It could be said that it was the friendship of the romantic poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge, that started the new era of romanticism. A number of poems written by both the poets could not be possible if they were not together. The most significant poem by Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,* was designed after discussion with each other and to pay the expenses of

their travel. The mother text of romantic poetry *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) was a joint effort of both the poets and result of the discussions of the three. All three wrote romantic poetry (Dorothy was also a good writer and a famous diarist), but the romanticism of each poet is unique in its own way.

Wordsworth had a long literary career. It seems that perhaps he was born to observe and write. His early writings include *Descriptive Sketches* (1793) and *Evening Walk* (1793). Although they were written in the traditional couplet, the most common element of Wordsworth's poetry, his love for nature, was very much evident in these works. Then he registered his poetic expressions through tragedy, as he wrote *The Borderers*, *Guilt and Sorrow, Margaret* or *The Ruined Cottage*. Although these were not very successful writings, they indicate future possibilities.

It was the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 which ushered the new era of romanticism in English poetry. It was a combined effort of Wordsworth and Coleridge. The first edition includes twenty-three poems, nineteen written by Wordsworth and four written by Coleridge. Wordsworth registers his presence as a great romantic poet through the poems, such as Lines Written, In *Fountain Early, Spring, Tintern Abbey, Michael,* etc. Besides the poems, Wordsworth added "Preface" to the *Lyrical Ballads* to the 1800 edition. It shows the genius of Wordsworth as a theorist of romantic poetry. The "Preface" was written to introduce a new kind of poetry to the reader but it turned out to be a complete theory which makes every reader, poet, and critic understand romantic poetry. Many new poems, such as *Lucy* poems, *Cutting,* and *Ruth* are also added to the 1800 edition by Wordsworth. It was around this time in his life when he married his childhood friend Mary Hutchinson, in 1802.

In 1805, he completed his autobiographical poem *The Prelude* but it remained unpublished till 1850. The poem is also famous with its alternative title *The Account of the Growth of a Poet's Mind*. The poem was planned to be part of his earlier poem *The Recluse* which could never be completed. The poet records his experiences of life from childhood to maturity in this poem. The most significant parts of the poem are where the poet registers the impact of nature on his life. It is also significant from the point that it traces the growth of a sensitive creative mind which is personal to a great poet of English literature.

Wordsworth published *Poems, in Two Volumes,* a collection of poetry in 1807. It records sonnets, short poems, odes, and ballads, and contains significant poetic pieces "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud", "My Heart Leaps Up", "The Daffodils", "The Solitary Reaper", "The World is Too Much with Us", "To the Cuckoo", etc. Most of these poems

execute major ideas of the poet. They played a major role in the popularity of the poet as they represent Wordsworth as a poet of nature.

The next significant poem written by Wordsworth is *The Excursion* (1814). It was written in nine books and was intended to be part of the supposed to be lengthy poem *The Recluse* as well. It reflects the poet's emotions and love towards nature. He also wrote a number of sonnets during his long literary career. He started to write sonnets in 1801 and continued to write till the last days of his life. He revived the tradition of Petrarchan sonnets. Initially, he wrote patriotic sonnets, but later turned to various themes, such as nature, human life, and humanity. His most popular sonnets include "The World is Too Much with Us", "Milton", and a series of sonnets of River Duddon.

We know that Wordsworth is primarily a poet, but his contribution as a critic of Romantic poetry is also notable. His "Preface" to the *Lyrical Ballads* provides a complete theory of romantic poetry and diction. Although it is a very short document, it is very valuable for the readers and critics of romantic poetry. It changed the general approach towards poetry in English.

There was a sudden decline in the poetic creativity of Wordsworth after 1808. Although he published some poetry, it did not attract much attention, and he turned conservative in the last phase of his life.

2.2 Selected and Important Works

- *Lyrical Ballads* 1798 (A joint effort with S. T. Coleridge)
- Enlarged edition of *Lyrical Ballads* with Preface 1800
- *Poems in Two Volumes* 1807
- *The Excursion* 1814
- *The River Duddon* 1820
- *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent* 1822
- *Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems* 1835
- *Sonnets* 1838
- *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years* 1842
- *Collected Poems* 1849-50
- *The Prelude* 1850

2.3 Romantic Age and Literary Criticism

‘Classic’ and ‘Romantic’ are the two important terms to understand the literary shift from the eighteenth century to the romantic age. Talking about the two trends differently does not mean that both are opposite to each other, rather it is a mutual shift.

Classicism has the following major features:

1. It appeals to reason
2. It has typical approach
3. Adherence to the known
4. Suspicion of the unknown
5. The viewpoint is objective

On the other hand Romanticism has the following major features:

1. It appeals to emotions
2. It has an individual approach
3. It is a quest for the unknown
4. No satisfaction with the known
5. The viewpoint is subjective

This major shift is due to the remarkable interventions of the two Wordsworth and Coleridge. Wordsworth brought a big reaction to the classical traditions in theory as well as in practice. He wrote the theory of romantic poetry in the form of *Preface* and wrote a significant number of poems to establish it. The publication of *Lyrical Ballads* marks this great shift in 1798.

Romantic Criticism has salient features which are totally different from classical criticism; and first of all, it redefines poetry. Romantics do not consider poetry as a mere imitation rather they consider it as a medium of communication. It is an expression of the feelings, emotions with the help of some kind of natural inspiration and imagination. It does not pay much attention to the heavy rules and regulations rather make poetry an easy exercise. It attempts to redefine poetry and the poetic process to make it for all.

Romantic criticism believes in the freedom and originality in writing. Romantics revolt against prevailing rules and principles of poetry. They give more freedom to the poet to write. They emphasize on the freedom of writing and the impression produced by the work. The approach must be original. When Wordsworth defines poetry as “a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” it leads to the complete freedom of thought and expression in all the ways.

It further leads to creative criticism. The critics put themselves in the position of the creator (poet) to understand the work fully. Here criticism also needs imagination to perform

its duty. A critic enters into the mind of the poet and the work through imagination. It is essential for a romantic critic to understand the emotions and feelings of the poet for the poet to be criticized.

Simplicity is given preference over the poetic diction in romantic poetry as well as in criticism. The rigid poetic diction of the eighteenth century is strongly condemned by Wordsworth in his *Preface*. Simple life, simple subjects, simple words, simple poetry are given more space in romantic criticism.

Subjective approach in criticism leads to the examination of a work of art in relation to the inner thoughts of the poet and the whole creative process. A critic appreciates a work of art according to his personal impressions.

2.4 Poetic Philosophy of William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth was primarily a poet and a philosopher. He had his own philosophy of poetry which reflects in his poems. Wordsworth and Coleridge introduced unique and new poetry through the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*. This romantic poetry demanded a new kind of approach and insight to read, comprehend, and enjoy this poetry. It made a dent in the traditional poetic tradition. Although Wordsworth was primarily a poet, he had to theorize his poetic philosophy in the form of "Preface" to introduce unique poetry to the reader. This "Preface" is an important and significant document which records the observations of a romantic poet on his poetry. In this document, he expresses his philosophy of poetry. We can easily trace all the elements discussed in the "Preface" very much evident in his poetry. He theorizes what he practices.

Preface to the Lyrical Ballads was not a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings like his poetry. Wordsworth had to revise the preface many times to give it a proper shape and finally it was published in 1800. It was focused on the inspiring nature and functions of a poet. It considers the poet superior to the man of science. The 1802 edition comes with an addition of "Poetic Diction". The revision continues in the subsequent editions but the essence of the preface remains the same. It is notable that the original idea of the preface belongs to Coleridge. It is obvious that many of the insights appearing in the preface may be the result of Wordsworth's discussions with Coleridge.

Primarily *Preface* was published to create public taste in romantic poetry; at the same time, it expresses the poetic philosophy of Wordsworth. He discusses who the poet is, what the poetry is and what it should serve. The main points discussed in the *Preface* include: poetry and its subject matter; the language of poetry; poetic process, functions of the poet;

poetry versus science; ordinary man and poetry, etc. The main features of his poetry can be discussed as follows.

Revolt against Eighteenth Century poetic tradition: Wordsworth writes against the traditional poetic diction and introduces the new in the preface and through his poetry. He attacks the "Gaudiness and inane phraseology" of contemporary traditional poets. He finds that the traditional poetic language separates itself from the core humanity while poetry is meant for human life. The language of the poetry must be the language of the people used by them in real life. He rejects the language of traditional poets by calling it "vague, glossy, and unfeeling". He himself chose to avoid the mechanical techniques in his poetry in order to make it the poetry of humanity.

Poet for Wordsworth: Wordsworth states that the poet is not an isolated man far from humanity rather he converses with the ordinary people through his poetry. He is one among the ordinary people but his intensity makes him different from them. He feels more and deeper than other people about the day-to-day real life incidents. He is a man who has greater observation, imagination, and contemplation power than ordinary people. He is a man of organic sensibility who makes other people feel and think what he feels and thinks himself.

Comparing the poet with a scientist, Wordsworth gives a high place to the poet over the scientist as the poet deals with greater universal truths than the scientist. The poet's pleasure is also greater than the scientist's. Science appeals only to the intellect while the poet and his poetry appeals to all the aspects of human life.

The Poetic Process for Wordsworth: There are a number of definitions by William Wordsworth about the poet, poetry, and poetic process. The important are: it is a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" and "emotions recollected in tranquility". It doesn't mean that the poet is not conscious while he writes. The intelligence of the poet is active at all times during the process. The imagination, thinking, and contemplation play a significant role in the process of creativity.

Simple language instead of heavy and complex: As Wordsworth believes that poetry is for people so its language also must belong to the language of people. Heavy language will spoil the worth of a poem. Its language must be the same as the language of the prose as poetry is also a medium of communication. Poetry shares the experiences of life in an appealing way. The poet is a more sensitive person than the ordinary people; he observes life and writes in the language of an average man. The subject must be simple and relevant. For Wordsworth, the poet's duty is to speak to the ordinary people through poetry. It must involve society, humanity, and aesthetics.

Subject-matter of his Poetry: Wordsworth believes that the poet finds matter for his poetry from every subject which can be the interest of the human mind. Particularly, humble and rustic life must be the subject of poetry according to him. He prefers feelings to situations. An ordinary happening from rustic life can be a good subject for writing poetry. He argues that the poet must deal with simple subjects with simplicity as much as it is possible. Number of poems executes his idea of rustic life and simplicity.

Nature is a most important subject in the poetry of Wordsworth. He is also known as a priest of nature. He seeks inspiration and guidance from nature to understand human life. He says that nature has solutions to all the human problems. In a number of poems, such as "Tintern Abbey", "Immortality Ode", and "Michael", he expresses his philosophy of nature. In the *Prelude*, Wordsworth states that love of nature can lead to the love of mankind. In a number of poems, such as "The World is too much with Us" and "London 1802" he shows that the person who gets detached from nature is lost.

Memory also plays a significant role in writing poetry. Wordsworth says that a beautiful scene of nature is not a joy for the moment but it is a joy forever because it gets recorded into our mind. In his poem, "Daffodils", the poet remembers that beautiful scene of nature which he had seen earlier and it remains fresh for all his life. Further, this beautiful scene of thousands of flowers gives him peace in times of distress.

2.5 Critical Examination of the Poem "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"

The poem records the poet's revisit to a beautiful natural spot along the banks of river Wye after five years. It is in true sense a Wordsworthian poem as it enlivens his theme of nature. The narrator contemplates on his experience in the lap of nature after his revisit. The poem can be called a major representative poem of Wordsworth. It is a blend of dramatic monologue and a lyrical ballad. Dramatic monologue means it is a narrative by an individual speaker, in which he reveals his thoughts by describing the situation.

The poem does not follow any clear rhyme scheme but it observes the meter. There are patterns of iambic pentameter throughout the poem. There are five sets of beats per line. The first unstressed beat is followed by a stressed one.

The speaker in the poem is Wordsworth himself who has returned to a spot on the banks of the river Wye after five years. He remembers his last visit experience as well as describes his current experience. The poem starts with the description of the beautiful place, the setting, and the theme of the poem. It begins with the lines

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear,
These waters, rolling from their mountain –springs
With a soft inland murmur.

He narrates that this place is very dear to him as nature unfolds all its inner beauty before him on this particular spot. The place was very beautiful and mystical for five years. The beautiful scenery of that last time is imprinted on his mind. The place has been very inspiring to the poet as he always feels the presence of this natural beauty although he was very far from it in the last times. It always stayed with him through thick and thin. Whenever he found himself fallen in the trap of modernism, nature has always helped him to stay positive and happy. The most important theme of the poem is very much evident in the beginning of the poem is nature and what role it plays in human life. Nature has all the power for the poet, such as inspiration, healing, creativity, love, enlightenment, etc. Nature is a blessing for human beings. It guides humanity on how to live. The poet also finds solace in the lap of it.

Tintern Abbey is not merely a geographical place for the poet rather it takes him away from the mad modern world. The poet rejects the chaos prevailing in contemporary busy life. The beauty of the natural world holds the mind of the speaker and takes him to the "deep power of joy".

The speaker again gets a chance to visit the place and enjoy nature with the high and impressive cliffs. It changes the mood of the poet and leads his sensitive mind to contemplate and think. The silence of the quiet landscape attaches it to the calm and vast sky. It seems that the earth and the sky come close to each other. It also involves the speaker by inviting him.

Wordsworth remembers his last visit in the lap of nature. He sat underneath a shady "sycamore" tree and looked at the surrounding greenery in the valley. There were farmlands and gardens around him. Thus, memory becomes a treasure for him.

Now, at this time of the season, the fruit on the trees is not ripe but the trees are full of greenery. There are lines and lines of green bushes. He can note that there are circles of smoke drifting up silently among the trees as messengers of nature. The poet remembers the past memories which double his joy. When he last visited the place he was like an innocent child. He ran here and there. He was excited but dreaded. He was not mature enough to understand the significance of this joyful experience. Now, he enjoys his visit to the fullest of his capacity. It also reminds the reader of a very famous statement of another romantic poet

John Keats “a thing of beauty is a joy forever”. The speaker expresses the philosophy of the poet by stating how the time spent with nature heals all his wounds. He states that whenever he is alone, stressed, or exhausted under the stress of daily life he again imagines that he is in the valley of Wye. This exercise gives him relief and he is again refreshed. It is his imaginary and spiritual visit to the valley to get solace and comfort.

The experiences of life with nature enrich the speaker every time as he states that the second visit to the valley is different from the first. In the first visit, the speaker was not well aware about the mysterious powers of nature. In the second visit, he realizes that everything in the universe is connected, united, and part of a whole. This organic whole is presented throughout the poem. The various experiences of the speaker with nature make him mature to examine and understand this relationship. It exists in the rays of the sun, the waves of the ocean, the blue sky and the mind of the speaker.

The experiences of the speaker with nature teach to the reader romance, kindness, love, simplicity, and humanity. Nature gives him spiritual gifts, which he states that humans are not able to return. The “blessed mood” reduces all the burdens of his life. It is nature which affects all of his life and guides him on each step. He is so mingled with nature that he learns how to see “into the life of things”. It makes him the priest of nature. He worships nature for all its blessings which changed the course of his life.

In the fourth stanza of the poem, the speaker expresses a lot of hopes from his visit to the valley and describes how his mind is gleaming with the thoughts which were “dim” and “half-extinguished”. He expresses his satisfaction in his love for nature and what nature has given him. His hopes are that the memories of this trip will remain with him forever. His soul is nourished and satisfied. All the descriptions of the mind of the speaker and natural beauty, given in the poem, are constructed by the use of metaphors and romantic language. For example: the speaker is so consumed by nature that he took it in like food.

The speaker states that his current experience with nature is different from his last experience as he is no longer a “thoughtless youth” but a mature human being. He is older and wiser now to understand life with nature. He feels something divine in nature which surrounds the entire world. He states

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Thus, he wishes to retain this “presence” to carry within him. He feels that this presence of the divine or nature is stronger than what he has experienced in the past. He also

admits that the way he loves and understands nature may be changed but he still wishes to remain its lover for whole life. The "meadows and the woods" are like temples of God for him.

Talking about the energy, which makes this world move, is nature according to the speaker. He argues that nature fuels each and everything in this world. Here the tone of the speaker is highly loaded with personal emotions for nature. This emotional description grows with the progression of the poem. He adds that nature plays the role of a guide as well as of nurse in his life and calls it the "soul" of his mortality. The romantic description of the beauty of nature and its humanistic teachings make Wordsworth a great poet of nature, romance, and humanity.

In the first four stanzas of the poem, the identity of the speaker was a mystery. It is revealed in the fifth stanza and the reader also comes to know that the speaker is not alone when he addresses his companion "[my] dear, dear Friend". The speaker is Wordsworth himself and his companion is his sister Dorothy who is also one of the best friends. He is narrating all the story to her by addressing her, "thou my dearest friend". Dorothy plays a major role in the life of the poet. He discusses his writings with Dorothy and these discussions shape most of his writings. He states one of the major theme of the poem to her

> [m]y dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
> Knowing that Nature never did betray

Wordsworth argues that nature is one of the best friends of humans which never betrays. The monologue of Wordsworth, thus, turns into his address to his sister. He again states

> Knowing that Nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her

He adds that our life is "full of blessings" because nature is with us.

The poet is turning to conclude the poem by expecting that Dorothy/reader now will be able to understand his bond with nature exactly. He believes that now onwards she should "let the moon" shine over her wanderings in nature and also feel the presence of nature all around her. He adds that after all this talk "thou [will] remember me" because ultimately no one can imagine living without nature. The poet tells her sister that if, in future, they are separated, they will not forget this place where they "stood together". He concludes the poem by stating that these landscapes are dear to him.

Thus, this poem is an expression of love for nature, Dorothy, and humanity at large. The love for nature and humanity is intermingled. The descriptions in the poem make the

reader attach with nature the questions and problems of human life. The language of the poem is simple which makes it easy to convey the themes registered in it. The relationship between humans and nature has been expressed in a very romantic way.

2.6 Critical Examination of the Poem "London 1802"

The Poem was composed in 1802 but published in 1807 in a volume titled *Poems, in Two Volumes.* It has two major aspects one is associated with the life and qualities of seventeenth century poet John Milton and second, the prevailing selfishness, immorality and stagnancy among the English people. The poem was composed after Wordsworth's visit to France which filled his heart with the feelings of nationalism. It leads him to stress on moralism and he becomes conservative too to discuss the socio-cultural and political conditions of the English people. There is a footnote given by the poet himself with the poem stating "written immediately after my return from France to London when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country. . . as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France". So, he wishes for a revolution in England too; the revolution in society and politics.

There are significant changes in Wordsworth after returning from France. A romantic poet turns to be a socio-culturist. He wishes to overthrow the socio-cultural as well as political traditions of the English which had been recently done in France.

The Petrarchan sonnet "London 1802" begins by eulogizing John Milton (1608-1674).

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour
England hath need of thee

Wordsworth remembers that great soul for his dissemination of morality through his writings. Milton helped the people to retain moral and religious values during the time of the Civil War. Wordsworth wishes the presence of Milton in the current time for "England hath need" of him because the people have lost the sense of morality under the changing conditions. The poem is set in London which is the center of modernity and industrialization in England. The poet states that once his country was a great place of religion, happiness, chivalry, literature, and art but at the present time the society has discarded all its virtues and values. So, the great English poet Milton needs to be invited to

Raise us up, return to us again
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power

He compliments Milton by comparing him with the beautiful things, such as the sea, the star etc. found in nature.

Wordsworth calls Milton a pure soul who could improve and guide the life of contemporary people. He is like a bright star which can enlighten the life of confused people. His voice is unique which resembles "the sea" and is "pure as the naked heavens". He never lived an artificial life but a simple and natural life taking "lowliest duties" on himself. The course of life can be a model of life for the contemporary people according to the poet.

The sonnet is full of literary devices, such as the pleading and praising tone, apostrophe, simile, metaphor, personification, enjambment etc.. This makes the themes of the poem more effective and creative. The sonnet is basically a request of an emotional person to make his country better. He is looking to the "inward happiness" for his people and for himself to "return to us again". He wishes a decent life full of humanism which must be enlivened "manners, virtues, freedom, [and] power!

The poet becomes emotional while writing about English society. It is his love for his people and for humanity as a whole. His socialism turns to nationalism when he talks about his own country. While writing about his country idealistically he also becomes conservative. One can say that in contemporary times nationalism itself is considered conservatism. Although the poet writes the sonnet for an ideal life, his approach is very much humanistic and he gives a big tribute to the great poet John Milton.

2.7 Questions for Practice

1. Discuss the Literary career of William Wordsworth.
2. Discuss the life and major works by William Wordsworth.
3. What is Romantic Criticism? Discuss in detail.
4. Discuss William Wordsworth's association with S. T. Coleridge and Dorothy Wordsworth.
6. Discuss the poetic philosophy of William Wordsworth in detail.
7. Discuss the theory of poetry given by William Wordsworth.
8. Discuss the poet and poetry according to romantic criticism.
9. Critically examine the poem "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"
10. What are the various themes touched in the poem "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"
11. Compare the Speakers' second visit with the first at Wye valley
12. Discuss the treatment of nature in the poem "Lines composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"

13. Discuss the themes appeared in the poem “London 1802”

14. Discuss the element of nationalism evident in the poem “London 1802

15. Compare and contrast “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey” and “London 1802”

Section-B
John Keats

UNIT I: John Keats

Structure

1.0 Objectives

1.1 Introduction to the Poet

1.2 List of Selected Works

1.3 Critical Examination of the poem "Ode to Nightingale"

1.4 Critical Examination of the poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

1.5 Questions for Practice

1.0 Objectives

In these units an attempt has been made to introduce the poet, John Keats and life conditions which make him one of the greatest Romantic poets of English. There is a critical examination of his two important poems "Ode to Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn". After reading this lesson, the student will be able to

1. Understand life and life conditions of the poet.
2. Understand the major features of Keats' poetry.
3. Understand and Contextualise "Ode to Nightingale"
4. Understand and Contextualise "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
5. Understand the themes prevailing in these poems
6. Attempt questions on Keats and his poetry.

1.1 Introduction to the Poet

John Keats (1795-1821) was one of the greatest poets of the Romantic Age of English Literature. His life was short and full of tragedy, but due to his passionate contributions to English literature, he left a permanent mark on the world. The suffering he endured in his short life led him to write not only of the inevitability of death and decay in this world, but more specifically about the importance of beauty and creativity in a life full of suffering. He managed to find joy through art and imagination despite the sheer amount of suffering he went through, which shines through in his poetry as well as his personal letters. Among his finest works of poetry are "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Nightingale", in which he talks about the permanence of art and the joy that it brings through its beauty, and quite

similarly his work has stood the test of time and brings joy to people around the world to this day. While his brilliance may not have been acknowledged in his life by the critics of his time, his profound works, his gentle yet enthusiastic personality, and his unique outlook on life were celebrated in his death. His works continue to add to the lives of many readers even after his death, affirming his statement, “A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.”

John Keats was born in London to Thomas Keats, a livery-stable keeper, and Frances Jennings Keats. John was the eldest of four siblings, and his family struggled financially throughout his childhood. Keats lost both of his parents at a young age, with his father dying when he was eight years old and his mother passing away from tuberculosis when he was 14. After their deaths, John and his siblings were sent to live with their grandmother and later with their guardian, Richard Abbey.

Despite the challenges he faced, Keats excelled in his studies and was awarded a scholarship to study medicine at Guy's Hospital in London. During his time at medical school, Keats developed a passion for literature and began writing poetry. He was particularly inspired by the works of William Shakespeare and John Milton, and his early poems reflect their influence. In 1816, Keats abandoned his medical studies to pursue a career in writing.

Keats’ family was a source of both inspiration and stress in his life. Keats had a difficult relationship with his guardian, Richard Abbey. Abbey disapproved of Keats’ decision to pursue a career in literature and believed that he was wasting his time and talents. Abbey’s financial mismanagement also contributed to the financial difficulties that Keats faced throughout his life.

On the other hand, he was very close to his younger brothers, George and Tom, and wrote many letters to them throughout his life. Tom was also pursuing a career in medicine, but he too was diagnosed with tuberculosis and died in 1818. George emigrated to America in 1818, leaving Keats alone in England.

One of the most significant relationships in his life was with Fanny Brawne, a young woman who lived near his home in Hampstead. Keats first met Fanny in 1818, when she moved into the house next door to him with her mother and siblings. Keats was immediately struck by Fanny’s beauty and charm, and the two quickly became close friends. The two fell in love, but their relationship was complicated by Keats’ poor health and financial struggles.

Keats wrote a series of letters to Fanny in which he expressed his feelings for her, describing her as his “bright star”. Fanny also wrote letters to Keats, and the two corresponded regularly while Keats was away on a trip to Scotland and Ireland in 1818. However, Keats’ financial situation and his deteriorating health made it difficult for him to

marry Fanny. Nevertheless, Keats and Fanny remained deeply in love, and their relationship inspired many of Keats' most passionate and romantic poems.

Keats was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1819, and his health deteriorated rapidly over the next two years. Keats continued to write poetry throughout his illness, producing some of his greatest works in the last years of his life. Keats left for Italy in 1820, hoping that the warmer climate would improve his health. He and Fanny corresponded regularly, but their letters became increasingly infrequent as his health deteriorated. He died in Rome in 1821, and his final request was to be buried in an unmarked grave.

Overall, John Keats was an English Romantic poet who is considered to be one of the greatest poets in the English language, known for his sensitive and passionate poetry. Despite the challenges that he faced, Keats' family played an important role in shaping his life and work. His experiences with loss and hardship inspired many of his poems, and his relationships with his brothers and Fanny Brawne provided him with love and support during difficult times. Today, Keats' poetry is celebrated for its beauty, passion, and sensitivity, and his legacy continues to inspire generations of poets and readers alike.

1.2 List of Selected Works

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art (1819)
Endymion: A Poetic Romance (1817)
The Eve of St. Agnes (1819)
The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream (Unfinished, 1819)
Hyperion (Unfinished, 1818)
La Belle Dame sans Merci (1819, revised 1820)
Lamia (1819)
Ode on a Grecian Urn (1819)
Ode on Indolence (1819)
Ode on Melancholy (1819)
Ode to a Nightingale (1819)
Ode to Apollo (1815)
Ode to Fanny (1819)
Ode to May (1818)
Ode to Psyche (1819)
Sleep and Poetry (1816)
To Autumn (1819)

1.3 Critical Examination of the poem "Ode to Nightingale"

"Ode to a Nightingale" is poem by John Keats that is considered to be one of his greatest works. The poem was written in 1819, during a time when Keats was grappling with issues of mortality, illness, and the fleeting nature of human existence. Keats meditates on the nature of beauty, mortality, the power of imagination, and the power of art to transcend the limitations of human existence. The speaker of the poem is drawn into a state of contemplation by the song of a nightingale, which he hears in the woods near his home. It describes the poet's experience of listening to a nightingale's song. The poet is initially filled with sadness and wishes to escape from reality, but the nightingale's song brings him a sense of joy and peace. He then reflects on the transient nature of life and imagines the nightingale as a symbol of immortality and wishes to join it in its world of beauty and song.

The poem starts off with the poet expressing how he wishes he could bounce out of reality and escape into the world of a nightingale. The speaker begins by describing a feeling of numbness and pain, as if he has consumed a poisonous substance. He then addresses a nightingale, praising its ability to sing so beautifully and effortlessly and states that he is not jealous of the nightingale's happiness, but rather overwhelmed by it.

Keats desires to escape the burdens of the world and enter a state of "full-throated ease" like the nightingale as he first hears the sweet song of a nightingale. But Keats is not just talking about escaping from life, he's also exploring the idea of mortality and the fleeting nature of human existence. He wishes to "fade away" into the song of the bird, which he sees as a symbol of immortality and transcendence. He suggests that the nightingale's song has the power to transcend time and mortality. He states that even though the nightingale's song will eventually fade away, its beauty will live on forever in the memory of those who have heard it. The nightingale, with its eternal song, represents a kind of immortality that the speaker desperately craves.

As the poem progresses, he becomes increasingly lost in his imagination, experiencing a series of vivid and sensual images that are inspired by the nightingale's song. He imagines himself in a "realm of fancy" where he can escape from the harsh realities of life and enter a world of pure beauty and imagination. The bird's melody takes him on a journey into his own mind and the dreamlike world of the nightingale. He even calls the bird a "light-winged Dryad of the trees," by which he means that she's like a forest spirit who flits around with grace. The speaker of the poem is deeply envious of the nightingale's ability to fly away and escape the troubles of the world. He longs to join the bird and leave behind the worries of life. This longing is expressed in one of the most famous lines in the poem - 'Oh for a

draught of vintage!' He longs for a drink that would be like a portal to another world, where he could forget his cares and leave the mortal world behind.

The poet's mind is enchanted by this bird's singing and he wants to fade away with it. He urges himself to leave the world and join the nightingale in the forest. He notes that he does not need the help of Bacchus, the god of wine and revelry, to get there, but rather the "viewless wings of Poesy," or the power of poetry. The speaker suggests that the night is tender and that the moon may be shining, but that there is no light in the forest other than what is provided by the stars and the breeze blowing through the trees. He wishes to "cease upon the midnight" and become one with the nightingale's song, leaving behind the worries and concerns of the world.

But then he snaps out of it and realizes that the nightingale's song isn't going to last forever. He starts feeling like he's getting older and older and all the good things in life are slipping and sliding away. That's when he drops the most famous line of the poem: "Where but to think is to be full of sorrow / And leaden-eyed despairs." He means to imply that life and existence is full of suffering. He switches gears again and starts praising the nightingale for never having to deal with human drama like grief, love, or death. He thinks that the bird's song is a symbol of the pure, unadulterated joy of life, basically saying that the bird's singing is so amazing that it is almost like a religion or a philosophy. However, the poet's still obsessed with the idea of escaping from his own life and being a part of the nightingale's world.

As the poem progresses, the speaker becomes more and more immersed in his own imagination, losing touch with the real world around him. He becomes so entranced by the nightingale's song that he forgets where he is and who he is. He goes so far into his dreaming that later he expresses he isn't even sure if he's dreaming or not. He wonders whether the nightingale's song is a product of its own mortality, or whether it is a symbol of something more enduring. He muses, "Was it a vision, or a waking dream? / Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?" These lines suggest that the speaker is caught between two worlds, the world of the nightingale and the world of reality, and that he is struggling to reconcile these two worlds in his own mind.

Eventually, the speaker is brought back to reality and realizes that he cannot escape his mortality. He must return to the world of the living and accept his fate. But he knows that if he could just fly away like the nightingale, he would be relaxed and free of all worries. He even goes as far as implying he would rather be dead than not be able to hear that bird's sweet, sweet song. He has often contemplated death and that it now seems appealing to him,

especially if he could die while listening to the nightingale's song. The nightingale's song is essentially playing the role that poetry and imagination play in providing a temporary escape from reality, as poetry and imagination can provide a glimpse of the eternal and the infinite, but they cannot provide a complete escape from the limitations of human existence. The song then becomes representative of the beauty of nature and art in life that make the suffering of life bearable. It is unquestionable though that Keats considers the rare beauty and joy found in life to be well worth going through the torment of life.

One of the major themes of this poem is escapism. Keats is all about escaping from reality. He says that life can be full of sadness and sorrow, suffering and pain, but that there is much beauty and joy to be found if you know where to look. He states the memory of the nightingale's song will remain with him always and that even though he will eventually "leave the world unseen," he will always be able to return to the realm of fancy and beauty that the nightingale's song has opened up to him.

Like the nightingale's song, beauty can be like a balm for the soul, even if it is only temporary. But at the end of the day, we all need to face the fact that life is fleeting and death is coming for all of us, so we might as well enjoy the journey of life while we can, and take solace in the fact that there are some beautiful things in the world that can make the journey worthwhile. So, this poem is all about the power of the imagination and the escape it can provide from the harsh realities of life. This is how the poem becomes a testament to the power of the imagination and the enduring beauty of the natural world.

Keats' signature style of rich, descriptive language and vivid imagery make the poem a masterpiece of English Romantic poetry. He employs a variety of poetic devices, such as alliteration, assonance, and repetition, to create a musical and rhythmic effect that reinforces the poem's themes. His ability to capture the beauty and mystery of the natural world through the medium of language is a testament to his skill as a poet, and a reminder of the enduring power of poetry to move, inspire, and uplift us. In a way, Keats himself becomes the nightingale and his song becomes this poem as its themes continue to resonate with and bring joy to readers even today.

1.4 Critical Examination of the poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

"Ode on a Grecian Urn" is one of the most famous and recognisable poems by John Keats. It is a poem that celebrates the timelessness of art, and has itself been celebrated for its beauty and timelessness. Inspired by an ancient Greek urn that he encounters, Keats meditates on the nature of art, beauty, and time, and explores the permanence, immortality,

and transience of art in human life. Keats admires the beauty of the urn's intricate images and characters which depict scenes from ancient Greek life, and marvels at how they have managed to survive the passage of time due to the existence of the urn. He uses the image of the ancient Grecian urn as a symbol of the timeless beauty of art, contrasting it with the fleeting nature of human experience.

The poem is an ode, a type of lyrical poem that is often addressed to a specific subject, in this case, an ancient Greek urn that Keats encountered. The poem is structured in five ten-line stanzas and the use of rhyme and repetition gives the poem a soothing musicality. The poem is written in iambic pentameter, a rhythmic pattern that consists of five iambs per line, which creates a sense of harmonious flow. All these elements consistently unite with its beautiful language to reinforce the themes of beauty, art, and the nature of reality and make the poem as timeless as the urn.

Keats was one of the greatest English Romantic poets and the Romantic movement was very much about tapping into the raw emotions and exploring the beauty of nature. Keats admires an old Greek urn he stumbled upon which had all these pictures on it that told stories about ancient Greece. And for Keats, it was like looking into a time capsule of another world. But this isn’t just some simple admiration of a fancy vase. Keats is using this urn to think over deep questions about life, death, and art.

The first thing Keats brings up is the idea of the urn as a piece of art that will never fade away. He talks about how the pictures on the urn are like a silent movie that will last forever. Keats celebrates that wholeheartedly as he sees the urn as a symbol of immortality, a reminder that art can outlast even the greatest empires and the most powerful rulers. But Keats goes even beyond. He also talks about how the pictures on the urn tell stories of love and loss, of joy and sorrow. And in a way, these stories are frozen in time, just like the pictures on the urn. They are beautiful, but they are also kind of tragic. Because while they will last forever, they are also doomed as they are stuck in the past, never able to change or grow. And this is where things get really deep. Keats starts asking some big questions about life and art. He wonders if it is better to live in the moment and embrace the impermanence of life, or if it is better to seek out the eternal, even if it means sacrificing the beauty of the present.

The poem ends with the famous lines: “Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.” All human beings will eventually die, and their experiences will be lost to time. However, the urn will remain, a “friend to man” that speaks

to the truth and beauty of the world. The final lines of the stanza, “Beauty is truth, truth beauty,” are some of the most famous in all of English literature. Keats uses these lines to convey the idea that beauty and truth are inextricably linked, and that the urn represents the eternal beauty and truth of the world. These lines suggest that the beauty and truth of art are intertwined and that the contemplation of beauty can lead to a deeper understanding of the human experience. Keats says that beauty is the only thing that can capture the truth of the world. But at the same time, he also acknowledges that truth can be kind of ugly. It is messy and imperfect, and it is always changing.

But even with all these heavy ideas floating around, Keats still manages to end the poem on a positive note. He says that even though the people on the urn can never change, they still manage to inspire us. They still manage to make us feel something deep and real. And in that sense, they are just as alive as we are. What we can take away from this poem is that it is a reminder that art can be a powerful force for exploring the big questions in life. It can inspire us, challenge us, and help us see the world in new and unexpected ways. But it is also a reminder that life is short, and that the beauty of the present moment is just as important as any eternal truth.

The poem begins with the speaker addressing the urn directly, asking it to reveal its secrets. He marvels at the images depicted on the urn, which show scenes of ancient Greek life. The first stanza of the poem sets the scene and introduces the themes of beauty and immortality. The speaker envies the figures on the urn, who are frozen in time and forever youthful, and wonders what stories they have to tell. He muses on the transience of human life and the permanence of art, suggesting that the urn’s beauty and mystery will outlast even the most glorious achievements of human civilization. Throughout the poem, Keats uses rich and sensual language to convey the beauty of the urn and the timeless nature of art. “Thou still unravished bride of quietness,” suggesting that the urn is a timeless object that has remained unchanged for centuries. The speaker marvels at the intricate images and characters on the urn, which depict scenes from ancient Greek life, and praises the beauty of their form and the precision of their details. He muses on the stories and lives of the figures on the urn, wondering what they might be trying to convey, but ultimately acknowledging that their meaning will remain a mystery to him.

The speaker envies the figures on the urn for their eternal youthfulness, describing them as “happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed / Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu.” The urn's beauty and permanence are contrasted with the speaker's own mortality and

the transience of human life. He acknowledges the inevitability of death, but suggests that the urn's art will outlast the fleeting moments of human life, as he states,

"Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

The poem's final lines have been widely debated and interpreted. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" is an assertion that suggests the two concepts are inseparable and perhaps interchangeable. The statement has been interpreted to mean that the beauty of art lies in its ability to convey truth, or that truth is itself a form of beauty. Some readers have found the statement to be overly simplistic, while others have seen it as a profound and timeless insight into the nature of art and human experience.

Throughout the poem, Keats uses rich and sensual language to convey the beauty of the urn and the timeless nature of art. He employs vivid imagery, such as "foster-child of Silence and slow Time," to evoke the sense of the urn as a living object that transcends the boundaries of time and space. Keats also uses a variety of poetic devices, such as alliteration, assonance, and repetition, to create a musical and rhythmic effect that reinforces the poem's themes. The poem celebrates the enduring power of art and suggests that the contemplation of beauty can lead to a deeper understanding of the human experience. Keats's use of rich and sensual language and his mastery of poetic techniques make the poem a masterpiece of English Romantic poetry, and its themes continue to resonate with readers today.

1.5 Questions for Practice

1. Critically examine the life of John Keats and his contribution to English literature.
2. Discuss the major themes of Keats's poetry.
3. Discuss the major characteristics of Keats' poetry.
4. How did Keats' illness affect his perspective of the world in his poetry?
5. Compare the power of art as portrayed in the two odes.
6. Differentiate the beauty that Keats talks about in the two odes.

Section-C
Robert Browning

UNIT I: Robert Browning

Structure

Unit I

1.0 Objectives
1.1 Introduction to the Poet
1.2 Selected and Important Works
1.3 Browning's Philosophy and his Works
1.4 Critical Examination of the poem "Porphyria's Lover"
1.5 Critical Examination of the poem "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at saint Praxed's Church"
1.6 Questions for Practice

1.0 Objectives

The present lesson introduces the students with the Victorian Age, its characteristics, and Robert Browning, the poet prescribed in the syllabus. It makes an effort to discuss Browning as the representative of his age and his writings as the product of present socio-cultural conditions. The life of the poet and the impacts of internal as well as external conditions on the poet will be discussed. Besides this, an attempt has been made to understand his major writings in the context of the life of the poet and the contemporary times. Further, it critically examines Brownings two major poems : "Porphyria's Lover" and "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at saint Praxed's Church".

After reading this unit, the students will be able to

1. Understand the life and life conditions of Robert Browning
2. Understand and contextualize the works of Robert Browning
3. Understand the features of Victorian Poetry
4. Attempt questions on Victorian Age and Life and Works of Robert Browning

1.1 Introduction to the Poet

Robert Browning was a major poet and playwright of the Victorian Age. He was born in Surrey (South London) in May 1812. He was the only son of his parents Sarah Anna and Robert Browning. His paternal grandfather was a slave owner but his father was an abolitionist. He was fond of reading books and had a personal library at home. The child

Browning gets a good literary environment at home. His father always encouraged his literary interests. It is notable that Browning wrote his first book of poetry at the age of 12 but later destroyed it because he could not find a publisher. As a student he did not like formal education; and was educated at home by a tutor. He became fond of poetry by reading romantic poetry from the library of his father. He became a great admirer of P. B. Shelley. He learned music from his mother. Later, he dedicated himself to poetry.

Browning got a chance to meet his would-be wife Elizabeth Barrett, who was six years senior to him, in 1845. Elizabeth Barrett was also a poet; they started to write letters to each other and this correspondence ultimately developed in love. Both got married in 1846. Elizabeth Barrett's father was a very dominating father who did not approve of their relationship, so their marriage initially remained a secret. When the father came to know about the marriage, he disinherited Barrett. But the relationship of husband and wife as poets was very productive. On the suggestion of Browning, she included love poems in the second edition of her book titled *Poems*. The book brought much name and fame to the poetess. She was very close to getting the position of Poet Laureate after the death of Wordsworth in 1950. Husband and wife spent their married life in Italy and Barrett gave birth to their only child Robert Wiedemann Barret Browning.

Browning is recognized as a Liberal who was against slavery, supported the rights of women, and had sympathy for the Northern people in the American Civil War. Later, he also gave words to the rights of animals through his writings. On his liberalism, he also wrote a poem titled "Why I am a Liberal" stating that

Who then dares hold – emancipated thus
His fellow shall continue to bound? Not I

Browning and Elizabeth Barrett spent a good life together in Italy but she was the first one to leave this companionship; she passed away in 1861.

In the last phase of his life, Browning traveled extensively. He revisited Italy also after seventeen years of the death of his wife. He revisited there on several further occasions also. He produced the major work of the last phase of his life *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day*. It represents the poet speaking to his own voice. It is a series of dialogues with the long forgotten eminent personalities of history. He died in Venice in December 1889.

1.2 **Selected and Important Works**

Browning was a poet and a playwright who produced a number of unique works. He earned more name and fame than his contemporaries for his dramatic monologues.

His writings are known for historical settings, human psychology, characterization, dark humor etc.. His early long poems, such as *Pauline* (1833) and *Paracelsus* (1835) earned him name and fame. Pauline was actually written as homage to the great romantic poet Shelley. It is notable that first it was published on the expenses of the poet himself. The list of selected important work is as follow

1. *Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession* 1833
2. *Paracelsus* 1835
3. *Strafford* [play] 1837
4. *Sordello* 1840
5. *Bells and Pomegranates* 1841-1846
6. *Men and Women* 1855
7. *Dramatis Personae* 1864
8. *The Ring and the Book* 1868-69
9. *Dramatic Idyls* 1879
10. *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in Their Day* 1887
11. *Asolando* 1889

List of some most popular poems of Robert Browning

1. Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came
2. Home Thoughts, from Abroad
3. Porphyria's Lover
4. My Last Duchess
5. The Pied Piper of Hamelin
6. Andrea del Sarto
7. Fra Lippo Lippi
8. Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister
9. Meeting at Night
10. Caliban upon Setebos
11. The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church

1.3 Browning's Philosophy and his Works

Browning was not only a poet but a great philosopher also. The Victorian period was a period of major upheavals in English politics, religion, science, culture, and arts. He stands in the fore-front of the Victorian poetry. The age is known as the age of reason and doubt. His poetry represents to this major shift in human understanding of life. He lived a

long literary and philosophical life; and even today his poetry is relevant and inspired a number of writers and poets to write in the future also. He was not so popular in the beginning of his poetic career but gradually in the last phase of his career he earned great fame. We have already discussed that he has a long list of works to his credit. He was the poet who made dramatic monologues very popular. His number of poems independently make him popular in the field of English literature. The longer poems, such as The Ring and the Book and Sardello are supposed to be tedious to read but small poems are appreciated for their appeal to the reader. His smaller poems include *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Dramatic Romances*. One can note that initially he was not so admired; it may be due to the fact that his poetry demands scholarly reading. It is not the poetry of an ordinary man. Further, he does not bother about grammatical rules. The major features of his poetry can be discussed under the following sections

1. **Originality in the Poetry**

   Browning can be regarded as the most original poet. He had a unique and independent idea to write poetry. That is why till today he has unique space among the English poets. His earlier poetry reflects the impact of romantics, particularly of Shelley, but gradually he develops his own way of thinking and writing poetry. As his genius ripened, he shook all the influences and made his independent understanding of life and poetry. He was a man of vast learning and experiences. His genius was shaped by English, French, Latin, Greek great works, and his intellectual associations. As a mature poet, he stands aloof from all the past and contemporary poets.

2. **Man is in the Center**

   The romantics were interested in man and nature. They initiated that the work of art must be focused on man and should address his life issues. Then the Victorian age was also inspiring as it awakened the interest in man. Browning deals with the man more deeply than the romantics and his contemporaries. He explores the mind of the human being and depicts it in his poems. The technique of writing dramatic monologues proves very useful for this purpose. He is the poet of individuals as he focuses on the inner workings of the minds of the individuals to understand what a man is. He depicts the inner workings of the mind of the individuals and brings out the moral, spiritual, and intellectual conflicts.

3. **Poet of Nature**

   Browning's poetry is not only man centered, it also reveals that he is a great admirer, lover, and observer of nature. He depicts nature and its moods in his poems

realistically. He remarkably observes and depicts nature. There is a notable difference between the romantics and Browning that nature was primary for the romantics and Browning uses nature in the background to examine and depict the mind of individuals. Nature is not mysterious to him. It is simply an object of delight for him and it helps to understand man fully. The natural beauty of England and Italy always fascinates him but he does not find moral lessons in it.

4. Poet of Love

Love is a major element in the poetry of Browning. He wrote a number of famous poems on the theme of love; the various situations, conditions, contradictions, faith, and doubt, in love. It helps a reader to understand love in the real conditions of life. Love is the most famous and appealing theme in his poetry. He is a poet most loved for his love poetry only. He argues that love is the ultimate goal of life which gives him space to go higher and higher in his/her life. He states:

Love once evoked, once admitted into the soul
Adds worth to worth

He touches each and every feeling and aspect of love in his various poems. It is the beauty of his treatment of love that in a poem he deals only with a single moment of love and makes it eternal. He demands only a ride from his beloved in *Last Ride Together* and throws light on the idea of possessiveness in *Porphyria's Lover*. He does not depict sorrowful moods in love; grief in love gives him courage. His focus is directly on the love between two young couples "whether moral or immoral". He depicts sensuous love mingled with intellectuality. Browning does not experience love personally in his youth but he understands the hidden layers of love and behavior in love remarkably. It can be noted his conceptions of love are philosophical and his treatment of love is very much realistic.

5. As an Optimist

Browning belonged to the age of doubt and reason but he was a great optimist. His poems teach the reader to be hopeful in his life and inspire him with courage. There is no element of sadness or pessimism in his poetry. He depicts opposite conditions in a man's life but his characters still remain cheerful and hopeful. *Porphyria's Lover* is a great example of it. He believes that this world is a place of beauty to be enjoyed. He believes in the high ideals in life and inspires the reader to fight and struggle for them. In his poem *Pippa Passes*, he writes

God's in His heaven

All's right with the world.

6. His Dramatic Monologues

Browning shows his genius through dramatic monologues. He brings out a novel form to depict the inner working of the human mind. As a well learned personality the poet realizes that it is the most suitable form for his aim of writing poetry. By depicting the minds of the individuals, he portrays humans as they really are. Dramatic monologue is a kind of soliloquy, in which the individual expresses his mind. When the poet's characters are in the crucial conditions of mind then they start to express themselves. In short, the soul of an individual is revealed. The expressions are so strong that they generate a dramatic pleasure. Some of the best dramatic monologues of Browning are *Andrea del Sarto, Rabbi Ben Ezra, Fra Lippo Lippi, Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church, Last Ride Together, My Last Duchess*, etc.

As we have stated, Browning is a philosopher poet. We can draw from his poetry that he is the poet of love, optimism, and positivity. His focus is only the bright side of the human world and individuals. He represents the contemporary age through his poetry. The lines like

God's in His heaven
All's right with the world (*Pippa Passes*)
and
And yet God has not said a word! (*Porphyria's Lover*)

represent that he is depicting the conflict between faith and reason. The aim of his life is to spread knowledge and love. He sets love as a moral ideal for man. He suggests continuous struggle to achieve it. He should even try to transform evil into good through love. Besides a number of qualities, Browning is often criticized for his obscurity. Some critics criticize him stating that he is often abstruse, incoherent, and irrelevant. But there is no doubt that he was a great poet.

1.4 Critical Examination of the poem "Porphyria's Lover"

"Porphyria's lover" is a beautiful dramatic monologue. It is one of the finest poems by Browning depicting the motions of love and hate in the human mind. The poem was first published in a magazine in 1836. Then it appeared in *Dramatic Lyrics*. It again appeared

independently under *Dramatic Romances* in 1863. It is said that Browning got the idea to write this poem from the mental condition of Christopher Smart who was the author of Song to David. But the readers and critics do not consider the character in the poem as insane or mad. It is generally considered as an issue of human psychology or behavior. The unexpected behavior of the character gives many dimensions and themes to the poem. It becomes the beauty of the poem that the reader is shocked and he is left to think continuously.

The beginning of the poem is very gripping. It suddenly catches the attention of the reader. The poet writes "The rain set early in to-night/The sullen wind was soon awake". It starts with the description of a stormy night. Porphyria enters the room where her lover is sitting alone on a bonfire and waiting for her. She enters and shuts the door. She kneels by the grate and makes a cheerful blaze. Both of them love each other very much. She takes off her wet cloak and lets down her damp hair. She sits beside him showing her love towards him by speaking to him and by putting her arm around him. She allows him to place his head over her shoulder. She murmurs in his ear and expresses the feelings of love. The lover is silent and his heart is also filled with love for her. His heart swells with joy and surprise. He feels that she, with all her beauty and love, belongs to him. He fears that this moment will soon be passed and ultimately she will leave him. His mind starts to work on this idea that she will leave him and he decides to kill her. He holds the golden hair of his beloved and winds it thrice around her thin beautiful neck. He strangles her and she dies. The lover does not repent his actions. Thinking about God, he says that even God has not said a word on his action.

The poem is a powerful dramatic monologue as it suddenly catches the reader and takes hold of him. The love story depicted in the poem is thrilling. It is a story of a man who is greatly obsessed with his beloved. He is so possessive that he cannot imagine that she may leave him at any stage of his life. We have already discussed that Browning writes about the particular moments in love. This poem also focuses on a particular moment when the lover conceives an idea even to kill his beloved. The speaker in the poem also talks about moment when he feels that his beloved totally belongs to him

That moment she was mine, mine fair,

Perfectly pure and good

The decision to murder his girlfriend emerges as a dramatic climax while the reader is calmly reading the poem. The situation and expressions suddenly change. The reader is expecting the passionate union of lovers but the poet gives him a peep into the mind of the lover who immediately kills his beloved. It is unexpected for Porphyria as well as for the reader. It gives a chance to the reader to peep into the mind of a human being. Both the

human mind and its working are so complex that they may show a totally different and unexpected behavior. Some readers may call him insane and some may call it abnormal behavior. But, one can draw that a man is made of moments.

The poem attracts the attention of the readers and gives birth to different points of view also. Some critics find it difficult to make sense. Some view it as a social satire. We may also read it as a study of the abnormal behavior of human beings also. One may say that the poet is advocating the bold unconventionality in the behavior of loyal lovers. It can be read as the study of the human character. Further, it is throwing light on a particular situation, in which the lover conceives an idea to kill his beloved. So, it may be read as a reaction to a particular internal and external situation also.

The question "Why does the lover kill his beloved" haunts the minds of the readers again and again. The question leads to the critical observations and conclusions. Although it may be called insanity by some readers, it can also be called the extreme sanity of the insane. Further, it can be observed that it is a momentary decision under intense excitement of feelings. But, it cannot be said to be a complete and satisfactory explanation as there is no repentance after the murder of the girl. The murderer seems heartless about his crime. It throws light on the complex character of a human being. Sometimes, even you cannot determine your own behavior.

The murder can be seen under various lights. It is notable that before the idea of murdering his girlfriend the lover is being dominated by the idea of possessiveness. He becomes so possessive towards his beloved that he cannot even think of the time when she will not be with him. This possessiveness leads to the steps of him killing her. He wants to preserve the moment when she has completely surrendered herself to him. Even after killing her, he opens her glittering eyes and laughing eyes to see the same love for him which she had shown towards him before her death. He also tries to justify his action in love by stating that "and yet God has not said a word".

The last line of the poem "yet God has not said a word" is most notable; it has numerous interpretations. Some critics write that the lover justifies his act of killing his beloved. His act of killing her is out of his love for her. He wants to retain her love with himself by killing her. Secondly, one can observe the traits of the Victorian Age, where the values are being changed. The people are becoming more educated and rational. They have started to question religious practices. So, it may be out of vain in which the poet may wish to state that there is no sin technically and there is no God to observe your good or bad deeds; only human beings are responsible to their humanity.

Although Browning is generally criticized as an obscure poet, this poem is free from any kind of obscurity. It runs very smoothly. The opening lines are very attractive and have natural flow which a poem must have. The description of rain and storm personified and they have been used as agents of destruction. The description of nature makes the scene more effective and dramatic. The storm outside indicates the storm inside the lover. All the setting of the room, the actions of Porphyria, and the monologue of her lover are the achievements of the poem which make it solid to depict various themes. Although, some may find the meaning of the poem elusive and baffling, the mysterious quality of it is very charming and the reader is left stunned.

1.5 **Critical Examination of the poet "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church"**

The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church is among some of the most significant and popular dramatic monologues written by Browning. It is about a sixteenth century Bishop's wishes at the end of his life. Saint Praxed was a daughter of a Roman Senator who used all her riches to help the needy and was martyred. The Bishop in the poem was a clergyman in the church named after her. The monologue reveals the mind of the bishop, who teaches as a clergy that vanity leads to the doom but even at the last of his life he cannot spare himself from the vain worldly enchantments. So, it is a kind of satire on the life of a corrupt old Italian Renaissance bishop, who, even on his death bead seeks a lavish tomb.

The poem begins by showing that the bishop is on the last stage of his life; he is lying in bed. The bishop invites all his sons and nephews near him and starts preaching that one should avoid vanity in his/her life. All wishes and aspirations are a vanity and come to nothing. One can note that his attention is more focused on his son Anselm, perhaps he is dearer to him. It is also notable that a clergy is not allowed to marry, so we can say that all these sons of his are apparently illegitimate.

The bishop recalls his beautiful wife who is no more. It indicates his sensuous life. He also relishes it that his rival Gandolf had envied him in possessing her as a wife. So, the bishop is totally a man of worldly affairs who enjoys a sensuous life with a beautiful wife and becomes a clergy only on the death of his wife. He also does not have good feelings for another clergy named Gandolf; he treats him as his rival. The reader comes to know during the course of the poem that Gandolf is also no more but still he treats him as his rival.

The bishop goes on to preach the religious meaning of life to all his children. He states that a human being is a mortal and he has nothing to claim on this earth. Then, he comes to the point that why he has invited all of them. He states that he wishes an appropriate

tomb for him after his death. He has selected a corner in the church for his dead body to be buried in. He also narrates the story of how he has struggled in his life to secure this corner for him after his death. He curses on Gandolf for having cheated him in acquiring a particular corner in the church after his death. The bishop is a person who does not spare his rival even after his death. Even today, he hates him while on the contrary a clergy is supposed to teach and practice love.

The bishop goes on to discuss his wish that he has chosen another corner for his tomb which is not inferior to his rival. He wants his tombstone to be black marble with a canopy over it supported by nine pillars. The marble for the canopy and pillars must be rare and costly according to him. The marble must be red coloured, rosy as peach-blossom and powerful as fresh wine. He criticizes the tomb of his rival as made of cheap marble. He asks his children that he must be buried in such a way that he may be able to see the inferior tomb of Gandolf for his inner satisfaction.

Then, the bishop calls his sons nearer to him and refers to a fire in the church. He says that a lot has been lost in the fire but he manages to save something for them. He directs them to the vineyard in the church and asks them to dig at a particular point; they will find a basket of rushes, concealed in a heap of rotten fig-leaves; it will have a piece of blue lapis lazuli (a valuable stone). He adds that he has left all his property for his sons, including the gorgeous villa with its beautiful bath. So, he expects something from them in return that is his wish for a marvelous tomb. He wants his tomb so decorated that his rival must feel jealous of him in his tomb. The wishes of the bishop show his sensuousness, greediness, and meanness.

The bishop again starts to preach his sons the philosophy of life. He states that life is like an illusion. Years pass in moments. Man dies and no one knows what is after death. Then, he shifts to his idea of a marvelous tomb for himself. It reveals to his contradictory character that what he speaks as a religious preacher, he is not in practical life. Now, he slightly modifies his idea of a tomb. Now, he desires that the tomb must be made of antique-black stone, high in quality and cost. He also reminds his sons that they have already promised him to provide his tomb with a bronze statue of him for the background. Further, he wishes that the tomb must be decorated with the figures of Pan, the nymphs, Pagan carvings of tripods, thyrsus or Bacchus's staff etc. At the same time he thinks of the Christian images to be carved on the tomb. His mind alternates between Pagan and Christian images on the tomb. It throws light on the sensuousness in his desire to have the image of Pan ready to snatch the last cloth from a nymph. He wishes to delight his eyes with the naked body of the nymph. One can also observe that the bishop has a wandering mind.

As the bishop himself is a corrupt and hollow person, he is suspicious of his sons also. He doubts whether they will carry out his wishes and make a marvelous tomb according to his wishes. He is scared that they will spend all his wealth in revelry and he will have to lie in a cheap tomb. Then, he reassures himself that his sons love him; they will make a tomb made of jasper stone. The Bishop promises them that he will pray to the Saint Praxed to bless them with luxurious life if they fulfill his wish of a marvelous tomb. It reveals his character that the bishop himself has lived a pleasure life and he wishes the same for his sons too. Further, he wishes that his tomb must be inscribed with correct and beautiful Latin phrases; these must be taken from Cicero's scholarly Latin not from Ulpian to who was an inferior scholar. He pompously states that Ulpian may satisfy his rival, not him. Thus, it can be drawn that the bishop is the victim of an inferiority complex as he wishes to show himself superior again and again.

In the last lines of the poem, the bishop imagines himself to be the statue on his own tomb. As he is in the last moments of his life, he thinks of his dead beautiful wife who was tall and pale with expressive eyes. He makes fun of Gandolf for his inferior life and tomb. Although he is conscious of his short life, he ignores all spiritual matters even at this stage. He warns his sons that if they do not fulfill his wishes he would leave all his property to the Pope. He states that he can see the greed in the eyes of his sons that they are waiting for his death for the sake of property. He angrily asks all of them to leave him. Although he asks them to go away, he blesses them as they are his children. He wishes to lie alone in the peaceful environment of the church and wishes to see if Gandolf is still envious of him for his beautiful wife. Even in the last, he is not able to shed the complexes of his mind.

The poem gives a vivid description of the bishop's character. It is clearly the picture of a worldly priest whose soul is being consumed by two passions: one is his hatred for Gandolf and the second is the desire for a marvelous tomb. He also represents the double standards of a religious representative. He enjoys a worldly life and even after being a priest he is not able to discard his worldly wishes. Perhaps Browning is trying to depict one of the major traits of the Victorian Age that people start to question the fake religious practices also.

The character of the bishop can also be studied as the spirit of Renaissance. The poet captures the essence of Italian Renaissance with its diverse aspects. He wishes for a luxurious life even for his sons if they fulfill his wish. His love for costly marvels, stones, grand houses, precious manuscripts, horses all represent the Renaissance spirit. Further, his character is full of contradictions and what he preaches he does not practice in his life. Although, bishop is a negative character, he is not forgettable.

1.6 Questions for Practice

1 Discuss the life and works of Robert Browning
2. Discuss Browning as the representative of his age.
3. Discuss the impact of Victorian Age on Robert Browning
4. Discuss the philosophy of Robert Browning as a poet.
5. Discuss the major characteristics of Robert Browning's poetry.
6. Critical Examination of the poem "Porphyria's Lover"
7. Critical Examination of the poet "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church"
8. Critically examine the character of Bishop in the poem "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at saint Praxed's church
9. Discuss the philosophy of Browning in "Porphyria's Lover"

Section C

William Butler Yeats

Unit II

Structure

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction to the Poet

2.3 List of Selected Works

2.4 Characteristics of W. B. Yeats' Poetry

2.5 Critical Examination of the poem "Easter 1916"

2.6 Critical Examination of the poem "The Second Coming"

2.8 Questions for Practice

2.0 Objectives

In these units an attempt has been made to introduce the poet, W. B. Yeats and life conditions which make him a unique poet of English. The major characteristics of his poetry have been discussed in detail. Then, there is critical examination of his two important poems "Easter, 1916" and "The Second Coming". After reading this lesson, the student will be able to

1. Understand life and life conditions of the poet.
2. Understand the major features of Yeats' poetry.
3. Attempt questions on Wordsworth and his poetry

2.1 Introduction to the Poet

William Butler Yeats was a famous Irish poet, dramatist, writer, and politician. He was a major driving force for the Irish literary revival. He played a significant role to found the Abbey Theatre. He also served two terms as a Senator of the Free Irish State.

Yeats was born in 1865 near Dublin as the eldest son of John Butler Yeats. The father wanted him to enter the Church of Ireland but the child was destined to become a poet and playwright. He becomes the friend of one of the great literary figure George Russsel at the School of Art in Dublin. Russel shares a number of interests of the friend e.g. interest in mystic religion and the supernatural. Initially, Yeats seems to be under the impact of romantic and Pre-Raphaelite poetry but gradually he develops his own understanding of poetry. He ultimately turns to be a poet instead of a preacher at the Church. The vast reading

and experiences of his life make him to create a specifically Irish literature. And no doubt, it is his unique and significant contribution to the literature.

It was a general belief among the many critics that there was no great poetry written during the twentieth century. Many critics state that Tennyson was the last great poet, after him there is no great poetry in the twentieth century. At the same time many critics counter this argument by stating that actually twentieth century is a century of experiments in the field of English poetry. The experiments give birth to a unique kind of poetry. The innovative ideas changed the face of new poetry. There is great freedom dealing with the subject and theme. The poets are free to write on diverse subjects. The modern poet gives space to modern way of thinking in his poetry also. He depicts the reality as he finds all around him. The romantics liked to write about romantic and pastoral elements but the moderns write about modern life conditions in more realistic way.

Modern age also brings a number of challenges to the man. So, sometimes pessimism also becomes another trait of modern poetry. The first half of the new century has to face two world wars and the people are always under the danger of third; it leads to the gloominess in the contemporary poetry. This sadness also leads the modern poetry to become more humanistic in its approach. It depicts the pains of human beings as well as teaches the public how to live. The modern poetry expresses it essence to the reader though a simple and direct mode.

The major modern poets include T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats, and W. H. Auden. Eliot depicts the post war effects on humanity in his poetry. The conditions of life emerged in the age of modernism. His *The Waste Land* is supposed to be the landmark of the poetry of modern age. Ezra Pound produced best of the poetry in imagist style. Pound had a great influence on Yeats also who was in a certain respects an imagist. Yeats was a mystic poet also whose poetry is basically rooted in the soil of Ireland.

Yeats remained active as an artist for the whole of his life. He was the member of the poetic set in London in the 90s; an enthusiastic worker in the Renaissance of the Irish theatre in the 1900's and returned to the literary London before the First World War By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century he became a recognized and popular poet and continuous to grow. It is notable that from 1900, his poetry grew more realistic and politicized. He moved away from the romantic enchantments of his youth and started to observe and write with more maturity. He was awarded Nobel Prize in 1923 for his contributions to literature.

Three women are notable in Yeats' life: Maud Gonne, whom he fell in love for many years; Lady Gregory, an aristocratic patron of the arts who worked in association with Yeats to establish Abbey Theatre in Dublin; and his wife, whom he married at the age of fifty-two with twenty-five year old Georgie Hyde-Lees; and she was the lady who brought stability into his work.

Yeats met Maud Gonne in 1889 when she was twenty-three years old. Gonne was an English heiress and ardent Irish nationalist. He fell in love with the girl and a number of poems written by him mark his relationship with Gonne. But his love was unrequited partly due to Gonne's participation in her nationalist activism. He visited Gonne in Ireland in 1891 and proposed marriage but got rejected. It hurt him and he admitted that from that point the troubling of his life started. He proposed her again and again but he was rejected every time and ultimately married the Irish nationalist Major John MacBrid. Yeats love for Gonne and pain in which he experienced in love made him mature in his writing.

Yeats was introduced to Lady Gregory by their mutual friend Edward Martyn in 1896. She encouraged him in many ways; she inspired him to continue with his nationalism and writing drama. She plays a major role to air his inner talent and nationalism. With the help of Gregory and other friends he became able to establish Irish Literary Revival movement. He also established Abbey Theatre with the inspiration and help of these friends.

By 1916, Yeats' rival John MacBride had been executed for his role in the 1916 Easter Rising, so he hoped that now widowed Gonne might remarry. He again proposed to her in the mid of 1916. But this time, Gonne was no longer a suitable match for him as she was totally broken from her past life. He proposed her but with some conditions and ultimately this proposal is also refused by her. Then, he met twenty-five year old Georgie Hyde-Lees in the same year through Olivia Shakespeare. He proposed Lees for marriage and despite the warnings from her friends she married him. It was a successful marriage in spite of big age difference. They were blessed with two children Anne and Michael. She was the lady who brought fulfillment and stability in his works.

Yeats was awarded Noble Prize for his contributions in the field of literature. His poetry was identified as an "expression to the spirit of a whole nation". He was politically conscious and knew the worth of art and poetry. After the independence of Ireland, he received a number of letters from the Irish people to thank and congratulate him. In response, he used to reply that "this honour has come to me less as an Individual than as a representative of Irish literature". He died at the age of seventy-three, in France, in 1939.

2.2 List of Selected Works

Poems

Mosada: A Dramatic Poem, 1880

The Wanderings of Oisin, 1889

The Wind among the Reeds, 1889

In the Seven Woods, 1903

The Green Helmet and Other Poems, 1910

Responsibilities, 1916

The Wild Swans at Coole, 1917

Michael Robartes and the Dancer, 1920

Later Poems, 1922

The Cat and the Moon and Certain Poems, 1924

The Tower, 1928

The Winding Stair, 1933

Collected Poems, 1933

The King of the Great Tower, 1934

A Full Moon in March, 1935

Last Poems and Plays, 1940

Collected Poems, 1949

Plays

The Countess Kathleen, 1892

The Land of Heart's Desire, 1894

The Shadowy Waters, 1900

Cathleen in Houlihan, 1902

Where There is Nothing, 1902

The House Glass, 1903

The Pot of Broth, 1904

The King's Threshold, 1904

Deirdre, 1907

The Unicorn from the Stars and Other Plays, 1908 (with Lady Gregory)

Plays for an Irish Theatre, 1911

Four Plays for Dancers, 1921

Wheels and Butterflies, 1934

The Herne's Egg, 1938

Collected Plays, 1952

2.3 Characteristics of W. B. Yeats' Poetry

Yeats poetry takes shape under various factors including his family, various romantic poets, Irish background, Imagist movement, nationalism, love for Maud Gonne, his wife, etc. It can be discussed under various headings.

The Literary background

Imagist movement emerges as a reaction to the romanticism. Although the movement initiated by T. E. Hulme and Ezra Pound does not last long but it has deep impact on a number of artists and writers. Initially, Yeats gets influenced by the romantic poets and it reflects in his early poetry. He is also influenced by the imagist movement and a number of poems by him mark it. Then the Irish revolution also gives him good food for thought.

The Irish Background

Yeats was brought up under the spell of old myths and fold tales of Ireland. He used to sit with the peasants and other old people who used to narrate him the cultural tales and ballads of Ireland. He also worked to compile them. Primarily, he is introduced with the fold literature of Ireland through oral narration of the old people. It leads him to develop his own system of thinking.

Continuous Development

It is notable point in Yeats' poetry that he continuous to evolve for whole of his life. His poetic career span is around fifty years. He constantly goes on to learn from all the useful resources and experiences of life; his poetry goes on to evolve accordingly. There is perhaps no poet who might have shown a longer period of development than Yeats. The seeds of the greatness of his poetry lie in his early poetry which grows with the passage of his life. He begins writing poems in romantic and Pre-Raphaelite tradition. One can easily trace the echo of Shelley and Spenser and the Pre-Raphaelites in his poems. With the passage of time, Yeats turns to be more "mysterious and inscrutable". The style changes to be more personal and more realistic. Rejection of his proposals by Gonne makes him more serious and realistic. The poems like "No Second Troy" and "A Woman Homer Sung" establish him as a great and mature poet.

Symbolism in his Poetry

Yeats is popular for the use of symbols in his poetry. After the rejection by Gonne, he marries to Hyde-Lees in 1917. This is proved as a starting point for an unexpected

conjunction of realism and romanticism in his poetry. His wife, as a writer, contributes to his poetry growth. She helps him writing *A Vision* which is known as a system of symbols. It deals with various types of human personality and the supernatural. "The "rose" has been widely used in his earlier poems as a symbol. But, gradually he uses variety of symbols like the tower, the winding stair, the gyres, the swan, etc which enrich his poetry. These symbols are highly suggestive and significant. Some critics say that it also leads to complexity, richness, and intensity in his poetry.

As a Myth-Maker

Yeats is also known as a great myth-maker. He has a mythopoetic imagination which makes him able to invent new myths or use the old ones in a new context and in a unique way. He is such a master of myths that he makes it more significant. He creates his own myth as well as uses the mythological tales of the old Ireland. *No Second Troy* is a remarkable example of his mastery in dealing with the myths. The myth of the Helen has been infused with the unique personal significance. He narrates the story of his own love through the myth of Helen.

Personal and Love Poetry

Yeats has written a number of poems. He is known as one of the most realistic and mature poet of his times. But, no doubt, personal life and his love for Maud Gonne are in the center of his poetry. Initially, he writes in the romantic vein. He falls in love with Gonne and he writes a number of poems about his feelings for her. He gets rejected by Gonne, and then he turns to see life in the new light and again writes about a number of poems depicting his experience in love. His personal experiences of life and his love for Gonne provide a unique kind of maturity which makes him a more realistic and mature poet.

Besides these unique features of poetry, Yeats is generally criticized for obscurity, lack of human interest, coarseness, and brutality in his poetry. But these charges are ignorable before his achievements as a poet. Critics observe that the use of symbols make his poetry obscure but it is also notable that it is the use of symbols which make his poetry more enriched and more meaningful; it's on the reader that how does he decode it. Then, some critics find that his poetry is in the lack of contemporary life in it and sometimes in his later poetry there is an expression of inner emptiness and personal futility also. It is notable that his poetry has created much of controversy that the critics continue to wrangle; one can see it also as his achievement as a poet.

In short, one can observe that Yeats had a long life of struggles and vast experiences which teaches him lessons at every step of life; and he is the person who never quits, he goes

on to learn and develop his intellect and poetic sense. Ultimately, today he is remembered as a great poet of his times who has the most precious qualities like realism and maturity.

2.7 List of Important Questions

1. Critically examine the life of W. B. Yeats and his contribution to English literature.
2. Analyse Yeats's symbolism with reference to the poems you have studied.
3. Discuss the major characteristics of Yeats' poetry.
4. Discuss the impact of love on the poetry of the poet.

Section-D
T. S. Eliot

UNIT I: T. S. Eliot

Structure

1.0 Objectives

1.1 Introduction to the Poet

1.2 Life Conditions of the Poet

1.3 T.S. Eliot's Literary Career

1.4 T.S. Eliot as a Modernist writer

1.5 T.S. Eliot's Political Views

1.6 Introduction to the poem "The Waste Land"

1.7 Critical Examination of the poem "The Waste Land"

1.8 Ezra Pound's relationship with T.S. Eliot and contributions to "The Waste Land"

1.9 Questions for Practice

1.0 Objectives

In these units an attempt has been made to introduce the poet, T.S. Eliot and life conditions which make him a great Modernist poet. There is a critical examination of his most important poem "The Waste Land." After reading this lesson, the student will be able to

1. Understand life and life conditions of the poet.
2. Understand the major features of Eliot's works.
3. Understand and Contextualise "The Waste Land"
4. Understand the themes prevailing in this poem.
5. Attempt questions on Eliot and his poetry.

1.1 Introduction to the Poet

T.S. Eliot was an American-born British poet, essayist, and literary critic who is widely regarded as one of the most important and influential poets of the 20th century. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on September 26, 1888, and lived a life filled with literary accomplishments and critical acclaim. Eliot moved to England in 1914 and his literary career

began in 1915 when he published his first poem, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” which is now considered a landmark in modernist poetry. The poem explores the themes of isolation, social anxiety, and the human condition in the modern world, and it established

Eliot's reputation as a major literary figure. Eliot continued to produce groundbreaking work throughout his life, including his epic poem “The Waste Land,” which was published in 1922. The poem reflects the disillusionment and despair of post-World War I Europe, and its fragmented and complex structure marked a significant departure from traditional poetic forms.

Eliot's work as a literary critic was equally influential. He wrote influential essays on literature and culture, including “Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "The Function of Criticism,” which helped to shape modernist literary theory. In 1927, Eliot became a British citizen and settled in London, where he continued to write and publish poetry, plays, and essays. He also became involved in the literary and cultural scene of the time, and he played an important role in the development of modernist literature. In 1948, Eliot received the Nobel Prize in Literature for his contributions to the development of modernist literature. Eliot's personal life was marked by several challenges, including a failed marriage and struggles with mental health. However, his contributions to literature and culture continue to be celebrated and recognized today.

1.2 Life Conditions of the Poet

T.S. Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888. He was the youngest of six children, and his parents were both from prominent New England families. His father was a successful businessman, and his mother was a social worker who was deeply committed to charitable causes. Eliot received his early education in St. Louis, where he attended Smith Academy, a private preparatory school.

In 1906, he enrolled at Harvard University, where he studied philosophy and literature. During his time at Harvard, Eliot was introduced to the works of British writers such as John Milton, William Shakespeare, and Samuel Johnson, which had a profound impact on his literary style. After completing his studies at Harvard, Eliot moved to Paris, where he worked as a teacher and translator. It was during this time that he began to write poetry seriously. In 1915, he published his first poem, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” which became an instant sensation in literary circles.

Over the next few years, Eliot continued to write poetry and also worked as a literary critic for a number of publications. In 1922, he published his most famous work, “The Waste

Land," which is widely regarded as one of the most important poems of the 20th century. The poem, which is noted for its fragmented structure and complex symbolism, is a reflection on the disillusionment and despair that characterized the post-World War I era.

Despite his immense contributions to modernist literature and culture, Eliot's life was marked by personal struggles and challenges. He suffered from mental and physical health issues throughout his life, and his marriage to his first wife, Vivienne Haigh-Wood, was tumultuous and unhappy. After her death in 1947, he married his secretary, Valerie Fletcher, who became his lifelong companion and literary executor.

1.3 T.S. Eliot's Literary Career

T.S. Eliot's works are known for their complex language, allusions to literary and religious traditions, and exploration of themes such as disillusionment, alienation, and spiritual emptiness.

Eliot's early poetry was marked by its experimentation with language and form. His first major work, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," was published in 1915 and is often considered one of the founding texts of modernist poetry. The poem's fragmented structure and use of stream-of-consciousness narration were seen as a departure from the traditional, formal verse of the Victorian era. Instead, Eliot used the poem to explore the psyche of a modern, urban man who is paralyzed by his own indecision and self-doubt.

Eliot's next major work, "The Waste Land," was published in 1922 and is widely regarded as one of the most important poems of the 20th century. The poem is a fragmented, multi-layered exploration of the spiritual and cultural emptiness of post-World War I Europe. Drawing on a wide range of literary and religious traditions, including the Bible, the works of Shakespeare, and the Upanishads, the poem presents a bleak picture of a world in which traditional values and beliefs have been shattered. A sense of disillusionment and despair permeates the work as a whole.

Eliot's later poetry continued to explore similar themes, but with a greater emphasis on Christian spirituality. In "Four Quartets," a series of four long poems published between 1936 and 1942, Eliot explored the nature of time and the human search for meaning in the face of mortality. The poems are marked by their use of complex imagery and allusion, as well as their intricate structure and use of musical language.

Eliot also wrote plays, including "Murder in the Cathedral," which was first performed in 1935. The play, which is based on the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in

the 12th century, is noted for its use of language and its exploration of the relationship between faith and politics.

In addition to his poetry, Eliot was also a prolific critic and essayist. His essays on literature and culture, collected in volumes such as “The Sacred Wood” and “Selected Essays,” were instrumental in shaping the literary and cultural landscape of the 20th century. Eliot was a key figure in the development of literary modernism, and his critiques of the Romantic and Victorian traditions helped to usher in a new era of literary experimentation and innovation.

Eliot’s influence extended beyond the literary world, however. He was also a prominent cultural commentator, writing on a wide range of topics including politics, religion, and popular culture. In his later years, he became increasingly involved in Christian theology, and his work as a religious thinker is seen as an important part of his legacy.

In addition to his literary and cultural contributions, Eliot is also remembered for his role as a publisher and editor. In 1922, he founded the literary journal “The Criterion,” which he edited until 1939. The journal was a key platform for the development of modernist literature and included contributions from many of the leading writers and thinkers of the time.

1.4 T.S. Eliot as a Modernist writer

The Modernist English Literature Age refers to a period of literary experimentation and innovation in the early 20th century, which is known for its rejection of traditional literary forms and conventions, and a willingness to experiment with new forms and styles. The key themes and concerns of modernist literature include the fragmentation of society and individual identity, the role of the artist in society, the meaning of language and communication, the relationship between the individual and the collective, and the nature of time and memory.

Some of the most important writers of the Modernist English Literature Age include T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, D.H. Lawrence, and William Faulkner, among others. These writers experimented with various literary techniques, such as stream of consciousness, non-linear narratives, and multiple perspectives, to create works that challenged traditional notions of narrative structure and language. The Modernist English Literature Age was a time of great innovation and experimentation in the literary world, and its influence can still be felt in contemporary literature today.

Eliot’s poetry, with its use of fragmentation, symbolism, and allusion, was a key example of this new modernist style. His most famous work, “The Waste Land,” is a prime example of modernist literature, with its nonlinear structure, diverse voices, and rich symbolism.

Eliot’s ideas on literature and the role of the writer were also influential in the development of modernist literature. He believed that literature should reflect the spiritual and moral values of a society, and that the writer's task was to create works that could provide a sense of order and meaning in a chaotic world.

Eliot’s association with other modernist writers and thinkers was also significant. He was a member of the “Bloomsbury Group,” a literary and intellectual circle that included Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, and others. The Bloomsbury Group was known for its unconventional ideas and its rejection of traditional values and mores, and Eliot's association with the group helped to shape his own views on literature and society.

Another important influence on Eliot's work was his association with the American expatriate community in Paris during the 1920s. Eliot spent several years in Paris, where he was part of a community of writers and artists that included Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, and others. This community was known for its rejection of traditional values and its embrace of new forms of art and literature, and Eliot's time in Paris helped to shape his own ideas on modernism and the role of the artist.

Eliot's influence on modernist literature was also evident in his work as an editor and literary critic. He served as the editor of the literary magazine “The Criterion” from 1922 to 1939, and his editorial decisions helped to shape the direction of modernist literature in Britain. He also wrote a number of critical essays that became influential in the development of modernist literary theory, including his famous essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” which argued that a writer's work should be judged in the context of literary tradition.

In addition to his contributions to modernist literature, Eliot's work as a playwright was also significant. His plays, which included “Murder in the Cathedral” and “The Cocktail Party,” were noted for their exploration of religious and philosophical themes, as well as their use of language and symbolism.

T.S. Eliot’s contribution to modernist literature was significant and far-reaching. His poetry, plays, and critical essays continue to be studied and admired by scholars and readers around the world, and his ideas on the role of literature and the function of the writer continue to influence contemporary literary theory. His association with other modernist

writers and thinkers helped to shape the movement as a whole, and his legacy as one of the most important and influential writers of the 20th century is secure.

1.5 T.S. Eliot's Political Views

T.S. Eliot was a complex figure when it came to his politics, and his views evolved over time in response to changing historical and cultural contexts. Eliot was known for his conservative and traditionalist views, and was a vocal critic of many aspects of modernity and modern culture. However, his political views were not always easy to classify, and he was not associated with any particular political party or movement. His political views were complex and multifaceted, and they evolved over the course of his life in response to changing historical and cultural circumstances. Eliot was deeply influenced by his experiences of both World War I and World War II, as well as by his personal struggles with mental health and identity.

One of the key features of Eliot's political views was his belief in the importance of tradition and continuity. He saw the decline of traditional values and social institutions as a major problem in modern society, and argued that a return to traditional values was necessary for the maintenance of social order and stability. Eliot was also deeply interested in religious and spiritual issues, and saw Christianity as a crucial source of moral and spiritual guidance in modern society.

In the early years of his career, Eliot was associated with the conservative literary and cultural movement known as the New Humanism. This movement emphasized the importance of traditional values and forms of knowledge, and was critical of the cultural and social changes associated with modernity. Eliot's conservative views led him to be critical of many aspects of modern culture and consumerism. He saw these as contributing to the decline of traditional values and social institutions, and argued that they were responsible for a general sense of cultural decay and moral decline. Eliot's early poetry, such as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and "The Waste Land," can be seen as reflecting these concerns, with their emphasis on fragmentation, disillusionment, and the breakdown of traditional forms of order and meaning.

In the 1930s, however, Eliot's political views began to shift in response to the rise of fascism and totalitarianism in Europe. He became increasingly critical of the liberal democratic values that he had previously espoused, and began to express sympathy for authoritarian forms of government. This shift in Eliot's political views can be seen in his writing during this period, such as in the essay "The Idea of a Christian Society" (1939), in

which he argues that liberal democracy has failed to provide a meaningful sense of social and moral order, and suggests that a more authoritarian form of government may be necessary to restore order and stability. Despite his conservative views, however, Eliot was also known for his support of social justice and his concern for the plight of marginalized communities.

During World War II, Eliot's political views continued to evolve, and he became increasingly supportive of the war effort and the struggle against fascism. He wrote a number of patriotic poems during this period, such as "Four Quartets" and "The Dry Salvages," which express a deep sense of faith and hope in the face of the challenges of war and social upheaval. After the war, Eliot continued to be politically engaged, and his views remained complex and nuanced. He was critical of both liberalism and conservatism, and argued for a more traditional and organic form of government. In his later years, Eliot became more politically engaged, and was involved in a number of social and political causes, including the civil rights movement and efforts to combat poverty and inequality.

Overall, T.S. Eliot's politics were complex and multifaceted, reflecting his interest in a wide range of social, cultural, and spiritual issues. While he was known for his conservative and traditionalist views, he was also committed to social justice and was critical of many aspects of modern culture and society.

1.6 Introduction to the poem "The Waste Land"

"The Waste Land" is a landmark modernist poem written by T.S. Eliot in 1922, and it is known for its fragmented structure, allusions to myth and literature, and themes of disillusionment and despair in the aftermath of World War I.

Fragmentation and juxtaposition: "The Waste Land" is known for its fragmented structure, with abrupt shifts in tone, voice, and scene that can be disorienting for the reader. This fragmentation is intentional, however, as Eliot sought to represent the fragmented state of modern society in the aftermath of the war. By juxtaposing different voices, images, and allusions, Eliot creates a collage of modern life that is both chaotic and meaningful. The poem is composed of a series of disconnected and often contradictory images, voices, and experiences, which are arranged in a nonlinear and fragmented structure. This fragmentation is meant to reflect the fractured and disordered nature of modern life, in which traditional forms of order and meaning have been disrupted or destroyed.

Allusions and intertextuality: Eliot's poem is full of allusions to myth, literature, and other cultural artifacts, from the Biblical story of the Fisher King to Shakespeare's "Hamlet" to Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde." Eliot's use of allusion is particularly notable for its complexity

and density, with references to a wide range of literary, religious, and mythological sources. These allusions are often used to create a sense of depth and resonance within the poem, as well as to explore the connections between different cultural traditions and historical periods. These allusions serve several purposes: they provide a sense of continuity and tradition amidst the chaos of modernity, they suggest a shared cultural heritage that transcends national boundaries, and they provide a framework for understanding the poem's themes and symbols. These references are often used in a playful or ironic way, and they serve to create a sense of interconnectedness and continuity across different historical periods and cultural contexts.

Themes of disillusionment and despair: "The Waste Land" is a deeply pessimistic poem that portrays a world in which traditional values and beliefs have been shattered by the war and its aftermath. Eliot's use of imagery and language reflects this sense of disillusionment, with scenes of decay, destruction, and emptiness dominating the poem. However, there are also moments of hope and redemption, such as the final lines of the poem, which suggest that there may be a way out of the waste land after all.

Symbolism: Symbolism is another important modernist element in "The Waste Land." Eliot uses a wide range of symbols throughout the poem, including water, fire, and fertility imagery, to explore themes of death, rebirth, and spiritual redemption. These symbols are often used in a highly compressed and elliptical way, requiring careful interpretation and analysis on the part of the reader.

Overall, "The Waste Land" is a complex and challenging poem that rewards close analysis and interpretation. The modernist elements in "The Waste Land" serve to create a complex and multi-layered work of literature that reflects the fragmented and disordered nature of modern life. It captures the essence of modernity and its discontents. Eliot's use of fragmentation, intertextuality, allusion, and symbolism helps to create a sense of depth and resonance within the poem, as well as to explore the connections between different cultural traditions and historical periods. This has made "The Waste Land" a lasting and influential work of modernist literature, and a key example of the modernist style.

1.7 Critical Examination of the poem "The Waste Land"

The Waste Land is one of the most well known poems of modernist literature, and it has more literary references than books on a shelf. "The Waste Land" is about the aftermath of World War I, which Eliot portrays as a world that has lost its faith and lost its identity. The poem is divided into five sections, each one representing a different aspect of the waste land.

First of all, talking about the title itself, “The Waste Land” is a metaphor for the state of modern society after World War I. It is a land that has been destroyed, both physically and spiritually. The poem is a reflection of the confusion, disillusionment, and despair that many people felt during this time. “The Waste Land” is about a world that has been left barren and devoid of life. Eliot paints a picture of a world that has been completely drained of vitality, and we are left with nothing but dry, dead soil. It is a place where nothing can grow, and the only things left are memories and relics of the past.

Now, the poem is divided into five sections, each with its own unique style and voice.

It starts off with “The Burial of the Dead,” where he hits us with some heavy imagery of a dead, lifeless world, such as “dead trees,” “dry stones,” and “cactus land.” All of these images are meant to represent the emptiness and hopelessness of the world that Eliot is depicting. It is a bleak, desolate picture that sets the tone for the rest of the poem. The section begins with the line, “April is the cruellest month.” This is a paradoxical statement because April is typically associated with new life and growth, but in this context, it represents the death and decay of the world around us.

Next, there is “A Game of Chess,” which is about relationships and the way people connect, or fail to connect with each other. This section is all about the breakdown of communication between men and women. Eliot is showing us how relationships have become hollow and meaningless in the wake of World War I. He uses a lot of chess imagery to illustrate this point. In chess, the pieces move around on a board but they never actually communicate with each other. They are just going through the motions. Eliot is saying that relationships have become like a game of chess. People are just going through the motions, but they are not really communicating. Eliot gives us two different scenarios here: one where a couple is struggling to communicate and connect, and another where a rich man is trying to seduce a woman. But both situations end in failure, and we are left with a sense of isolation and loneliness. It expresses the idea that people are trapped in their social roles and cannot escape them.

Next is “The Fire Sermon,” which is concerned with passion and desire. However, it is not any passion related to love. Instead, Eliot hits us with some hardcore sexual imagery, and talks about “burning flesh” and “bodies intertwining.” But it is not just physical desire he is talking about here – it is also about the desire for power and control. Eliot meditates on desire and how it has become twisted and corrupted in the modern world. Eliot uses a lot of imagery in this section to show how desire can overwhelm us and drown us. He shows how

desire has become distorted and unhealthy. The section ends with, “Burning burning burning burning,” which creates a sense of intense heat and passion, but also a sense of destruction and decay.

Then is the shortest section of the poem, “Death by Water,” which is about water, but it is not just any water – it is water as a symbol of destruction. This section is about a man drowning which is a metaphor for how people can get consumed by their own problems and just sink into despair. So, in this section, T.S. Eliot brings in the element of water as a powerful and destructive force. We are introduced to Phlebas, a dead Phoenician sailor, who has been forgotten by the sea and is now just a memory. The imagery of the “deep sea swell” gives a sense of the immense power of the ocean, and how easily it can swallow up and forget even the strongest and bravest sailors. Italso stays to warn us of the terror of death, to make us forget the trivialities of life and focus on what really matters.

The final section of the poem is “What the Thunder Said,” which is about redemption and hope. “What the Thunder Said” is a powerful and evocative conclusion to “The Waste Land.” Through its use of vivid and often disturbing imagery, it conveys a sense of despair and decay, but it also suggests the possibility of redemption and renewal. And through its emphasis on the power and majesty of nature, it reminds us of the enduring beauty and wonder of the world around us. This section is the most enigmatic and difficult to interpret. It uses a variety of mythological and religious allusions to explore the theme of spiritual rebirth. Eliot takes us through a series of apocalyptic visions, but it is not all doom and gloom. In the end, we are left with a sense of renewal and possibility. Eliot is saying that even though the world is empty and lifeless, there is still hope for renewal and regeneration. He uses a lot of religious imagery in this section to illustrate this point. The section ends with the line, “Shantih shantih shantih,” which is a Sanskrit word that means “peace” or “tranquility.”

In a nutshell, “The Waste Land” is a challenging and complex poem that explores a wide range of themes and emotions. It reflects the fragmentation and disillusionment of modern society and offers a bleak view of the world. However, it also offers a glimmer of hope through the theme of rebirth and renewal. The poem challenges us to confront the darker aspects of our world and find a way to move forward. It is a poem about a world that has lost its faith and its identity. But even though things seem hopeless, Eliot is saying that there is still hope for renewal and regeneration. It is a powerful message, and one that we could all learn from.

1.8 Ezra Pound’s relationship with T.S. Eliot and contributions to “The Waste Land”

Ezra Pound played a significant role in the composition of “The Waste Land” and was a close friend and collaborator of T.S. Eliot. Pound's contributions to the poem were numerous and varied, ranging from offering editorial suggestions to providing Eliot with literary and cultural references.

One of the most significant contributions that Pound made to “The Waste Land” was his role as an editor. Eliot originally sent the manuscript of the poem to Pound for feedback, and Pound provided extensive editorial suggestions and revisions. These included cutting and rearranging sections of the poem, as well as suggesting changes to individual lines and words. Pound's editorial interventions helped to shape the structure and style of the poem, and were instrumental in creating the final published version of “The Waste Land.”

In addition to his editorial role, Pound also provided Eliot with a range of literary and cultural references that were incorporated into the poem. These included references to the work of Dante, Shakespeare, and other literary figures, as well as to a range of cultural traditions and historical periods. Pound's extensive knowledge of literature and culture helped to enrich the thematic and symbolic content of the poem, and helped to create a sense of depth and resonance within its fragmented structure.

Pound's relationship with Eliot was a close and collaborative one, with the two poets sharing a deep mutual admiration and respect. They first met in 1914, when Pound was already an established figure in the literary world and Eliot was a young and relatively unknown writer. Pound recognized Eliot's talent and potential early on, and encouraged him to pursue his creative ambitions. Over the years, the two poets developed a close friendship and creative partnership, with Pound providing Eliot with guidance, inspiration, and support throughout his career.

Despite their close relationship, however, Pound and Eliot had some fundamental differences in their artistic and political views. Pound was a vocal supporter of fascism and anti-Semitism, and his political views became increasingly extreme in the years leading up to World War II. Eliot, on the other hand, was a more moderate figure politically, and distanced himself from Pound's more controversial views. Despite these differences, however, the two poets remained close friends and creative collaborators throughout their lives, with Pound continuing to offer Eliot advice and support even after his own political views had led to his imprisonment and exile.

1.9 Questions for Practice

1. Discuss T.S. Eliot's contributions to English literature.
2. Discuss T.S. Eliot as a Modernist.
3. Discuss the Modernist elements in "The Waste Land."
4. Discuss "The Waste Land" as a criticism of modern life.
5. Discuss the major themes of the poem "The Waste Land."