स्व–निर्देशित अध्ययन सामग्री
Self-Instructional Learning Material

Master of Arts (English)

(M.A. English)

First Year

Early Nineteenth-Century Literature

Paper-IV

दूरवर्ती अध्ययन एवं सतत् शिक्षा केन्द्र
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Message

I have the pleasure to elucidate that Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya established by Govt. of Madhya Pradesh by an enactment Act. No. 9, 1991 in the year 1991, with a mandate for rural development. Infact, it is the first Rural University of the country implementing the recommendations of Radha Krishnan Committee, 1948. The proposal was piloted by **Padam Vibhushan Shri Nanaji Deshmukh** to materialize the vision of **Mahatma Gandhi** regarding the development of rural India.

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I am happy to learn that Distance Learning & Continuing Education Center, Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya Chitrakoot, Satna (MP) has developed Self-Instructional Material for the students and trust that this endeavours of ODL Center will helpful to enhance the students understanding and their self enlightment.

(Naresh Chandra Gautam)

SECTION A : Authors/texts for Detailed Study

UNIT I:

Wordsworth	:	a. Tintern Abbey b. Immortality Ode c. Ode to Duty
Coleridge	:	The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

UNIT II:

Shelley	:	Adonais; Ode to the West Wind.
Keats	:	a. Ode on a Grecian Urn b. Ode to a Nightingale c. Ode to Autumn.

UNIT III:

Charles Lamb	:	a. Christ's Hospital b. Imperfect Sympathies c. The Old and the New School Master d. Poor Relations.

SECTION B : Authors/texts for Non-detailed Study

UNIT IV:

Jane Austen	:	Pride and Prejudice
Walter Scott	:	Kenilworth

UNIT V:

Byron	:	Childe Harold, Book IV
Hazlitt	:	Essays (Ed.) G. Sampson.

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

In Unit I our objective is to acquaint you with William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge. Besides discussing their life and works in general, we have chosen three poems of Wordsworth— *Tintern Abbey*, *Ode to the Intimations of Immortality*, and *Ode to Duty*—for our critical study, and Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as well.

In Unit II our purpose is to tell about P. B. Shelley and John Keats. We shall discuss the life and works of these two great poets of their times. For critical appreciation we have chosen Shelley's *Adonais* and *Ode to the West Wind* and three poems by Keats— *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Ode to Autumn*.

In Unit III our aim is to let you know about Charles Lamb and his style along with further discussion on some of his select and more popular essays. We have chosen *Christ's Hospital*, *Imperfect Sympathies*, *The New and the Old School Master*, and *Poor Relations*.

In Unit IV our intention is to familiarize you with Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott. We shall tell you about their lives and further discuss their select works for our study—Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Scott's *Kenilworth*.

In Unit V we shall tell you about Byron and William Hazlitt. We will further discuss Byron's *Childe Harold*, and Hazlitt's essays.

UNIT-I WORDSWORTH, S.T. COLERIDGE

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Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

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In Unit I our objective is to acquaint you with William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge. Besides discussing their life and works in general, we have chosen three poems of Wordsworth— *Tintern Abbey*, *Ode to the Intimations of Immortality*, and *Ode to Duty*—for our critical study, and Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as well.

You will be able to:

- Speak on the poets and their works in general.
- Offer summaries of the general poems.
- Critically analyze their worth.

1.1 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Birth and Parentage

William Wordsworth, the second of five children, was born on April 7th in 1770 at Cockermouth, in Cumberland. Hs father was the attorney to the Earl of Lonsdale, and his mother came from a family of good social standing of Penrith. He was unlucky enough to lose his mother when only eight years old, and father when only fourteen.

At Hawkshead

It was only by the generosity of his uncles that the poet could be educated. At eight years, he was sent to school at Hawkshead, where he was allowed to read whatever books he liked. The country-world was his real school and education. As he tells us in the Prelude, even his moral nature took shape due to his education in the school of Dame Nature.

At Cambridge

In 1787, he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, as an undergraduate. He did not care much for the university curriculum; his education was mainly carried on by self-chosen reading and by communion with nature. His first summer vacations was passed among his boyish haunts at Hawkshead and the second at Penrith, where he met Dorothy again after a long separation. It was at this time, in the company of his sister Dorothy, that he met Mary Hutchinson and

thus was laid the foundations of that love which thirteen years later culminated in an ideally perfect marriage. In the third summer vacations, he went with a college friend on a walking tour of France and Switzerland. He landed at Calais, "on the very eve of that great federal day," when the trees of liberty were planted all over France. He took his B. A. degree in 1791, and then settled in London, but without any definite plans for his future career.

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Wordsworth and the French Revolution

In November 1791, Wordsworth paid a second visit to France. At Orleans, he formed an intimate friendship with the republican Beaupuis. He returned to Paris in October 1792, a month after the September massacres. It was also during this visit to France that he fell violently in love with Annette Vallon and had a daughter, Caroline, by her. His subsequent conduct towards the innocent girl he had seduced still remains a blot on his fair name.

Moral Crisis in his Life

The excesses of the revolutionaries and the declaration of war between England and France in 1793 badly shattered the poet's dream of a newborn world through liberty. It was the healing influence of the society of his beloved sister, Dorothy, and of his friend Coleridge.

Coleridge and the "Lyrical Ballads"

About the year 1796, a young friend and admirer of the poet left him an annual legacy of £ 1900. He now settled with his sister Dorothy at Racedown, and from here shifted to Alfoxden near the Quantock Hills in 1797, thus became a close neighbour of S T Coleridge, his life-long friend, then residing at Nether Stoway. The close companionship between the two resulted in the publication of the epoch-making Lyrical Ballads in 1798. After the publication of this volume, the Wordsworth left on a tour of Germany. They passed the winter at Goslar, where the poet produced some of his best poems, including the exquisite group of love-poems on "Lucy".

Marriage –Peace and Happiness

Towards the end of 1799, Wordsworth settled at Townsend in Grasmere, and in October 1802, he married Mary Hutchinson. Henceforward he lived an ideal poet's life dedicated to the ideal of, "plain living and high thinking".

Last Years—Bereavements: Death

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He had five children, of whom the death of two—Catherine and Thomas—about the year 1812, was a severe shock to him. He could no longer remain at the parsonage and moved to Rydal Mount, his favourite and last abode.

His intensely loved and venerated brother, John, died in 1805, and his sister, Dorothy, fell seriously ill in 1832, and became a permanent invalid. The death of Coleridge in 1834, of Sara Hutchinson soon after, and of his daughter, Dora, in 1847, cast a dark shadow over the poet's last years. He died of pleurisy in 1850, at the age of eighty.

1.1.1 WORKS OF WORDSWORTH

Works of Wordsworth

Wordsworth was a prolific writer, his poetic span covers a period of more than sixty years, and so far as the bulk of this poetry is concerned, few can challenge comparison with him. Herbert Read divides his period of creative activity into the following four parts:

The Early Period (the period before 1791):

The best-known poems of this period are the *Descriptive Sketches* and *Evening Walk.* Both these poems are in the orthodox heroic couplet, and in both there is much to remind us of the conventional 18th century poetic style. The poems are proof of the fact that he is in love with nature and renders her faithfully and accurately.

The Period of Gloom

It is the period of guilt and remorse, which is from 1792 to 1797. Wordsworth had already been to France, had already met Annette Vallon, and a sense of guilt haunted him. His feeling of remorse and his gloom find expression in the unsuccessful tragedy, the *Borderers*, *Guilt and Sorrow*, and *Margaret*, or *The Ruined Cottage*.

The Glorious Decade

It is the decade in which the poet's powers were at their zenith and in which he produced his best works. These were days of peace and contentment. The chief achievements of this remarkable decade are:

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The Lyrical Ballads (1798), containing along with many other admirable pieces, such works as *Lines Written in Early Spring*, *Michael*, *Fountain*, etc., and ending with the *Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey*. *The Lyrical Ballads* proved very popular. *Peter Bell* was published in 1819. The famous "Lucy" group of poems composed early in 1799, during a German tour, while staying at Goslar. To this period also belong *Lucy Gray*, *Nutting*, and *Ruth*. The spiritualising touch of Wordsworth is to be noted in these poems.

The Prelude, or the account of the growth of a poet's mind, commenced in 1799 and completed in 1805, though published only after the poet's death in 1850. It is an autobiographical poem running into fourteen books. ***The Immortality Ode*** begun in 1802 on the eve of his happy marriage and completed in 1805.

The great poems of the period from 1804 to 1807 include *Ode to Duty*, *Highland Girl*, *Solitary Reaper*, *Affliction of Margaret*, *Happy Warrior*, *Resolution and Independence*, *Peele Castle*, *To the Cuckoo*, *My Heart Leaps Up*, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, etc. All these poems were included in the two volumes of his poetry published in 1807.

The Excursion begun about the year 1802 and published in 1814. It runs into nine books and was intended to form a part of *The Recluse*. It is a work of unequal merit. Wordsworth was inspired to write sonnets on hearing the sonnets of Milton read out to him in 1801. The best of his sonnets are: *Sonnet on the Sonnet*, *Milton*, *Upon Westminster Bridge*, *The World is Too Much Us*, and the series on *The River Duddon*.

The Period of Decline

The period of decline is from 1808 to 1850. After 1807, the poet's powers began to decline. The process started in 1807, and reached its consummation in 1815. In lines composed upon an *Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty* in 1818, we have, "our last glimpse of Wordsworth in the full and peculiar power of his genius." Such is the poetic career of one of the greatest poets of England,

one to whom Matthew Arnold assigns a place next only to Shakespeare and Milton.

1.1.2 WORDSWORTH: RELIGION OF NATURE

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Wordsworth: Religion of Nature

Or

Wordsworth: Education of Nature: His *Pantheism*: Nature as a Teacher

Or

Wordsworth's Treatment of Nature

Or

Stages in the Development of Wordsworth's Nature-love

Wordsworth's Originality as a Nature Poet

Wordsworth is called the "harbinger of Nature", the 'high-priest of nature', and the 'worshiper of nature,' as he was the poet of nature *par excellence* and his chief originality is to be found in his poetry of nature. From his very boyhood the external world was the most important formative influence on him. Hudson points out that the awakening of his love of nature was the most potent element in his passion, and De Quincy fittingly says, "Wordsworth had his passion for nature fixed in his blood. It was a necessity of his commerce with Nature did he live and breath." It was Wordsworth who, for the first time in English poetry, penetrated beneath the outward manifestations of nature and gave to her a separate life and soul of her own. This distinction, says Herbert Read, "drawn between the life of Nature and the life of Man, is perhaps the most important point to remember in considering Wordsworth's poetry". He spiritualised nature and made her a moral teacher; and therein is to be found his originality and this is his most important contribution.

Stages in the Growth of His Nature Love

First Stage: This spiritual conception of nature, however, did not come all of a sudden. The poet himself tells us in the *Prelude* and in the *Tintern Abbey* that there were four stages in the development of his love of the outer world. In the

first stage, "his love of nature was simply a healthy boy's delight in freedom and the open air."

The Second Stage: Then followed a period of his sensuous love of nature. He loved nature for her sensuous beauty. His boyish pleasures lost heir charm for him and, as Hudson says "nature was loved with an unreflecting passion altogether untouched by intellectual interest or associations—the kind of interest that found such full expression in the poetry of Keats."

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The Stage of Human-heartedness: This stage of "dizzy joys" and "aching raptures' came to an end with his experiences of human sorrow and sufferings he witnessed in France. Love of nature now fused with the love of Man, and he could now hear in Nature,

The still sad, music of humanity
Not harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue.

During this phase objects and forces of nature reminded him of the fact of human decay and death. Thus the setting sun reminded him of human mortality.

The Spiritual Stage—His Pantheism: But this stage of "human-heartedness" was a transitory one. It was soon followed by the last and the most important stage—the stage of the spiritual and mystical interpretation of Nature. In the poem "Nutting", the poet tells us how this happened. His interpretation of nature became spiritual and mystical. He now imparted a separate life and soul to nature; henceforth he had apprehensions of transcendental presence in the external world. He now felt that there is One Soul, the Supreme or God, immanent through the universe; but the same objectifies itself into various forms and phenomena perceived by the human senses. The reality is one, only the forms are countless. This is the so-called pantheism of Wordsworth—a belief in the basic oneness of all.

Nature as a Teacher

Wordsworth made Nature the teacher of man. Since there is an indispensable kinship between the soul of man and the indwelling soul in the universe, communion between the two is achievable. But this communion will result only when the soul of man is in harmony with the soul of nature. We should

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go to nature in the right mood, the mood of, "wise passivity," that "serene and blessed" mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood,
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

Legouis and Cazamian write, "To Wordsworth Nature appeals as a formative influence superior to any other, the educator of senses and mind alike, the sower in our hearts of the deep laid seeds of our feelings and beliefs".

His Dislike of Materialism

In sheer loathing at the materialistic craze of his countrymen he turns to nature. In her he finds not only moral lessons, but also joy and peace. He would prefer to be a pagan and to see all nature peopled with gods and goddesses than to be a Christian who, getting and spending, lays waste his powers and his rich heritage.

His Joy in the Sensuous Beauty of Nature

But Wordsworth's spiritual interpretation of nature does not mean that he could no longer enjoy the beauty of her physical aspects. Herbert Read writes in this connection, "Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties".

Here is the graphic picture of an early morning in spring:
It was an April morning, fresh and clear,
The rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed.

The Sonnet on *Westminster Bridge* records the poet's spontaneous enjoyment of the splendour of the day dawn near London.

Limitations of His Nature-treatment

Wordsworth's nature-treatment has been criticised on grounds of being one-sided and partial. As W H Hudson points out, "he finds a never failing principle of joy in nature." He tells us in one of the well-known poems,

And it is my faith
That every flower enjoys the air it breathes.

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He also believes that there is a 'Holy plan' at work in the world of leaves and flowers. He is thus blind to the sorrow and suffering that pervades all nature, to that brutal struggle for existence and mutual butchery which is nature's law. As Aldous Huxley in his 'Nature in the Tropics' points out, he had never strayed out of the Lake District and so never had the chance of coming across nature "red in tooth and claw". His vision was, therefore, limited.

Conclusion

But it should be always kept in mind that Wordsworth was a poet and not a scientist, we should not expect from him scientific truth. He gives us his vision of nature; he renders her in calm and in repose as he found it, and in this lies the chief value of his poetry—its healing power. Nature is to us what we are to her; she is a reflection of our own souls:

O Lady: we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live.

"Byron, being Byron," says Hudson, "saw nature in the tumult of revolt, Wordsworth, being Wordsworth, found in nature what he sought, the peace which was in his own soul." It was for this reason that he could find,

The silence that is in the starry sky
The sleep that is among the lovely hills.

1.1.3 DIDACTIC NOTE IN WORDSWORTH'S POETRY

Didactic Note in Wordsworth's Poetry

Or

Wordsworth as a Teacher

Or

Wordsworth's Message

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Wordsworth once wrote to his friend Sir George Beaumont, "Every great poet is a teacher, I wish to be considered as teacher or as nothing." In other words, his purpose was truthfully didactic, in his view every true poet is a prophet and seer, and, therefore, also a teacher, on another occasion, he explained his aim in writing poetry to Lady Beaumont in the following words: "To console the afflicted, to add sunshine to day-light by making the happy happier, to teach to the young and the gracious of every age, to see, to think, and to feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous."

His greatest hope was that his poetry would co-operate with "the benign tendencies in human nature in making man nobler, purer and better." J. S. Mill called his poetry, "the very culture of feeling."

Its Adverse Effects

In the very beginning it may be acknowledged that the didactic purpose is sometimes too intrusive and betrays him into prosaic passages of direct moral preaching. Matthew Arnold was right in emphasising that Wordsworth, to be really appreciated, must be read in a discriminating selection. But in his really inspired mood, in his really vital verse, "moral truth is transmuted by him into the purest poetry." In *Lines Written above Tintern Abbey*, he is great at once as a poet and as a teacher. When the mood was upon him he could become, "a living soul", and see into the, "heart of things", and he seeks to guide and elevate humanity by conveying to it his insight.

Plain Living and High Thinking:

The first and most significant message he conveys to humanity is the message of, "plain living and high thinking." Disgusted with the increasing materialism of the age, he turns to Nature and warns his countrymen, in his well known sonnet, of the evils and dangers of worldliness:

The world is too much with us; late and soon
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers,
Little we see in Nature that is ours'.

Worldly wealth was not going to lead them anywhere; it would only increase the ills and sorrows of their life. It would be better to turn to nature, and to lead a life

of simplicity and contentment like that of the humble rustics. They lead a simple life, have a few wants, and so are happier and nobler than those who live barricaded within the city walls.

Life in Nature Conducive to Happiness

In his poetry he does not deal with the lives and doings of the kings and his generals, the great and the rich, but with those of the humble shepherds, farmers, leach-gatherers of Cumberland. They are happy, though they are poor and suffering. These simple characters are held out as examples to show that true happiness is to be sought not in external conditions, but in the soul. It may be had even, "without money and without price", through a life of faith, fortitude, virtue and self-sacrifice. This is the inspiring message of *Resolution and Independence*. The Leach-gatherer is an impressive figure, an old man, the only survivor of a wife and ten children. Despite all this, he is happy, for he has raised himself above external circumstances through the constant practice of faith and fortitude.

Emphasis on Duty

This is the constant burden of Wordsworth's song. "Two convictions", says Herford, "penetrate Wordsworth's work—the dignity of man in himself, and the moral and intellectual strength which comes to him in communion with Nature". The secret of real happiness within and without is that one must do one's duty whatever the circumstances be, in his celebrated *Ode to Duty* he tells us that "unchartered freedom" tires him. Duty may be a stern law-giver, she may be the, "Stern daughter of the Voice of God," but true happiness is to be attained only by those who follow its call. It is the law of Duty which governs all universe, and if we obey this law,

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.

Faith in Universal Brotherhood

A significant aspect of Wordsworth's message to humanity is his faith in the basic identity of all life. The Supreme soul, God, is one and Inseparable, but it assumes myriads of forms. The 'Soul-of-all-the-worlds' circulates from link to

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link, knowing no chasms in between the source of the soul of all men and that of the various objects of nature is one and the same. Hence there is no basic difference between one form of life and another. It is for this reason that even the humblest flower can give to him thoughts that lie too deep for tears. Even the village idiot acquires for this reason, in his view, an added grandeur. In one of his poems he warns us,

Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With the sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

The lower creatures are our, 'blood brethren', and so they all must be treated with human compassion and affection. We must love them and be careful to them as God is.

Faith in Nature

Since the soul of Man and Nature are derived from the same source, communion between the two is possible. Man should approach Nature in the right mood, which is defined as a mood of 'wise passiveness' with a 'heart that watches and receives'. In such a 'serene and blessed mood' we are gently guided by the primary affections and become one with Nature. The motion of our human blood is suspended, and,

...We are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul.
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

Thus 'primary affections', natural instincts and impulses, are surer guides to truth than reason or intellectual analysis. It is for this reason that he refers to Nature as,

The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart and soul,
Of all my moral being.

In another of his poems he tells us,

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,

Than all the sages can.

As Raleigh tells us, wisdom, truth, joy and peace are qualities that exist outside of man; they may pass into his life, from the external world, if he approaches it in a mood of "wise passiveness".

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In Hudson's opinion one can acquire, "through communion with her more moral energy and more spiritual insight than we can ever get from all the philosophies of the schools, and through such energy and insight we shall obtain a clearer vision of good and evil than mere knowledge will ever afford."

Optimism: Its Healing Power

Thus Wordsworth's message to mankind is an optimistic one. It is a message of peace, of joy and of hope. There is joy everywhere in nature, and central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation. There is a Holy plan at work in nature and everything is pre-ordained to a Divine end. Man need not despair, for Nature does never betray the heart that loves her. Those who come to her in their fear, grief or pain are sure to be cheered up and reassured. In her they would find, "healing thoughts," "moral strength and intellectual power," and "joy in widest commonalty spread". The child has vivid recollections of its divine origin, but with age and with increasing contact with custom and hard realities of life these memories grow faint and dim. But a life in nature would go a long way to keep alive the childhood visions of the Eternal. Such is the optimistic and sublime teaching of the great *Immortality Ode*.

His Place as a Teacher

As a teacher Wordsworth's aim is frankly didactic so much so that Legouis considers that, "The *Lyrical Ballads* and the poems of the same group are a series of moral analyse of a rich intrinsic value, discreetly guided by edifying and utilitarian purpose". He himself finds life worth living, and through his poetry tries to acquire that peace and harmony which was within his own soul. His message is a lofty, spiritual one, and he must be ranked with the greatest teachers of mankind. Countless of his readers have witnessed to the healing power of his poetry. He brings the soothing balm of spiritualism to the wounded and scarred heart of humanity, groaning under the crushing heels of the monster of materialism.

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1.1.4 WORDSWORTH'S POETIC GENIUS

Throw critical light on Wordsworth's poetic genius so as to bring out a complete analysis of his entire poetic art.

Poetry is Emotion Recollected in Tranquillity

"For Wordsworth", says Mair "life is a sweetest of impression and the poet's duty is to recapture these impressions, to isolate them and brood over them till gradually as a result of his contemplation, emotion, stirred again and emotion, akin to the authentic thrill that has excited him when the impression is first born in the experience then poetry is made."

Wordsworth treasured up innumerable experiences of this kind in his own life. Some of them are set forth in, *The Prelude* for instance, on which the poem, *The Thorn* in the *Lyrical Ballads* is based. There were many occasions when the best of them produced his finest words—such a poem for instance is *Revolution and Independence* or *Gipsies*.

If the question is raised as to how, Wordsworth differentiated his experience which had most value for him, we shall find something lacking. That is to say things which were unique and precious to him do not always appear so to the readers. He counted as gold much that we regard as dross. According to him all great literatures must be nourished by suggestiveness. For example, in a lonely Highland meadow, Wordsworth saw the solitary girl, making hay and heard her at her work. Normally there was nothing usual in those rustic notes of the present girl to quicken thought or inspire expression. But to Wordsworth's imagination, the doleful strain of the forlorn reaper seemed to derive a pensive sorrow from memories of old unhappy things and matters long ago. When weary and worn out with fret and fever of the material world he lay on couch in the pensive or vacant mood, the daffodils gave him bliss of solitude.

He sees Life and finds Soul in the Nature

Wordsworth's conception of the nature was completely different from those held by all other poets of the nature. He conceived, as a poet, that the nature was alive. He had imagined one living soul which was entering into flower, stream or mountain, gives them each a soul of their own. Between this spirit in the

nature and the mind of the man, there is a pre-arranged harmony which enabled the nature to communicate its own thought to the man and the man to reflect upon them until an absolute union between them was established.

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This was, in reality, the theory of the Neo-Platonists of the Renaissance period. They did not, however, care for the nature but when Wordsworth either reconceived or adopted this very idea it made him the first who loved nature with the personal love for she being living and personal and not only reflection was made capable of being loved as a man loved a friend or as a lover who loves his beloved.

Joy of Nature

Wordsworth saw joy in Nature and it awakened joy in him. To him it was finally the joy of God in his own creative life, the ancient rapture as Browning called it. Wordsworth while writing poetry, was content to feel the joy as it was seen in the Nature herself without continually referring it to the metaphysical action to edify wherever he went through a rejoicing world and he married to its joy of his own heart. He received delight and gave back delight.

Inter-communion of all Things in Nature

In Stopford Brooke's view, there was yet another element in the life. Of the nature which filled the poetry of Wordsworth it was the inter-communion of all things in the nature, with one another, their tender association in the friendship and their self-sacrifice in the mutual loving kindness. And this view of his was founded upon the confidence that an infinite love followed through the whole universe every flower and cloud, every stream and hill, the stars and the mountain tops, the trees and the winds that visited them and the birds that lived among them, had each their own life and rejoiced in communicating all they had I their character and love to one another. "The world", according to Wordsworth, "was a world of active and loving friendship."

Union with God through the Nature

Just as a little rivulet is impatient to mingle with the infinite sea so in the opinion of Wordsworth, individual soul's ultimate end is to be completely absorbed in the soul of all souls. Wordsworth's philosophy asserts that the ultimate union of the man with the eternal being can be effected. Man must

recognize that his very self, his will is identical in essence with every creature even the oppressed, the humblest and the down-trodden, when he has done so and is in love and sympathy with the nature the veil of the mystery becomes transparent and he gets nearer to his Maker and ultimately he becomes His part.

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Nature is God

"There is" according to Wordsworth "a spirit life actively operating everywhere not from without but as an emanation of the most being of every form of creation. The fullest expression of her life is to be found in the man, but it is present everywhere. Hence the meanest thinks share in the honour of the infinite. But his is very different from the saying that the Nature and God or the Mind of Man and the Mind of God are identical." This distinction is well brought out by Euclem in his statement of the position of Goethe. The words, which he uses in this connection will apply also to Wordsworth."

Conflict between the Man and the Nature must be bridged up

One of the greatest problems of Wordsworth was to resolve the seeming conflict between the Man and the Nature. Wordsworth's firm conviction was that this godly universe is exquisitely cited to the mind of the men and that the mind of man is also correspondingly fitted to the universe. But this exquisite adjustment is upset by the so-called civilized life is ever ending struggle against the forces of the nature. The city, which symbolizes man's civilized life, is built only when the jungles are felled and cleaned. But man should go to nature in wise passiveness to understand her mysteries in a spirit of reverence.

1.1.5 TINTERN ABBEY

Tintern Abbey

Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on
Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a tour, July 13. 1798

The Poem

Five years have passed; five summers, with the length

Of five long winters; and again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a sweet inland murmur. Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on this wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage ground, these orchard tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
Among the woods and copses, nor disturb
The wild green landscape. Once again I see
These hedgerows hardly hedgerow: little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods.
Or of some Hermit's cave whereby his fire
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous Forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure; such perhaps,

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As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love, nor least, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood,
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul;
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! How oft,
In darkness, amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight, when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! Thou wandered thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions thin and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts

That in this moment there is life and food
For future years, and so I dare to hope,
Though changed no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all—I cannot paint
What then I was, the sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy woods
Their colours and their forms, were then to me,
An appetite
A feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye—That time is past,
And all its aching joyous are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures, not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense, for I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often times;
The still, sad music of humanity,

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Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue, and I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of the setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore, am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth, of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise,
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart and soul,
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirit to decay:
For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
Of this fair river thou, my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend, and in the voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! Yet a little while

May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature did never betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this, our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts that, neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, or all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore, let the moon
Shine on thee in the solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies, oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or grief,
Should by thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me.
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams

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Of past existence, wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together: and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service; rather say
With warmer love, oh! With far deeper zeal,
Of holier love, not wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake.

Substance

Introduction

The poem is considered to be Wordsworth's noblest utterance. It was written soon before the departure of Wordsworth and his sister for Germany.

The Substance of the Poem

The poet returns to gaze upon the river Wye after an absence of five years. He has often thought of that quiet and beautiful scene during this long absence. To the unconscious influence of those beauteous forms he owes the highest of his poetic moods—that mood in which the soul rises above the world of sense, and views the world of being, and the mysterious harmony of the universe. It's is the poet's own belief; but even if this were a vain belief, he knows at least that the memory of this peaceful scene has often cheered him in hours of solitude and hopelessness.

And now he once more looks upon the real scene of his past recollections. He contrasts his present feelings with the past ones. He has a painful belief that the past with its intense and childish raptures can no more return to him.

But he does not, therefore, faint or murmur, because he knows that other gifts have followed. If the mere external forms of nature cannot fill him with the rapture of his boyish days, he has reached a higher and more serene region; he has

learnt to understand the inner meaning of nature; he has learnt to recognize a living principle underlying the world of sense, and giving to it all beauty and harmony.

And even if it were not so, the sympathy of his dear sister would keep his genial spirits from drooping or decaying. In her he views his former self; in her voice he catches the language of his former heart, and in the glances of her wild eyes he reads his former pleasures. He prays that she should be what he was once—viz., a fervent worshipper of nature, and a devout believer in the maxim "all that we behold is full of blessing." And so whatever sorrows might be her lot in aftertimes, she would remember with joy the poet and his exhortations, and derive consolation from the remembrances.

NOTES

1.1.6 ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

Ode on Intimations of Immortality

"From Recollections of Early Childhood"

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,

The earth and every common sight,

To me did seem

Apparelled in celestial light,

The glory and the freshness of a dream,

It is not now as it hath been of yore:

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

NOTES

II

The rainbow comes and goes,

And lovely is the Rose;

The moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare;

Waters on a starry night

Are beautiful and fair;

But yet I know, where're I go,

That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,

And while the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief.

A timely utterance gave that thought relife,

And I again am strong:

The cataract blow their trumpets from the stream:

No more shall grief of mine the season wrong.

I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,

The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,

And all the earth is gay.

Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity.

And with the heart of May

Doth every beast keep holiday.

Thou child of joy,

Shout round me; let me hear the shouts, thou happy

Shepherd-boy!

IV

Yet blessed Creatures, I have heard the call

Ye to each other make; I see

The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;

My heart is at your festival,

My head hath its coronal,

The fullness of your bliss I feel—I feel it all.

O evil day! If I were sullen

While the Earth herself is adoring

This sweet May-morning,

And the children are culling

On every side,

In a thousand valleys far and wide,

Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,

And the babe leaps up on his mother's arms:

I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!

--But there's a tree, of many one,

A single Field which I have looked upon,

Both of them speak of something that is gone;

The Pansy at my feet

Doth the same tale repeat:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

NOTES

V

Our Birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.

The soul that rises with us, our life's Star

Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing Boy,

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows

He sees it in his joy:

The youth, who daily farther from the East

Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,

And by the vision splendid

Is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away,

And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills his lap with pleasures of her own;

Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,

And even with something of a mother's mind,

And no unworthy aim,

The homely Nurse doth all she can,

To make her foster child, her inmate Man,

Forget the glories he hath known,

And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,

A six years' darling of a pigmy size!

See, where' mid work of his own hand he lies,

Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,

With light upon him from his Father's eye!

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,

Some fragment from his dream of human life,

Shaped by himself with newly-learned art:

A wedding or a festival

A mourning or a funeral,

And this hath now his heart,

And unto this he frames his song:

Then will he fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love or strife:

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But it will not be long
Ere this is thrown aside,
And with new found joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his “humorous stage”
With all the persons, down to palsied age,
That life brings with her in her equipage;
As of his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul’s immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage; thou Eye among the blind,
That deaf and silent, read’st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,--
Might Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave,
Thou, over whom thy Immorality
Broods like the day, a master o’er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might

Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,

Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke

The years to bring the inevitable yoke,

Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?

Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,

And custom lie upon thee with a weight,

Heavy as fronts, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! That in our embers

Is something that doth live

That nature yet remembers

What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed

Perpetual benediction; not indeed

For that which is most worthy to be blest.

Delight and liberty, the simple creed

Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,

With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:

Not for these I raise;

The song of thanks and praise;

But for these obstinate questionings

Of sense and outward things,

Fallings from us, vanishings;

Blank misgivings of a Creature

Moving about in worlds not realised.

NOTES

High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised;
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Whieth, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the Eternal Silence: truth, that wake,
To perish never:
Which neither listlessness, not mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy.
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm whether,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither.
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing a joyous song!

And let the young Lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound!

We in thought will join your throng,

Ye that pipe, and ye that play,

Ye that through your hearts to day

Feel the gladness of May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright

Be now forever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour

Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

We will grieve not, rather find

Strength in what remains behind;

In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be,

In the soothing thoughts that spring

Out of human suffering:

In the faith that looks through death

In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills and Groves,

Think not of any severing of our loves!

Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;

I only have relinquished one delight

To live beneath your more habitual sway.

I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,

Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;

The innocent brightness of a new-born Day

Is lovely yet;

The clouds that gather round the setting sun

Do take a sober colouring from an eye,

That hath kept which o'er man's mortality.

Another race hath been, and other palms are won,

Thanks to the human heart by which we live

Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,

To me the meanest flower that blows can give

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Introduction and Appreciation

Wordsworth's Platonism

The Composition of the Ode:

Wordsworth's celebrated *Ode on Immortality* has been widely praised by critics. Emerson, the American critic, for example, regards it as, "the high watermark of poetry in the 19th century." Wordsworth himself attached great importance to it. He positioned it at the end of his collected poems as if it were the roof and crown of his works and his last word on the central problems of his creative life. Its full title, "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from the Recollections of Childhood," indicates its subject matter i.e. memories of childhood visions and experiences are an indication of the immortality of the human soul. Wordsworth began writing it in the spring of 1802 when he was at the height of his power and prosperity. By summer the first four stanzas were completed and the main design conceived. Then however, there was a break of

two to four year; the rest of the poem was completed about the years 1805-1806 and it could be published only in 1807. This long gap explains the abrupt beginning of the 5th stanza: "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting."

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Its Three Parts: Development of Thought

The plan of the *Ode* is simple but majestic. Its thought can easily be divided into three parts. In the first four stanzas the poet tells of a spiritual crisis which faces him; in stanzas from V to VIII he states the possible causes of that crisis; and in the last three stanzas he points out the sources of consolation that still remain open to him. Let us now examine the leading thought of the three parts in some detail.

The Crisis

In the first part (1-4) he tells us that a change has come over his approach to nature and his relations with her. In childhood every common scene and sight of nature seemed to him, "apparelled in celestial light." But now in manhood, though nature remains the same as before, he tells us that some glory has gone out of her. The things which he had seen in childhood, he can see now no more. What he finds missing is described as, "celestial light," "visionary gleam," etc. Everything around him is gay; but the poet is sad at heart. The tree, the field, and the flower at his feet, which had played so large a part in his life, are suddenly changed. In poignant, moving tones he asks the question,

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is now, the glory and the dream?

The language used makes it plain that spiritual crisis which the poet faced was a grave one and caused him much suffering. The *Ode* has far reaching autobiographical significance. C.M. Bowra writes, "At the height of his career Wordsworth discovered that nature, in which he had put an unquestioning trust as the inspiration of his poetry, seemed to have abandoned by him and this deprived him of his most cherished strength."

The Explanation

Stanzas V-VIII are devoted to an explanation of the crisis which faced him. He replies to the question with which stanza IV ends. He takes the help of the Platonic doctrine of pre-existence, which shall be presently examined in some

NOTES

detail. We have a prior state of existence in heaven. In our childhood, when we are still fresh from heaven, we have recollections of the divine. This vision of a blessed divine world makes the child see on earth the light of heaven. Hence nature appears to him, "Apparelled in celestial light." As the child grows up, the vision of the divine gradually fades away and so the grown-ups do not have the, "visions of the divine". He is glorified as the "best philosopher", "seer blessed", the "Eye among the blind."

Sources of Consolation

The *Ode* ends with the confidence that the poet still has much to comfort and sustain him. He might have lost, "one delight" but he can still enjoy lasting companionship with nature:

I only have relinquished one delight

To live beneath your more habitual sway.

Moreover, traces of our divine origin are not wholly lost. The grown-up man may not have visions of a blessed world, but he still has recollections of such childhood visions to console and strengthen him. This recollection breeds in him, "perpetual benediction". These "shadowy recollections" are spoken of as a "fountain light," a "master light," to uphold and cherish him.

The poet is even more grateful for the feeling of the unreality of the outward, which often recurs to us in our highest moods, and tells us of our spiritual origin.

He even draws upon his own childhood experiences. As a child he often had the awful feeling that he was surrounded with unreality, and had to clutch at a wall or a tree to assure himself of the reality of things.

Old age brings with it other consolations. He can still feel cheerful in nature; for though he has lost the bright visions of childhood, yet this loss is compensated for by the human sympathies which came with maturer years and which enables him to see new and higher meanings in the most commonplace objects of nature.

Sympathy, faith in the immortality of the soul, and the "philosophic mind" or wisdom that the poet gains with experience, are sufficient consolations for the loss of the visions which the poet as a child had.

The *Ode* ends on a note of hope and self-confidence which makes us forget for the moment the gravity of the crisis stated in the opening stanzas. Thus the *Ode* is felt to be a personal document which tells us of a grave spiritual crisis felt and surmounted.

NOTES

1.1.7 ODE TO DUTY

Ode To Duty

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!

O Duty! If that name thou love

Who art a light to guide, a rod

To check the erring and reprove;

Thou, who art victory and law,

When empty terrors overawe,

From vain temptations dost set free

And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are those who ask not if thine eye

Be on them; who in love and truth,

Where no misgiving is, rely

Upon the genial sense of youth.

Glad Hearts; without reproach or blot,

Who do thy work, and know it not:

Long may the kindly impulse last!

But Thou, if they should totter, teach them to

stand fast!

Serene will be our days and bright,

And happy will our nature be,

When love is an unerring light,

And joy is its own security.

And they a blissful course may hold,

Even now, who, not unwisely hold,

Love in the spirit of this creed;

We seek thy firm support, according to their need,

I, loving freedom, and untried;

No sport of every random gust,

Yet being to myself a guide,

Too blindly have reposed my trust;

And oft, when in my heart was heard

Thy timely mandate, I deferred

Thy task, in smoother walks to stray.

But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may,

Through no disturbance of my soul,

Or strong compunction in me wrought,

I supplicate for thy control;

But in the quietness of thought;

Me this unchartered freedom tires;

I feel the weight of chance-desires.

My hopes no more must change their name,

I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou does wear

The Godhead's most benignant grace.

Nor know we anything so fair

As is the smile upon thy face.

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds

And fragrance in thy footing treads.

Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong;

And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee are

Fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!

I call thee: I myself commend

Unto thy guidance from this hour.

Oh, let my weaknesses have an end!

Give unto me, made lowly wise,

The spirit of self-sacrifice.

And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live!

NOTES

Substance

The *Ode to Duty* is one of the finest Odes in the English language. Gray's Hymn to Adversity inspired it and bears close resemblance to it. The poet calls Duty to stern daughter of god. By following the call of Duty, a man can gain victory over evil and temptation. It is duty which can guide man along the right path and bring peace to frail humanity.

There are people who instinctively follow the path of duty. But they feel that they are being guided by their own natural sense of love and truth. Such people are lucky.

Human life can be serene and happy only when the call of Duty is obeyed. Those who follow the path of Duty, feel happy and secure against Evil.

There was a time when poet did not care for the call of Duty. He loved freedom and lived in his own way. But now he is determined to serve Duty more strictly.

He now prays to Duty to guide him. He is tired of uncontrolled or unbridled freedom. He now longs for peace of mind which is possible only through obedience to the law of Duty.

NOTES

Duty may appear to us harsh, but in reality she is as gracious and kind as God Himself. Duty is the law of Nature, and all objects of Nature move in their particular spheres according to this law.

The Poet entrusts himself to the guidance of Duty. He prays to Duty to bless him with the spirit of self-sacrifice, and make him reasonable and wise.

1.1.8 SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

Lines: *These beauteous Forms,*

Through a long absence, have not been to me

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:

But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,

And passing even into my purer mind,

With tranquil restoration

Explanation: These lines have been taken from William Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*. During this interval of five years the poet never forgot the impression made upon his mind by these beautiful objects of nature. Their memory was very vivid and nothing could wipe out their impression. Neither peaceful life in seclusion nor the time spent in noisy towns to the recollection of the scene the poet owes a great deal during moments of moral and mental crisis. It refreshed not only his physical senses and feelings, but his intellectual powers were also made alert. The experience often thrilled him completely and helped him to overcome the depressing moods, and regain the calmness of the mind.

Lines: *Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,*

In which the affections gently lead us on—

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame

And even the motion of our human blood,

Almost suspended, we are laid asleep

In body, and become a living soul;

While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,

We see into the life of things.

Explanation: These lines have been taken from William Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*. The poet says that in that mood, guided by the higher emotions, the vital functions and physical nature are for the time suppressed, we lose the sense of physical existence and the body becomes totally calm. Then we become all spirit, and with our mental vision we see harmony all round without the least trace of any chaos or confusion in the world. This mystical experience and the bliss that accompanies it gives such a spiritual exaltation that we understand the real significance of things and then doubts no more depress us. We feel spiritually very enlightened.

NOTES

1.2 S.T. COLERIDGE

Birth and Parentage

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born on October 21, 1772 in the little Devonshire town of Ottery St. Mary. He was the youngest child of a family of thirteen children. His father was Reverend John Coleridge. He was the Vicar of the parish Church. He was also the master of the Free Grammar School of the town. He was a simple, sincere and benevolent man. His ways were somewhat eccentric but he was a man of great scholarship and learning. The impact of his life and character on all the children including Coleridge was deep and lasting. The poet's mother is described as a woman of strong mind. She was attentive to

her husband's duties and was devoted to the husband and family. She was ever anxious to make gentlemen of her sons. It was the task which her visionary husband left in her hands. The father, however, recognised the extraordinary genius of his youngest son. So he took personal charge of his training. He took him to long rambles in the country and very early made him interested in philosophical and religious speculations.

NOTES

University Life

Coleridge was entered on the rolls of Jesus College in 1971 at the age of 19. In the very first year of his University career he won the Browne Medal for Greek Ode on the Unhappy Lot of Slaves in the West Indies. By reason of his gifts of brilliant conversation he soon become the centre of a large circle of admiring friends. He was capable of repeating page after page of prose and poetry verbatim. He was deeply stirred by the French revolution. Utopian dreams filled his thoughts. It made his studies aimless. In 1973 he suddenly ran away from the college and joined military. He was tired of his military life in two month. So he returned to his college. He left the University without taking any degree.

Last Days of His Life

Under the observation and treatment of doctor, Coleridge somehow overcame his habit of opium-taking and improved his health. The restoration of health led him once again to recapture some of the old literary fervour and the holy sermons, the *Biographia Literaria*, with its invaluable analysis of the principles and language of poetry. The Aids to Reflection, and the Notes on Shakespeare are the chief evidences of days devoted to quiet but memorable literary work. His friends and admirers flocked to him with great affection and respect. He died on 25th July 1834 at Highgate and was buried in the Highgate churchyard.

Major Poetic Works

Supernatural Works: (a) *Kubla Khan*, a vision (1797)—a fragment based on the opium dream. (b) *Christabel* (1800)—an unfinished ballad. A medieval tale of Witchcraft steeped in a supernatural atmosphere. It represents the eternal conflict between good and evil as personified in Christabel and Geraldine respectively. (c) *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*(1797-98)—a supernatural ballad dealing with the punishment and penance of a sailor who had killed an albatross.

Personal Works: (a) *The Eolian Harp* (1795) **(b)** *Hymn before Sunrise* (1802) **(c)** *Frost at Midnight* (1798)—the loving shouts of a father beside the cradle of his child. **(d)** *Dejection*—an ode (1802) **(e)** *Youth and Age* (1823-32) **(f)** *Epitaph* (1833-34)

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Political Works: (a) Religious *Musings* (1794) **(b)** *Ode on the Departing Year* (1776) —Review of year's event, addressed to Liberty, the Revolution, and England. **(c)** *France: An Ode* (1793) (d) *Fears in Solitude* (1798).

1.2.1 COLERIDGE AS A POET OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Coleridge as a poet of the Supernatural

Coleridge and the Cult of the Supernatural

The eighteenth century is known as an age of reason with a characteristic bias towards rationalism in thought and literature. But even in this century the fascination the human mind feels for the weird and mysterious could not be fully overcome. Towards its closing years, writers lie Horace Walpole, Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, Clara Reeve and Monk Lewis popularised a special kind of novel known as Gothic romance. These romances depicted the life in the Middle Ages. Their scenes were invariably laid in haunted castles and dilapidated buildings. They aimed at producing supernatural awe and terror in the minds of the readers by creating scenes of darkness and night, by taking their characters to the graves of the dead in the churchyard, by showing supernatural powers dominating human life, and by including hard-to-believe scenes of magic and mystery. Though these novels could send chills down the spine, they lacked subtlety, and refinement that could appeal to a sophisticated mind. When Coleridge began writing, the cult of the supernatural that formed the basis of the Gothic romance was by then on the decline; in reality, it was practically dead. But lured by its strangeness and discovering in it vast possibilities of exploitation, Coleridge gave it a new prominence in his poetry.

Scene Set in Distant Times and Remote Places

The three important poems in which Coleridge has made use of the supernatural are *The Ancient Mariner, Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*. It is worth taking note of the fact that in all the three poems, Coleridge takes us to distant

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times and remote places. The Ancient Mariner narrates the experiences of an ancient Mariner voyaging around Polar Regions in unknown seas. *Christabel* takes us back to the Middle Ages, to the old moated castle with barons and bards. In *Kubla Khan*, the scene is laid in the oriental city of Xanadu, in forests as 'ancient as the hills'. The remoteness of scene in all the three poems is quite deliberate.

Gradual Introduction of the Supernatural Elements

Coleridge is cautious enough not to show any abruptness in introducing supernatural elements. He first takes his reader around familiar places and wins his faith in the narrative through vividly portrayed minute details. Then minor hints of the supernatural are gradually dropped. Finally, the entire scene puts on a supernatural look. But by now the reader's sensibility is so attuned to the mood of the narrative that he easily accepts whatever he is told. In The Ancient Mariner, there is a very vivid description of the ship's journey southward to the equator with a good wind and fine weather. Then a storm blast drives it towards the South Pole. With the introduction of mist and snow the scene takes on a weird and unusual look. Ice, mast-high, and as green as emerald, sends a dismal sheen and occasionally cracks and growls. In Part II, the Mariner announces:

We were the first that ever burst

Into that silent sea.

Then the atmosphere is given some more supernatural touches. Thus the poet prepares us fully well before revealing her reality.

Dramatic Truth of Human Experience

When it was decided that Coleridge would write about supernatural incidents and agents, it was also agreed upon that 'the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would natural accompany such situations, supposing them real. In other words, the experience projected through supernatural machinery was to be fundamentally human. The appearance of the spectre ship in *The Ancient Mariner* may be supernatural, but there is nothing supernatural about the Mariner's response to its appearance. In the same way, the animation of the dead crew by a troop of

celestial spirits is a supernatural phenomenon by the poet retains the essentially human psychologically truth in its depiction:

The body of brother's son

Stood by me knee to knee:

The body and I pulled at one rope

But he said nought to me.

The mariner's emotions on other occasions are also portrayed with exquisite power and pathos. The complete sense of desolation when the sailors are struck dead, the quick and tender apprehension of the beauty of the water-snakes followed by the blessing and prayer, the delirium of delight felt when the ship reaches back the native country, and above all the poignant perception of love as the best form of prayer—all these the poem human and supernatural as well. The dramatic truth of human experience is preserved in *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*.

Subtle Blending of the Natural and the Supernatural

Another very significant feature of Coleridge's treatment of the supernatural is a very clever and subtle merger of the natural and the supernatural. Indeed the two are so indistinguishably fused with each other that it becomes difficult to locate where the one ends and the other begins. Nobody can say with any certainty whether the bloody sun, no bigger than the moon, standing right up above the mast in a hot and copper sky, the death-fires dancing at night and the water burning green, and blue and white like a witch's oils constitute natural or supernatural phenomena. One can never be sure as to whether the mastiff bitch makes an angry moan because she sees Geraldine or because she is disturbed by the hooting of the owl. Besides why does Christabel make a hissing sound; was it because of womanly jealousy or does she do so under the spell of Geraldine. In *Kubla Khan*, the mighty fountain being momently force is definitely invested with supernatural energy but the similes employed. To describe it are so familiar that we accept the fountain as quite natural.

Suggestiveness

Suggestiveness is the central point of Coleridge's treatment of the supernatural. Coleridge does not describe the supernatural as a tangible reality is bound to damage its effectiveness. Mystery revealed ceases to be mysterious. So

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Coleridge does not make any effort to unravel the mystery; he passes on with a subtle suggestion, leaving it to the reader's imagination to fill in the necessary details. In *The Ancient Mariner*, he describes Life-in-Death in the following words:

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.

These lines leave the reality of Life-in-Death vague and are yet suggestive enough to convey her dreadfulness.

In *Christabel*, when Geraldine exposes her bosom, Coleridge suggests its disgusting and horrifying ugliness through two very suggestive lines:

A sight to dream of, not to tell!

O shield her! Shield sweet Christabel!

In *Kubla Khan*, this suggestiveness is seen even to a better advantage. In this poem, the description of the deep romantic chasm slanting down the green hill across a cedarn cover is perhaps unsurpassed for its sheer suggestiveness:

A savage place! As holy and enchanted

As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted

By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

Conclusion

Today we have come a long way from the days of supernatural beliefs. Ghosts and goblins no longer capture our imagination. Now we do not feel impressed by supernatural occurrences in haunted castles. Still we are able to enjoy Coleridge's poetry and appreciate its relevance to us. It is meaningful because it is deeply human. Like Charles Lamb, we might be sceptical of the supernatural machinery in it, but like him, we would keep reading it as if dragged by "Tom Piper's magic whistle."

1.2.2 COLERIDGE AS A POET

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Describe some aspects of the poetry of Coleridge.

Or

Make an assessment of Coleridge as a poet.

Introduction

Coleridge is called a Metaphysician. He has produced more work in criticism and philosophy than in poetry. He devoted himself to muse only in his young manhood. He was a born procrastinator or a living Hamlet who was ever plotting and designing but seldom acting. So most of the work was of a fragmentary nature. Be this small amount of his poetry is of superb quality. Mr. Stopford Brooke says, "All that he did excellently might be bound in twenty pages but it should be bound in pure gold." This remark is not wholly true but pieces like the *Ancient Mariner, Christabel, The Kubla Khan,* etc. are masterpieces in English poetry. Some aspects of his poetry may be described as follows.

Perfect Workmanship

His poetic workmanship is perfect and his melody never fails. H. D. Fraill aptly writes, "He is always a singer as, Wordsworth is not and Byron almost never."

Poet of Supernaturalism

He is a poet of supernaturalism. *Kubla Khan*, *Christabel* exhibit his power of supernaturalism. He looked into the void and found it peopled with presences. He had the uncommon eye that beheld the unseen.

Poet of Nature

Hymn before Sunrise, *Lime Tree, Bower, My Prison, The Nightingale*, and other poems reveal the poet's feelings for nature and close observation of its life. He was really a great poet of nature.

Poet of Inner Life

Coleridge was a subtle psychologist. He shows in his poetry a remarkable knowledge of the inner side of Human Life. An eminent writer remarked, "Coleridge was as familiar with the avenues of the soul as Wordsworth was with the dales of the country."

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Poet of Dreams

He was the poet of dreams. Coleridge himself once said "I should much wish like the Indian Vishnu to float about along an infinite ocean, cradled in the flower of the lotus and wake once in a million years for a few minutes to know that I was going to sleep a million years more."

Love for Medievalism

Coleridge found in the Middle Ages the suitable atmosphere and subject for his poetic treatment. That is why the medieval touch is clearly seen in his poems.

Poet of Humanitarianism

He was the poet of humanitarianism. He supported the French Revolution for it seemed that it would bring peace and prosperity to mankind. Later on when he found the French Revolution going against the principles of humanitarianism, he denounced it in *The Ode to France*. His love for humanity is well expressed in *Reflection on Having Left a Peace of Retirement*. In this poem he bids farewell to his cottage in order to go to the city and work for the relief of those who were in distress. He condemns those theoretical lovers of mankind who do nothing practical for humanity.

A Poet of Telling Tales

Coleridge is the supreme master of story-telling. It can be seen in the *Ancient Mariner*.

Limitations of Coleridge Poetry

Lack of Actuality:

The poetic output of Coleridge is not enough. There are large tracts which may be termed as dreary and flat in his poetry, and he seldom finished what he began. *The Ancient Mariner* is "The only completed thing of the highest quality in the whole of his work". *Christabel* is a splendid fragment. *Kubla Khan* remained

unfinished because the call of a friend broke his reverie. Actually, Coleridge never fulfilled the promise of his early days. His was a life of unfulfilled dreams. Another complaint urged against Coleridge's poetry is its inadequacy of the treatment of the actualities of life. He has created wonderful dreamland in his poetry. He has opened before us the work of the unseen and the supernatural forces; he has given us many a peep of beautiful scenery. But we miss in his poetry that firm grips of the realities of life, which produces a satisfying and fulfilling sense in the reader. Poems like *The Ancient Mariner* or *Christabel* cannot always satisfy us, we need something that tells us of human action, passion, sensations and thought. And when we try Coleridge's poetry by any of these, we have to admit that in spite of its beauty and power, it does not give a satisfying sense of actuality.

Smallness and Incompleteness of his Poetic Work:

Coleridge left but little poetry. Much of this is fragmentary and unfinished, and no small proportion of it is obviously inferior in quality to his best poetic work. Inspiration came to him suddenly in mysterious gusts; but often before a poem was finished, it suddenly left him apparently as powerless as an ordinary moral, to complete what he alone could have begun. Thus, after the second part of *Christabel*, a poem born of very breath of inspiration he waited unproductively until the end of his life for the return of the creative mood. We should rather attribute the smallness and incompleteness of his poetic work to some defect of character of purpose, some outside limitation which clogged the free exercise of a great gift. We regard it as the result of any flow in the quality of the gift itself.

1.2.3 THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

PART I

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.

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`By thy long beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me ?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin ;
The guests are met, the feast is set :
May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,
`There was a ship,' quoth he.
`Hold off ! unhand me, grey-beard loon !'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

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 Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :
He cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

`The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the Line.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he !
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon--'

The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music ; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she ;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

`And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong :
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
The southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen :
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken--
The ice was all between.

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The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around :
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound !

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came ;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
The helmsman steered us through !

And lo ! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

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

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine.'

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

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

NOTES

The Sun now rose upon the right :
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo !

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

And I had done an hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe :
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow !

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist :
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze continues ; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

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Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea !

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night ;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

A Spirit had followed them ; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels ; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so ;

Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root ;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner : in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Ah ! well a-day ! what evil looks
Had I from old and young !
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time ! a weary time !
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist ;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
And still it neared and neared :
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship ; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

NOTES

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail ;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail ! a sail !

A flash of joy ;

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call :
Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

And horror follows. For can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide ?

See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
Hither to work us weal ;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel !

The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well nigh done !
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun ;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace !)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun.

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears !
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres ?

The Spectre-Woman and her Death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton ship.

And those *her* ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate ?
And is that Woman all her crew ?
Is that a DEATH ? and are there two ?
Is DEATH that woman's mate ?

Like vessel, like crew !

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.

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice ;
`The game is done ! I've won ! I've won !'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight within the courts of the Sun.

The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :
At one stride comes the dark ;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising of the Moon,

We listened and looked sideways up !
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip !
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steerman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;
From the sails the dew did drip--
Till clomb above the eastern bar

NOTES

The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after another,

NOTES

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

His shipmates drop down dead.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

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 IV

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him ;

`I fear thee, ancient Mariner !
I fear thy skinny hand !
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.'--
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest !
This body dropt not down.

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm,

The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie :
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on ; and so did I.

And envieth that they *should live, and so many lie dead.*

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away ;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray ;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat ;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they :
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high ;
But oh ! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye !

Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

NOTES

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward ; and every where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide :
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside--

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread ;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charméd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes :
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

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.

Their beauty and their happiness.

He blesseth them in his heart.

O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare :
A spring of love gushed from my heart,

And I blessed them unaware :
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The spell begins to break.

The self-same moment I could pray ;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

Oh 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.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank ;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs :
I was so light--almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blesséd ghost.

He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind :
It did not come anear ;

But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life !
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about !
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge ;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud ;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side :
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on ;

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on !
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ;
Yet never a breeze up-blew ;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do ;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools--
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee :
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.

NOTES

But not by the souls of the men, nor by dæmons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

`I fear thee, ancient Mariner !'
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :

For when it dawned--they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast ;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun ;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing ;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,

That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe :
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

NOTES

The lonesome Spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean :
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion--
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound :
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

The Polar Spirit's fellow-dæmons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong ; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare ;
But ere my living life returned,

I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

`Is it he ?' quoth one, `Is this the man ?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew :
Quoth he, `The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

`But tell me, tell me ! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing--
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?
What is the ocean doing ?'

SECOND VOICE

`Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast ;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast--

If he may know which way to go ;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see ! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance ; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

NOTES

FIRST VOICE

`But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind ?'

NOTES

SECOND VOICE

`The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
Or we shall be belated :
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion is retarded ; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather :
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high ;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter :
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away :
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is finally expiated.

And now this spell was snapt : once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen--

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,

And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring--
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze--
On me alone it blew.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The light-house top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray--
O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock :

The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

NOTES

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

And appear in their own forms of light.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were :
I turned my eyes upon the deck--
Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood !
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light ;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart--
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
My head was turned perforce away
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast :
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third--I heard his voice :
It is the Hermit good !
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

The Hermit of the Wood,

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears !
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve--
He hath a cushion plump :
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,
`Why, this is strange, I trow !
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now ?'

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

`Strange, by my faith !' the Hermit said--
`And they answered not our cheer !
The planks looked warped ! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere !
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along ;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,

And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

`Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look--
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared'--`Push on, push on !'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred ;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread :
It reached the ship, it split the bay ;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat ;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round ;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips--the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit ;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,

Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
`Ha ! ha !' quoth he, `full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him ; and the penance of life falls on him.

`O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man !'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
`Say quick,' quoth he, `I bid thee say--
What manner of man art thou ?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale ;
And then it left me free.

And ever and anon through out his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land ;

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns :
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land ;
I have strange power of speech ;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me :
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door !
The wedding-guests are there :
But in the garden-bower the bride

And bride-maids singing are :
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer !

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea :
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company !--

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay !

And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

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

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn :

A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

Introduction

NOTES

Wordsworth and Coleridge planned *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* on the afternoon of the 20th November 1797, when they were walking in the Quantocks. Among the great poems of Coleridge, it is the only complete one. It was founded on a dream of Coleridge's friend, Cruikshank, who fancied he saw a skeleton ship, with figures in it. Wordsworth soon dissociated himself from its composition while Coleridge continued working on it alone and finished it on 23rd March 1798.

The first version of *The Ancient Mariner* appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. It was considerably revised for the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* published in 1800, but not many material changes were effected in the subsequent editions brought out in 1802 and 1805. In 1817, it appeared in *Sybilline Leaves*, accompanied by the gloss and revised in some important particulars. After this, no important changes were made in it.

Critical Summary

Part I.

The Ancient Mariner, with long grey beard and glittering eye and a skinny hand, stopped one of the three guests going to attend a wedding. When the Wedding-guest protested at being detained, the Mariner dropped his hand and held him spellbound with his glittering eye. So powerful was his spell that the Wedding-Guest was forced to listen to his story like a three-year-old child. The Ancient Mariner told him how he undertook a southward voyage with two hundred sailors. The ship then crossed the equator. Later a powerful storm drove it to the polar regions of snow and ice. Suddenly, out of the frozen silence around them there appeared an Albatross, a large sea-bird. The sailors hailed it as a Christian soul and made a pet of it. It daily came to them for food and for play. The ice split and favourable south wind drove them northwards. The sailors thought of the Albatross as a bird of good omen. Their fellowship continued for nine days. Then the tragic incident takes place. The Ancient Mariner killed the Albatross with his cross-bow.

NOTES

Part II.

They doubled Cape Horn. A good south wind still blew behind, but no sea bird followed the sailors' vessel. The sailors condemned the Ancient Mariner for having killed the Albatross. When the sun shone in the sky, they justified his action, thus making themselves accomplices in the crime. Now they entered the Pacific Ocean and the breeze dropped down suddenly. Their guilt began to show itself as reflected in the external nature with a 'cloudy sun' burning in a 'hot and copper sky'. The ship came to a standstill. Though the sailors were surrounded by water on all sides, the boards of the ship shrank and they suffered from great heat and thirst. The ocean appeared to rot. Slimy things crawled on the slimy sea. Death-fires danced around them at night. The sailors were filled with loathing and horror and some of then dreamed that the polar spirit was tormenting them in order to avenge the shooting of the innocent Albatross. In order to fix the sole responsibility of the sin on the Ancient Mariner, the sailors took off the cross from round his neck and hung the dead Albatross there.

Part III.

Tormented by heat and thirst, the sailors spent some really very tough time. Eventually there appeared on the horizon a ship. The Ancient Mariner bit his arm, sucked his blood to moisten his parched lips and announce its approach to the sailors. They were revived a bit by the hope of rescue and grinned with joy. But it turned out to be a spectre-ship with Death and Life-in-Death as its only crew. The two were playing at dice for the souls of the Mariner and the sailors. Life-in-Death won the Mariner. His companions fell to the lot of Death. So they dropped down dead one after another. As they fell, they cursed him with their eyes and their souls passed by him making a sound like the whiz of his cross-bow.

Part IV.

The Ancient Mariner underwent an experience of Life-in-Death for seven days and seven nights. He was left alone on a wide sea with men lying dead on the deck, while 'slimy things' lives on in the sea. The curse with which the sailors had died had never left their eyes and it was torturing to look at them. He was also full of self-loathing. He tried to pray but 'a wicked whisper' made his heart as dry as dust. Thus cut off from God as well as God's creation, he suffered a kind of spiritual death. However, at the height of his agony, he saw water-snakes coiling

and swimming freely in the sea, in tracks of shining white, their rich attire gleaming in the benign light of the moon, and his heart was filled with love and appreciation for them. These slimy things now appeared to him beautiful and joyous and he blessed them unaware. No sooner had he blessed them than he could pray and the dead Albatross fell from his neck and sank into the sea.

NOTES

Part V.

Now the Mariner was able to sleep. He dreamt about rain, and when he awoke, it was actually raining, he felt refreshed and unburdened. There was a storm in the sky, and though it never reached the ship, its very sound made the ship move on. Celestial spirits now entered the bodies of the sailors and the air was filled with heavenly music. There was no breeze in the sky, but moved from beneath by the Polar spirit, the ship kept on moving. For a moment, it came to a standstill, but again bounced forward, throwing the Mariner into a swoon. In his trance he heard two voices and learnt that the Polar spirit who loved the Albatross still sought vengeance for its death. He heard one of the voices telling the other that he had already done penance for his sin and would be doing more penance.

Part VI.

The Mariner's trance continued for a moment. He learnt from the two voices that ship was being driven by supernatural force; it was sailing fast but its speed would decrease when the Mariner regained consciousness. When the trance was over, he found the dead men standing together on the deck with the curse still in their eyes. However, this spell was soon snapped. A gentle breeze blew on him. The moon shone brightly. In this bright and still moonlight, he beheld his own country, the very port from which he had set sail. Then the angelic spirits left the dead bodies of the crew and appeared in their own forms of light. The Pilot on the beach saw the lights and he rowed out with the Pilot-boy and a holy hermit to bring the ship into harbour.

Part VII.

When the pilot, the Pilot-boy and the Hermit came close to the ship, in their boat, they were surprised to see that the angelic spirits had disappeared. They were also frightened by the fiendish look of the ship, its warped planks and thin sails. As the boat came closer, there was a loud noise and the ship sank into the sea like a lump of lead, the Mariner was, however saved in the Pilot's boat.

They all took him to be a ghost. So, when he opened his lips to say something, the Pilot fell into a fit. The Pilot-boy went crazy with fear and even the hermit knelt to pray. Once the Mariner was back on the firm land, he prayed to the Hermit to give him relief. All of a sudden he was wrenched with pain and was constrained to tell his story. After that, at uncertain hours, his agony returned, and he could feel relieved only after he had repeated his story. He moved from land to land, and wherever he recognised the right listener, he accosted him and cast a sort of spell on him to listen to him. This was the penance he was to undergo all his life. Presently, the vesper-bells were heard and the Mariner announced to the Wedding-Guest the moral of his story—we must have love and reverence for all things, both great and small, made and loved by God. The merry din of the wedding feast had ceased, and the Wedding-Guest returned home a sadder but a wiser man.

NOTES

1.2.4 TREATMENT OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Treatment of the Supernatural

The Supernatural Events

In *The Ancient Mariner* the series of supernatural events begins with the appearance of the spectre-ship with its crew, Death and Life-in-Death, and ends with the leaving of the corpses by the troop of the angelic spirits. Death and Life-in-Death play at dice. The sailors falling to the lot of Death cast an angry curse at the Mariner and drop dead one by one. The Mariner himself, won over by Life-in-Death, begins a lifelong process of penance. At first, he loathes the sea creatures and finds that his heart being as dry as dust, he is unable to pray. But he partly atones his crime by appreciating their beauty, acknowledging their worth, and blessing them. The spell is broken and he is able to pray, and no sooner does he pray than the body of the Albatross that the sailors had hung round his neck instead of the cross drops into the sea. The Mariner, somewhat absolved, falls into a blessed sleep and is refreshed with rain. The bodies of the crew are animated by a troop of angelic beings and the ship moves on without any apparent wind. It is the Polar Spirit, desiring further vengeance that makes the ship move and carries it as far as the equator. The Mariner falls into a swoon and hears two voices, one telling the other that the Mariner has done enough penance but will do more.

When the angelic spirits quit the bodies of the dead sailors, the supernatural spell is ultimately broken. The Ancient Mariner nears his home country. His ship is wrecked and it sinks into the sea but he is rescued by the Hermit to continue his penance.

Scene set in Distant Times and Remote Places

First of all, Coleridge transports us to distant times and remote places with weird and unusual possibilities. "It is an Ancient Mariner," he tells us suggests Middle Ages when an atmosphere of magic and mystery was ripe all around and when supernatural occurrence were not dismissed as the figments of a feverish imagination but were believed to be really true. And the Mariner is not moving about in any familiar place but is voyaging around Polar Regions.

Gradual Introduction of the Supernatural Elements

The supernatural elements are not abruptly introduced into the poem. It is very difficult to locate exactly where the natural ends and the supernatural begins or to distinguish the natural from the supernatural in a particular description. There is a very deliberate and subtle insinuation of the supernatural. A sensitive reader is capable of showing at a particular stage and to some degree some belief. He is at a later stage willing to shed his disbelief. Nature, quite in the beginning, is endowed with supernatural energy. The storm-blast is represented as a gigantic vulture and we feel that nature has been invested with demoniacal life.

Subtle Depiction of the Supernatural Elements

In *The Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge has strictly excluded the conventional, crude presentation of the supernatural elements. His depiction is suggestive and tantalisingly indeterminate, exercising an effect of vague mystery. There are no horrifying details in the description of the nightmarish Life-in-Death. The poet wants us to grasp the dreadfulness of Life-in-Death through this effect on the Mariner's mind. This method had been repeatedly used in the poem.

Dream-like Quality in 'The Ancient Mariner'

C. M. Bowra observes that Coleridge has exploited some characteristics of a dream to make his poem convincing. In his book, *The Romantic Imagination*, Bowra writes, "He uses the atmosphere of dreams to accustom us to his special world, and then he proceeds to create freely within his chosen limit." Dreams

have a peculiarly vivid quality which is often lacking in waking impressions. In dreams, we have one experience at a time in a very concentrated form and since the critical self is not at work, the effect is more powerful and more haunting than most effects when we are awake. The *Ancient Mariner* has many examples of a dream.

NOTES

1.2.5 SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

Lines.

Nor dim nor red, like god's own head

The glorious Sun uprest;

Then all averred, I had killed the bird

That brought the fog and mist,

'Twas right, said they such birds to slay

That bring the fog and mist.

Explanation: These lines have been taken from S. T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

In these lines the fellow sailors justify the killing of the albatross and thereby make themselves accomplices in the crime. The ancient mariner says that the bright sun rose out of the mist and the fog. It was neither very bright nor dim. It was like the circle of bright circle around God's head. When the fellow sailors of the ancient mariner saw the sun, they declared that the ancient mariner had done a good thing by killing the albatross that had been responsible for bringing mist and foggy weather.

Lines.

O happy livings I no tongue

Their beauty might debare:

A spring of love gushed from heart,

Sir my kind saint took pity on me,

And I blessed them unaware.

Explantion: These lines have been taken from S. T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. These lines refer to the change which came over the ancient mariner. When he saw the water snakes he was very impressed by their beauty and happiness that a spring of love welled up in his heart. Referring to them he says that they appeared to be so glad and beautiful that no tongue could be able to describe their beauty and happiness. He prayed for the happiness and the welfare of the water-snakes in a very impulsive manner. It seems that he took pity on him because he experienced a wonderful change in his heart. Instead of hating God's creatures he began to love and respect them.

NOTES

1.3 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. Write an essay on Wordsworth's Treatment of Nature.
2. Present the different stages in the development of Wordsworth's Nature-love.
3. Discuss in brief Wordsworth's Message.
4. Give a critical appreciation of *Ode on Intimations of Immortality.*
5. Give a critical appreciation on *Tintern Abbey.*
6. Give an estimate of Coleridge as a poet of the Supernatural.
7. Make an assessment of Coleridge as a poet.
8. Critically appreciate *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

1.4 LET US SUM UP

Unit I has acquainted you with William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge. Besides discussing their life and works in general, you can present critical appreciation of the three poems of Wordsworth— *Tintern Abbey*, *Ode to the Intimations of Immortality*, and *Ode to Duty* and Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as well.

UNIT-II SHELLEY, JOHN KEATS

NOTES

Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In Unit II our objective is to tell about P. B. Shelley and John Keats. We shall discuss the life and works of these two great poets of their times. For critical appreciation we have chosen Shelley's *Adonais* and *Ode to the West Wind* and three poems by Keats— *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Ode to Autumn*. You will be able to:

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- Discuss their life and works.
- Summarize their works.
- Offer a critique on their poems.

2.1 P.B. SHELLEY

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born on August 4, 1972, at Field Place, Sussex. His father, Timothy Shelley was a wealthy landlord. Shelley passed his childhood at Field Palace. In 1804 he was sent to Eton. Shelley's rebellious character showed itself at Eton. He organized a revolt against flogging. He was called 'Atheist' at Eton for his defiance of authority. Shelley began to dabble in authorship while he was at Eton. He finished his novel, *Zastrozzi*, and wrote a romance called *St. Irvyne* during his school days.

He fell in love with Harriet Grove, his cousin, but his views alarmed her and as a result the engagement was broken off. He scribbled verses with fluency, and devoured novels.

He entered the University College at Oxford in 1810. He was delicate, almost feminine. He was tall but stooped so much that he seemed short of stature. His clothes were expensive but embroidered. His features, particularly face, were abnormally small but his head appeared large due to his long hair. He would tumble while stepping across the floor. His unwrinkled face retained, till the last, a look of wonderful youth.

His voice was very shrill. His rooms were a perfect place of confusion. Study was his passion. Shelley was expelled on 26th March 1811 for having written a pamphlet of two-page "The Necessity of Atheism." He was drawn towards Harriet Westbrook by her pretended tales of domestic suffering. Sense of

NOTES

chivalry was very sharp in Shelly. They eloped together. Shelley's father was a man of conventional morality. He could not pardon his son for misalliance. He stopped sending him money. They lived in George Street, Edinburgh. From Edinburgh they shifted to Cork and from there to Keswick and thence to Dublin and then returned to London. Shelley published *Queen Mab* at this very time. The first child of their union was born in 1813.

His chief friends at this time were Mrs. Boinville and her sister and daughter and the Godwin family. Shelley and Harriet married on March 24, 1814 with a view to legalizing their union. But Harriet had no sympathy with Shelley's ambitions and literary pursuits. There was estrangement between them. Shelley fell in love with Mary Godwin and on 28th July 1814, Shelley and Mary departed for the Continent.

Harriet was at Bath and in November 1814, Charles Bysshe was born who unfortunately died in 1826. She seemed to have formed other connections but, they proving unsuccessful, committed suicide in 1816. Shelley was filled with self-accusation and remorse when he got the news of her death.

Marry Godwin and Shelley both went to France, Switzerland and other places, but shortage of money forced them to return home. In 1815 on the death of his grandfather, an understanding was reached between him and his father and he began to receive an allowance of £ 1000 a year. In 1816, *Alastor* with other poems was published.

William was born to Mary in January 1816. Shelley once again went to Switzerland with his wife and Miss Clairmont. He reached Geneva in 1816 where Byron joined him. Miss Clairmont became intimate with Byron and gave birth to Allegra who was adopted in Shelley's family.

In September, Shelly returned to England and took a cottage at Marlow on the Thames. After Harriet's death, he married Mary Godwin. In March 1818, Shelley left England forever. He settled at Naples. He suffered from low spirits and spasms which resulted in great pain. William died in 1819. In 1819, Percy Florence Shelley was born. In 1820 he met Emilia Vivant, an extremely beautiful lady whom he regarded as conforming to his conception of Ideal Beauty.

On July 8, 1822, while returning from Leghorn, the boat was wrecked in a tempest. His corpse was found on 18th July. In one pocket he had the volume of

Sophocles, in another a volume of Keats' poems. Great as his life work was, Shelley as a man was greater.

2.1.1 POETICAL CHARACTERISATION

NOTES

Poetical Characterisation

As a poet he contributed a new quality of English literature -- a quality of ideality, freedom and spiritual audacity. He cheers us with new hopes and splendid vistas. Cazamian writes, “In none of Shelley's great contemporaries was the lyrical faculty so paramount. He was the loftiest and most spontaneous singer of English language. Truly, never was the soul of poet so spontaneously lyrical.”

In range of power too, he was conspicuous. He wrote the best lyrics, the best tragedy, the best translations and the best familiar poems of the century. As an artist he has more faults than the rest. His works show haste, incoherence, verbal negligence, incompleteness, want of narrative force and a weak hold on objective realities. He wrote under direct inspiration. His works have something of the waywardness and carelessness of nature.

But steadily he was becoming riper, wiser and truer to his highest instincts. When he died he was ready to unfold his wings for a yet sublimer flight. In rendering what his chiefly audible and what is in rapid motion Shelley is unsurpassed. Shelley was the greatest lyricist. Shelley's lyricism is incomparable.

His style is spontaneous, fluent, poetical through and through. The lyric proper is the product of a swift momentary and passionate impulse, the impulse bringing with it the form the poem has to acquire. In Shelley the lyric fire burns slowly for a time, then flares to heaven in a rush of flame, then sinks and dies as promptly as it flamed. Shelley came nearer to the fiery, swift yet simple form of the lyric than any modern poet except Burns.

Half of his poetical output consists of lyrics, the other half consists of Queen Mab. The Revolt of Islam, Julian and Maddalo, Alastor, Epipsychidion, Prometheus Unbound, and The Witch of Atlas.

Prometheus Unbound is more of a titanic lyric than drama. The Witch of Atlas shares in the nature of a lyric. Alastor is lyrical in its unity of emotion. Purer

lyrics burst out of Hellas like fountains. Epipsychidion is a lyric expanded into a poem. There have been only a few men who were more swiftly swept away by impulse than Shelly.

NOTES

Shelley is the best in changes wrought into one theme. The musical changes of his lyrics are delightful. In the inevitable vibration of rhythm in harmony with the vibration of emotion, is the chief loveliness of his lyrical music.

His lyrics offer their numerous varieties. In his lyrics of nature his impassioned treatment of nature varied with his mood. Sometimes he saw nature as one and indivisible. And others, he looked at nature not as one being but as many beings. At other times, Shelley sees and describes things in nature as they are in themselves, as they were before man was born -- not one suspicion of humanity attaches to these lyrics. Shelley could strip himself completely of the elements of humanity and move among the elements like one of them.

In his descriptions of things, he is often true to science. Prof. Garbo has called Shelley a Newton among poets. Shelley's early training and tendency made him very receptive to astronomical and physical phenomena. Electricity, light, motion, heat, conception of matter as energy, solar systems hurtling through space, dead worlds and comets caused him positive exhilaration.

There are lyrics in which nature and man are clasped together like the hands of two lovers. There are poems in which he makes nature and her life the source of reflections on human life. There are many poems founded on theoretical conceptions of nature.

There are lyrics concerned with human emotions alone and poems embodying passing, personal impressions with regard to human life. The general spirit, which informs their diverse mood, is collected into one thought in the *Triumph of Life* where he describes the overthrow of all aspirations, joys and works by life. The destruction of humanity by its own life is the subject of the poem.

The love-lyrics are a curious revelation of the ever changing, indifferent, indefinite character of his passion, which fled from its fulfilment as if it were en enemy.

There is a whole class of lyrics which defy analysis. There are lyrics of liberty and hope for the poor and the oppressed. The most lofty and clarion note of his hope and optimism is in the prophetic music of *The Ode to the West Wind*.

NOTES

The Ode to the West Wind, To a Skylark, To the Night, Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples, The Cloud are some of his superb lyrics. His lyrics have a logical arrangement of their own. There is logic of emotion as well as of thought in them.

Shelley possessed the gift of myth-making. In the ancient myths the doings of nature and especially of the sky are impersonated and described as the doings of men or animals. Shelley did the same. He creates the winter with vigour in the *Sensitive Plant*.

Cazamian writes, "He created the wondrous myths and the cosmic schemes in which the elements, the planets, on a less superhuman scale the clouds and the west wide, became quickened with their individual existence."

The Sensitive Plant, The Could, The Hymn of Apollo furnish beautiful examples of his nature myths. The Cloud is the outcome of the imaginative mind of Shelley who was fascinated by the contemplation of different magnificent and cosmic aspects of the cloud. Shelley ahs expressed the subtle, passing moods with wonderful charm.

Whatever the voice which speaks to us, Shelley has the gift of lending the sweetest and most liquid harmonies, not the most sonorous and sensual but pure in their vigorous intensity. The words merge into one another with great ease.

He experimented with all kinds of rhythms; the suppleness and variety of his prosody are extraordinary. Even when the form testifies to his negligence, it retains the felicity of inspired expression.

2.1.2 ADONAIS

Adonais

1. I weep for Adonais—he is dead!
O, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!

NOTES

And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow, say: "With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!"

2. Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

3. Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

4. Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania!—He died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

5. Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

6. But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished—
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

7. To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

8. He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface

NOTES

So fair a prey, till darkness and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

NOTES

9. Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
The passion-winged Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not,—
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

10. And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries;
'Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.'
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

11. One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

12. Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music: the damp death

Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

NOTES

13. And others came...Desires and Adorations,
Winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

14. All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aereal eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

15. Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

16. Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,

For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

17. Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

18. Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere;
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

19. Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight,
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

20. The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning?—the intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

21. Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

22. HE will awake no more, oh, never more! 'Wake thou,' cried Misery,
'childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs.'
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried: 'Arise!'
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

23. She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapped Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere

NOTES

Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

NOTES

24. Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts, which to her aery tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

25. In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!' cried Urania: her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

26. 'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

27. 'O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then

Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

NOTES

28. 'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures to the conqueror's banner true
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

29. 'The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.'

30. Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his tongue.

31. Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm

Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

32. A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

33. His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

34. All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own,
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: 'Who art thou?'
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it should be so!

35. What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

36. Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:
It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

37. Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow;
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

38. Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now—
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow

NOTES

Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

39. Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life—
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings.—WE decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

40. He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

41. He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

42. He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,

Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

NOTES

43. He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

44. The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

45. The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

46. And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,

Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
'Thou art become as one of us,' they cry,
'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!'

47. Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

48. Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought
That ages, empires and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

49. Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness
Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

50. And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

51. Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

52. The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

53. Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is passed from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near:

NOTES

'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

54. That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

55. The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

The Occasion of the Poem

Adonais stands with Milton's *Lycidas* and Arnold's *Thyrsis* in the great tradition of English 'Pastoral' elegies, and was occasioned by the death of the youthful poet, Keats on February 23, 1821. Although Keats died in Rome, Shelley did not hear of his death until April 19, 1821. On 5th June, he wrote to the Gisbornes, "I have been engaged these last days in composing a poem on the death of Keats. It is a highly wrought piece of art, and perhaps better, in point of composition, than anything I have written. Three days later he wrote to his publisher, Charles Ollier, that the poem was finished, and that he would send it either printed at Pisa, or transcribed in such a manner as it shall be difficult for the reviser to leave such errors as assist the obscurity of the Prometheus." It was printed at Pisa during the next month. Shelley continued to think well of it, writing to Horace Smith in September, "I am glad you like Adonais, and, particularly, that you do not think it metaphysical, which I was afraid it was". To

a publisher in the same month, he wrote "*The Adonais*, in spite of its mysticism, is the least imperfect of my compositions. Collier did not more than distribute the copies received from Pisa. The edition was published at Cambridge in 1829 on the initiative of Monckton Milnes and Arthur Hallam, then undergraduates there.

The Keats' Legend

According to the gossip which Shelley and Byron were too ready to believe, Keats' death had been brought about largely by distress over an unfavourable criticism of *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review* for April 1818. Carlos Baker says, "Shelley embraced this legend for two reasons; he had himself felt the bite of adverse criticism in the contemporary journals, and his mind was naturally predisposed both to pity and in some degree to apologize a fellow-poet who had been similarly wounded. Secondly, his estimate of Keats' character had been formed less through personal acquaintance than through a perusal of works like E*ndymion* and 'I Stood Tip-toe,' and he had therefore conceived stereotype of a superlatively gentle, sensitive, and rather fragile Keats which had very little to do with the sturdy, courageous, and stoical little poet who had died in Rome."

Shelley had been led to believe that the reviewers' criticism of Keats's poetry had broken Keats's spirit and hastened his death. Reviewers were Shelley's enemies too, and he was forever a champion of the persecuted; the greatest and most obvious reason for writing Adonais however, was Shelley's admiration for Keats' genius and the grief he felt on posterity's loss. He had just completed *A Defence of Poetry* in which he proclaimed that poets and all creators enlarge our sympathies, through the imagination, with the beautiful that exists in thought, act or person, not our own.' The communication of this beauty in thought or act constitutes the great 'cyclic poem' of tradition (which poet inherit and contribute) which has built up civilization; and, therefore, he concludes, 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.' So circumstances made Keats' death a suitable focus round which to gather some of the thoughts about poetry he had just expressed in prose and his sense of the world's resentment to the poet. Luckily, as he worked on the poem, his personal injuries were mostly eliminated, or swallowed up in the larger themes. There is not much in the poem about Keats as an individual. If the work is treated as a biography it gives a false impression of the man and of the circumstances of his death. But we should not read it as biography. Keats is transformed into a generalized figure of the poet who brings

light into an uncomprehending world's incomprehension, its resistance to the light.

Myth of Adonais

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In Greek mythology, Adonis was a beautiful youth of Cyprus, born of the unnatural love of Myrrha (or Smyrna) for her father Cinyras, King of Cyprus. When Cinyras, discovering the crime wanted to kill her, she was changed into a myrtle, from which Adonis was born. Aphrodite fell in love with him and, when he was killed by a boar while hunting, caused the rose or the anemone to spring from his blood (or the anemone sprang form the tears that Aphrodite shed for Adonis). Both Aphrodite and Persephone then claimed him, and Zeus determined that he should spend part of the year with each. The name Adonis is born of the Semitic word 'Adon', lord, and the myth is symbolical of the course of vegetation. Adonis is a vegetation god, and his rites include the mourning of women followed by rejoicing at his rebirth. The story of the love of Aphrodite for Adonis is the subject of Shakespeare's poem *Venus and Adonis*. Shakespeare follows Ovid's account of Adonis's death, while Shelley's Adonais takes its title from the pastoral poet Bion's lament for Adonis. The choice of this title points out that Shelley's elegy is closely modelled on that of the Greek poet.

Why did Shelley choose to adopt the Adonis myth? Carlos Baker says, "What must have pleased Shelley was that the Quarterly Review legend and the Adonis legend coincided to a degree which made sweeping modifications unnecessary. The fundamental conception—a goddess mourning the untimely death of a gifted mortal in whom her hopes had been concentrated—was well suited to Shelley's own purposes, just as Milton, in mourning the death of Edward King, had thought proper despite King's limited poetic skills, to introduce an allusion to the Epic Muse, Calliope sorrowing for the death of her son Orpheus."

The point has been established that it was characteristic of Shelley's mythopoetic approach to accept for his "ideal' poems only such mythological situations as could be, like Spenser's, "cloudily enwrapped in allegorical devices." Both by the use of a variant of the name of Adonis and by the application to the Venus-figure of only one of her innumerable Greek surnames, Shelley partially masked his source-myth. But in modified form all the elements of the original story are present. Venus' temporary absence from the side of her beloved, Adonis' daring the boar, the beast's attack, Adonis death, the arrival of mourners, the

gentle ministrations of sub-deities, Venus' effort to revive her lover, and finally, though this is merely suggested as one of the possible fates of Adonais, the victim's metamorphosis into a flower. The reviewer whom Shelley blamed for Keats' death of course occupies the place of the boar in Adonais. But the original boar (no matter how spelled) did not suit the degree of Shelley's anger, the depth of his sympathy with Keats, or his desire to infuse the original myth with allegorical devices. In the place of the boar, therefore, the reader finds an array of vituperative images; the reviewer is a cowardly archer, a killing frost, a venomous snake, a dragon, a wolf, a hound, a raven, a vulture, and a carrion kite.

2.1.3 ADONAIS AS A PASTORAL ELEGY

Adonais as a Pastoral Elegy

Adonais began as a pastoral poem in the manner of the Sicilian Greek poets Bion and Moschus who lived in the second century B.C. Shelley took ideas especially from two pastoral elegies, an elegy on Adonis attributed to Bion, and an elegy on Bion attributed to Moschus.

In Bion's elegy on Adonis, the poet mourns for Adonis, killed by a boar, and calls upon Aphrodite to rise and lament. She roams distracted through the woods, bare-footed, and 'the brambles tear her as she goes, and draw her sacred blood (Adonais, XXIV). She pleads: 'Stay, Adonis... Kiss me so long as life is in the kiss, until thy spirit has passed into my lips and I shall guard that kiss as though it were Adonis' self, since thou, hapless one, art fleeing from me. Far away thou fliest, Adonis, and comest to Acheron... but I, poor soul, live and, am a goddess and cannot follow thee (XXV-XXXVI). Take thou my husband, Persephone (Queen of the Underworld), for thou art mightier far than I, and all that if fair comes down to thee... Why, rash one, did'st thou go hunting? Why, being so fair, wast thou so mad as to pit thyself against the beast. (XXVII). Aphrodite's tears and Adonis' blood are changed to flowers as they fall to the ground (XXIV). His body is carried to Aprodite's bed, 'and weeping Loves make moan about him, their locks shorn for Adonais. One throws him his arrows, one his bow, one a feather from his wing, one his quiver. Here one has loosed Adonis sandal; these bring water in a golden ewer; another bates his things; another from behind fans Adonis with his wings' (X-XI). At last the poet bids Aphrodite 'cease

thy laments today; stay thy dirges. Again must thou lament, again must thou weep another year.' He is to be mourned another year. This may point to the significance usually attributed to Adonis as a fertility god who dies and is resurrected each year.

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Moschus' Elegy on Bion is a lament whereby the poet who calls upon rivers, flowers, nightingales, etc. to join with various mythological characters and with places associated with Bion and other poets in mourning for Bion. He addresses Meles, the name of a river near Smyrna, Bion's birth-place, and of its god, supposed by some as the father of Homer; "Here is for thee, most musical of rivers, a second sorrow... of old died Homer, that sweet mouthpiece of Calliope (the Muse of epic poetry)…… Now for another son again thou weepest, and wastest with a new grief."

Shelley chose the pastoral convention for his elegy on Bion, for he had great precedents as Spenser's *Astrophel* and Milton's *Lycidas*. He used the classical form, so that he may connect his theme with the great poetic tradition of the world, and so that he may represent Keats as one of a long series of poets, all natives of the same enchanted country and all children of the same mother, Urania. By using the pastoral tradition, he had removed his work from the plane of immediate reality, and in this way he takes us to remote antiquity where his flights of fancy seem credible. In this way he has imparted an air of universality to his expression of grief.

The pastoral elegy represents both the mourner and the one he mourns as shepherds. The poet and his subject are spoken of as shepherds and the setting is the classical pastoral world. The nymphs, Satyrs, shepherds and other inhabitants of this world join in mourning, but the poem usually ends in a serene and to some extent joyous mood.

The most notable English pastoral elegies are Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais* and Arnold's *Thyrsis*, although Milton and Arnold refer to their poems as 'monodies' not 'elegies'.

Adonais comprises fifty-five Spenserian stanzas, and falls into two principal movements and is divided into two parts. Shelley uses the pastoral elegiac conventions in the first thirty-seven stanzas of *Adonais*, but thereafter the

pastoral mode is thrown aside and the chief source is Platonic, Neo-Platonic philosophy,

In the words of Harold Bloom, "Adonais, or Keats, is dead as the poem opens, and the Hour of death mourns him, and is to call the other hours to similar mourning. The dead poet was the youngest, the dearest son of the Muse, Urania, the patroness of his poems, Endymion and Hyperion, who was asleep in her paradise when the murder occurred. She is called upon to weep, and yet her lament will be in vain. The poet's creations lament with her. The poem's first crisis comes in the counter points between the rebirth of Nature and the soul's failure to revive (Stanzas XVIII-XX)."

This is a relatively crude formulation of the poem's greatest concern. The shaping spirit alone vanishes, while everything grosser turns over and reappears in cycle. This grief becomes that of Urania when she seeks her son's death-chamber. She desires to join him in death, but she is "chained to Time, and cannot thence depart." After her lament, she is joined by the Mountain Shepherds, the surviving poets, including Byron, Thomas Moore, and Leigh Hunt (only the last of whom, in fact, cared for Keats). Once again, Shelley deliberately ignores the poets as men, and emphasizes only their symbolic aspect. Among the others comes Shelley himself:

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift-

A love in desolation masked;- a Power

Girt round with Weakness (Stanza XXXII)

In his other stanzas of self-description, Shelley compares himself to Actaeon, Cain, and Christ. Like Actaeon, he has "gazed on Nature's naked loveliness", and Nature strikes back by turning his own thoughts upon him, as Actaeon was pursued by his own hounds. Like Cain, he has perhaps failed to be his brother's keeper, though he had tried to help and shelter Keats.

E.W. Edmunds says, "Like Milton, Shelley was inspired by the Greek magnificent modern poem. And as the death of Lycidas led Milton up to the triumphant Puritanism which was the highest spiritual force of its time, so Shelley emerges from his sorrow into a paean of immortality, the victory song of love, wherein death is swallowed up in life."

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2.1.4 ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Ode to the West Wind

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

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: 0 thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

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

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

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver; hear, O hear!

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

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,

Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

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

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

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

(III) Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

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

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

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

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Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O hear!

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

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

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

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

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

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

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

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

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened Earth

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

Introduction

The poem was written in 1819, and published in 1820. Shelly was living in Italy at the time. As Shelly tells us in a note, this poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood round the Arno, near Florence (in Italy). He wrote it on a day when the stormy wind was collecting the vapours that send the autumnal rains. At sunset, as Shelly has foreseen, there was a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by an exceptional thunder of clouds and lighting.

It is one of Shelley's greatest poems. It has been called a "matchless ode". But it is not easy to understand. The major difficulty in understanding it arises from the abundance of similes and metaphors which follow one another with an amazing quickness. In the course of the poem, Shelly passes from a magnificent realization of Nature's storm and peace to equally great self-description. Finally, he mingles Nature and himself together in order to sing of the Golden Age of mankind.

Critical Summary

Stanza I. The opening stanza describes the activities of the West Wind on land. The West Wind drives the dead leaves before it just as a magician drives away a ghost by his approach. The West Wind scatters the seeds far and near and covers them with dust so that they are buried underground where they remain, like dead

bodies in their graves, till the coming of spring when they sprout into plants which bear flowers filling the valley with sweet smells and attractive colours. The poet addresses the West Wind as a "Wind Spirit" moving everywhere and as a destroyer (of dead leaves) and a preserver (of living seeds):

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;

Destroyer and preserver; hear, Oh, hear!

Stanza II. The second stanza describes the activities of the West Wind in the air. The West Wind carries on its surface loose clouds which seem to have fallen from the sky just as withered leaves fall from the trees in autumn. The clouds floating on the surface of the West Wind are messengers of rain and lighting. The locks of the approaching storm are spread on the airy surface of the West Wind like the bright hair uplifted from the head of a frenzied bacchante. Moreover, the West Wind is the dirge of the dying year for which this closing night will be the dome of a big tomb vaulted with all the collective strength of the West Wind as seen in rain, lightning, and hailstorm. The poet calls upon the West Wind to listen to him. This stanza is an example of the abstract imagery which characterizes much of Shelley's poetry. It is notable for its various similes and metaphors as well.

Stanza III. The third stanza describes the effects of the West Wind on water. The West Wind awakens from sleep the blue Mediterranean which was dreaming of old palaces and towers which once stood on its shores. When the West Wind blows on the Atlantic, the waves rise on both sides to prepare a sort of passage for the West Wind, and, far below, the plants growing at the bottom of the ocean tremble with fear and shed their leaves. The stanza is remarkable for its vivid imagery and for the manner in which the two oceans— the Mediterranean and the Atlantic—are personified. The phenomenon alluded to in lines 36-42 is very familiar to naturalists. In a note, Shelley pointed out that the vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathises with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is accordingly influenced by the winds which announce that change.

Stanza IV. In this stanza the poet establishes a link between his own personality and the personality of the West Wind. He recalls his boyhood when he was as swift, energetic, and wild as the West Wind. In his boyhood he could excel the speed of the West Wind and could accompany it on its wanderings over the sky.

But now the misfortunes of life have crushed him. He is bleeding on the thorns of life helplessly. He wishes that he were a leaf, a wave a cloud, so that the West Wind could lift him. He makes a pathetic appeal to the West Wind to come to his help:

Oh, lift me as a wave, leaf, a cloud!

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed

One too like thee: tameless and swift and proud.

Stanza V. The concluding stanza includes the whole universe in its sweep. The poet appeals to the West Wind to treats Him as a lyre and to blow on him as it blows on the forest. Like the forest, he too is passing through the autumn of his life. The West Wind blowing on him and on the forest will produce a sad but sweet music. Addressing the West Wind as "Spirit fierce" and as "impetuous one", he appeals to it to become one with him and to scatter his dead thoughts all over the universe so that these thoughts may bring about a new period in human history. He would like the West Wind to broadcast over the whole world his prophecy about the coming of the Golden Age: "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" In this stanza we find a clear expression and his belief in the Golden Age that is to come.

Critical Appreciation

Shelley Perception of The West Wind

Shelly watches the West Wind acting as a destroyer of the dead leaves and as a preserver of the living seeds. He finds it carrying clouds on its surface and sees the locks of the approaching storm spread on its airy waves. Further, he imagines the West Wind awakening the Mediterranean from its sleep and throwing the Atlantic into a tumult so that the plants at the bottom of the ocean shed their leaves in fear. What impresses Shelley most about the West Wind is its strength, vigour, liveliness, and freedom. He finds it "uncontrollable", "swift", "tameless" and "proud". Next he regards the West Wind as a musician playing upon the autumnal forest as its lyre. Lastly, the West Wind has the power to scatter the poet's thoughts over the universe and to broadcast his prophecy about the Golden Age of mankind.

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The Symbolical Meanings

The poem has great symbolical meaning. Shelley reads several symbolical meanings in the West Wind. First, he sees the West Wind as a symbol of destruction and preservation. Actually, the West Wind destroys the dead leaves and preserves the living seeds. But to Shelley's mind the West Wind appears to be a destroyer of the old older, and the preserver of the new. The West Wind, therefore, becomes a symbol of change or mutability, which destroys and yet recreates all things, while the leaves and seeds symbolize for him all things, material and spiritual, that are ruled by changes. Secondly, Shelley regards the West Wind as a symbol of mourning. The sound of the West Wind passing through the forest is sad or mournful. Hence the West Wind is called a "dirge of the dying year". Thirdly, the West Wind is a symbol of Shelley's own personality. As a body he possessed the same qualities that the West Wind possesses. Like the West Wind, he was swift, proud, wild, uncontrollable, and free. Thus there is a similarity between the West Wind and the poet. This similarity encourages the poet to appeal to the West Wind for help, so that the West Wind is not only a symbol of his temperament and personality but also a symbol of help and relief to him in his distress. He looks upon the West Wind as a saviour. Lastly, the West Wind is regarded as a symbol of the powerful influences and forces that will bring about the Golden Age of mankind. The poet expresses the faith that "If Winter comes, Spring cannot be far behind." This is his prophecy about the Golden Age of Mankind. In the last stanza, as in the first, the West Wind appears as a symbol of revolutionary change that will lead to a "new birth" and will regenerate the "unawakened earth"

Shelley's Revolutionary Fervour : His Idealism

Shelley was a revolutionary. He was very dissatisfied with the existing order of things. He hated political tyranny and orthodox Christianity. He hated the wickedness, the evil, and the war which made the life of mankind so unhappy and miserable. He wanted to liberate mankind from the chains of political, religious, and intellectual slavery. This attitude of his is clearly reflected in this poem. The West Wind is depicted as a destroyer of the dead leaves and a preserver of the living seeds. Symbolically interpreted, the West Wind is a destroyer of the old older of society and a preserver of the new. In other words, the West Wind is a symbol of those forces which sweep away old modes of life, old institutions and

old customs, and with her aid new ways of thought and new patterns of life. In the last stanza, the West Wind symbolizes the forces that will bring about The Golden Age of Mankind, when human nature would become perfect and when Beauty and Love would rule the whole of universe. Shelley dreamed of a millennium and believed in the perfection of human nature Shelley was an idealist, dreamer, a visionary, and we clearly see him in this light in this poem in which he utters a prophecy about the radiant future of mankind. Shelley expresses the hope that his "dead thoughts" will accelerate a new birth and thus bring about a revolutionary changes in the social, Political, and religious set up of human society. Thus the poem has a prophetic quality. In other words, the poet speaks in the manner of a prophet, saying "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" Shelley was a pessimist as regards the present of mankind but was a radiant optimist regarding the future.

The Myth-Making Quality Of The Poem: Its Pictures Of Nature

Shelley personifies the West Wind and gives it an independent life. He furthermore personifies the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, giving each a separate personality and existence. There forces of Nature are so vitally imagined that they become real presences, inspiring wonder and awe. This giving of individual life to the different forces of Nature is known as Shelley's myth-poetic quality or the quality of making myths. Shelley is unique in English poetry by virtue of this power. For him the forces of Nature have the same reality as human beings. In this Poem, he renders natural phenomena in terms of conscious and deliberate acts. The West Wind drives the dead leaves; it carries the seeds to their dark wintry beds; it awakens the blue Mediterranean and it is also given a conscious life: it is imagined as having been lulled to sleep by "the coil of his crystalline streams" and seeing in sleep old palaces and towers. The Atlantic's level powers cleave themselves into chasms in order to prepare a path for the West Wind. The pictures of Nature in the poem are most remarkable. The poet also gives a flood of superb imagery. We are made to pass in turn over earth, sky and sea. The dead leaves, yellow, black, pale, hectic red are described as "pestilence-stricken multitudes". The living seeds lie cold and low until the advent of Spring who blows her clarion over the dreaming earth and fills both plain and hill with beautiful and sweet smelling flowers. Loose clouds float on the surface of the West Wind, and the locks of the approaching storm cover it. The sea blooms and the oozy woods, which wear the sapless foliage of the ocean, "despoil

themselves" when the West Wind causes a commotion in the Atlantic Ocean. Shelley describes these natural phenomena with a scientific accuracy though his expression is highly poetic.

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Its Ethereal Quality

The poem has an ethereal quality about it. It is nothing but cloud, wind and sky— as the human interest in it is very little. The second stanza, which describes the clouds and the storm and in which the poet conceives of the West Wind as a dirge of the dying year (to which "this closing night will be the dome of a vast sepulchre...."), is full of vague and abstract imagery.

The Personal Note And Intensity Of Emotion

The poem is majestic and imposing by virtue of its universal character but it also has a poignant personal note. The fourth stanza is wholly personal and autobiographical. The poet discovers an affinity or likeness between himself and the West Wind. He tells us that, as a boy, he possessed the same qualities as the West Wind possesses. He was swift, proud, free and wild like the West Wind. But now misfortunes have crushed him and he is in a pathetic condition. He appeals to the West Wind to come to his help and to lift him like a wave, a leaf, a cloud:

Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours have chained and bowed

One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

These lines are characterised by an intensity of emotion, and show a complete abandonment of self on the part of the poet. The intensity of feeling ahs here been carried to a point "which seems to threaten the balance of personality." We have here the lament, the cry of sorrow, which marks so many of Shelley's lyrics. We hear the forlorn wail of the poet. There is much self-pity in Shelley's poetry to the extent that one critic considers it a sign of "unmanliness".

Its Technical Excellences

The poem is divided into five sections of fourteen lines each. The metre is terza rima by which the stanza is divided into inter-rhyming groups of three lines

each. The last two line of every stanza are a couplet. In form, the poem is a regular ode, with the same rhyme scheme in each stanza.

It is regarded as one of the finest poems of Shelley, being a masterpiece of lyricism. It is nearer to music than any other poem in the English language. Shelley's musical gifts find their fullest expression here. The poet emerges as a master of harmonies. Melody, rhythm and sweetness of words combine to produce a inimitable lyric. The whole poem possesses this musical quality, but the following lien may be taken as an example of the subtle methods by which melodic effects have been produced in the poem:

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Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams.

Here the repetition of "l" sound in "lulled", "coil", and "crystalline" of "c" (k) sound in "coil" and "crystalline," of "s" sound in "crystalline" and "streams", and of "z" sound in "his" and "streams" is remarkable. In the alliteration of this line we have an example of what is called artless art. The music grows fuller and more majestic as the poem sweeps on to its conclusion.

The poem is faultless from the point of view of its construction. We find a logical development of ideas in it. The poem has a unity of structure and a rare symmetry. In the first three stanzas, we are given the effects of the West Wind on the leaves, the seeds, the clouds, and the waves. In the fourth stanza, the poet becomes personal and establishes a link between himself and the West Wind. In the concluding stanza, the poet passes from the personal to the universal, and calls upon the West Wind to proclaim his prophecy about the impending Golden Age of mankind.

2.1.5 SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

Lines:

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift-

A Love in desolation masked; - a Power

Girt round with weakness.

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Explanation: These lines have been taken from Stanza XXXII in Shelley's *Adonais*.

In these lines he compares himself to Actaeon, Cain and Christ. Like Actaeon, he has gazed himself on Nature's naked loveliness. And nature strikes back by turning his own thoughts upon him as Actaeon was pursued by his own hounds. Shelley means to compare his sufferings for mankind with those of Christ. He compares his own power to the mutable strength of natural process, caught at the moment of its downward passage, "a falling shower, a breaking billow."

Lines:

He is made one with Nature: there is heard

His voice in all her music, from the moon

Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird.

Explanation: These lines have been taken from Stanza XLII in Shelley's *Adonais*. In these lines we find a touch of Keats' *Ode to the Nightingale.* Here Shelley moves to a very clear affirmation of the benevolence of the unknown power. The Power had withdrawn Keats into its remote tranquillity, but it still dominates and directs the world with love. The unknown Spirit will now direct the succession of mutable appearances, as part of its ultimate desire to mould the world into its own likeness.

2.2 JOHN KEATS

Keats produced a body of poetry of extraordinary power and promise. During the three years of his poetic career he showed a rapid and firm development and a gradual and complete abandonment of almost every fault and weakness.

Born in London on 29th October 1975, he was the son of a stable keeper. He was very devoted to his mother. At her death Keats was heart broken. His father died when he was nine and his mother when he was fifteen. After her death, his guardian removed him from school in 1810 and apprenticed him to a surgeon at Edmonton for five years.

He became the friend of Charles Cowden Clarke, the son of the employer of his father. Cowden Clarke gave him books to read. He introduced him to Spenser, the Poet's Poet, who inspired him to write poetry. Cowden Clarke also introduced him to Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Haydon, Shelley and Godwin. Keats very much rejoiced in the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece.

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At the age of nineteen, in 1814, he quarrelled with his master and left him, but continued his training in London. In 1817 Keats brought out his first volumes of poems and abandoned surgery. The first volume contained the Epistles which was not a success.

In 1818 he published *Endymion*. The Blackwood's Magazine and the Quarterly Review mercilessly treated it. "Back to the shop Mr. John, stuck to plasters, pills and ointment boxes" wrote Lockhart in Blackwood's Magazine.

His brother, Tom died in December 1818, of consumption. Keats nursed him during his illness. His small fortune was melting away and signs of disease became visible. He developed an attachment for Fanny Brawne who could not understand his nature and did not return his love. Despite his troubles, the next two years saw his best poems. The Odes*, La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and *The Eve of St. Agnes* were written during these two years. The Fall of Hyperion was recast. He published his third volume: Lamia, Isabella and other poems.

The doctors advised change of climate and Keats went to Italy in September 1820, accompanied by a friend. But Italy could not restore him to health. He died on 23rd February 1821, at Rome, after a meteoric career.

2.2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF KEATS' POETRY

Characteristics Of Keats' Poetry

Sensuousness in Keats

"No one can question the eminency, in Keats's poetry, of the quality of sensuousness. Keats as a poet is abundantly and enchantingly sensuous," wrote Arnold. Keats himself cried, "Oh for a life of sensations rather than of thought." Once he covered his tongue and throat as far as he could reach with crayon paper in order to appreciate the delicious coldness of claret in all its glory.

NOTES

By sensuousness, Arnold meant the excellence of revealing the pleasures of the senses. But the word now means abundance and delicacy of idealized sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch which are surely conspicuous in his poetry. Whatever Keats describes, whether it be an object of touch or smell or sight, he does it in an object of touch or smell or sight. He does it in a very vivid manner.

Cazamian writes, "The work of Keats in its entirety breathes a rapture of the sense, a transport of soul that finds its full satisfaction in the voluptuousness of nature or in the entrancing, imaginative aspects of the human world."

His Love of Beauty

Keats said, "With a great poet, the sense of beauty overcomes every other consideration or rather obliterates all considerations." He further said, "I have loved the principle of beauty in all things." He also said, "To see things in their beauty is to see things in their truth. What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth." To quote him in his *Endymion*:

A thing of Beauty is a joy forever;

Its loveliness increases, it will never

Pass into nothingness,

Beauty is truth, truth beauty-that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

With truth, joy also accompanies beauty. Keats' conception of beauty was concrete whereas Shelley's conception was intellectual. As Shelley said of him: "He was a Greek." Colvin makes an apt remark: "He resembles the Greeks in his vivid sense of the joyous and multitudinous life of nature and he loved to follow them in dreaming of the powers of nature as embodied in concrete shapes of supernatural, human activity and grace."

Sometimes he showed a naiveté of feeling and a simple lucidity which won for him the enthusiastic praise of Shelley.

He showed a sense for personifying the powers of nature in clearly defined imaginary shapes endowed with human beauty and half human faculties.

During his boyhood, the Greek gods and goddesses had a special appeal to his imagination. He came under the spell of Chapman's *Homer*.

Endymion, Hyperion and Lamia are based on Greek myths. Ode on a Grecian Urn, Hymn to Pan are poems written on Greek subjects. There is lucidity in Keats which is a Greek quality in literature. Matthew Arnold said, “But indeed nothing is more remarkable in Keats than his clear sightedness, his lucidity in itself is akin to character and to high and severe work.”

But Keats was not a Greek in many respects. The rooted artistic instincts of the Greeks which taught them to reject all beauties but the vital and essential ones and the preservation of just proportions and clear-cut outlines—these were not his qualities. "Alike in his aims and his gifts, he was in the workmanship essentially romantic, Gothic, English."

There is prodigality of incidental and superfluous beauties in Keats which is an Elizabethan, a Romantic characteristic. "Poetry should surprise by a fine excess." said Keats and he followed the dictum.

His workmanship is far from Greek purity and precision of outline and firm definition of individual images. His Greek stories came to him through English sources and he combined romantic elements with them.

Keats was a Shakespearean

Endymion is enriched with Shakespearean phrases and allusions. During 1817 he was steeped in Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *King Lear* engrossed him.

Keats remarked,” I have reason to be content, for thank God, I can read and perhaps, understand Shakespeare to his very depths".

Matthew Arnold writes, "In the faculty of naturalistic interpretation, in what we call natural magic, he ranks with Shakespeare." He further said, "No one else in English poetry save Shakespeare has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness."

Keats had great power to give form to his imagination with wonderful swiftness, and he combined swiftness with excellence. *Ode to a Nightingale* was written in three to four hours. His ability to enter into the feelings and thoughts of others was Shakespearean quality. He says, “Even now I am perhaps not speaking

from myself but from some character in whose soul I now live." He was accustomed to live in the lives of others.

Medievalism in Keats

NOTES

There is an element of medievalism in him. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* impressed him. He became enamoured of the Spenserian stanza and imitated it. The world of enchantment cast a spell in him.

Love of sensuous beauty, response to the charm of Nature and romance, luxuriance of fancy and felicity of expression, these qualities he possessed in common with Spenser.

La Belle Dame Sans Merci, Isabella and *Eve of St. Agnes* contain elements of medievalism.

Density in Keats

Keats himself said, "I think poetry should surprise by a fine excess." His aim had been "to load every rift of a subject with core." The most original character of this art is its density, each epithet is extraordinarily rich in suggestion. Each of the images selected from among the most evocative opens up a far-reaching point of view. The aestheticism of Keats has also an intellectual side. No one has reaped such a rich harvest of thought out of the suggestions which life has to offer.

From all these elements (paganism, romanticism, medievalism, from his study of Spenser, Chapman, Milton, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Hunt) Keats built up for himself a personal store of reflections and ideas. His intellectual ambition was sublime. Matthew Arnold said, "His burning passion for the beautiful which was his master-passion for the sensuous or sentimental strain. It is an intellectual and spiritual passion."

2.2.2 HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

His Philosophy of Life

He wrote in a letter, "I know nothing, I have read nothing and I mean to follow Solomon's directions, 'Get knowledge, get understanding'... I find that I can

have no enjoyment in the world but the continual drinking of knowledge." He was determined to acquire a philosophy of his own. His religion was the adoration of the beautiful. To him Beauty is the supreme truth. It is imagination that discovers it. Scientific reasoning is an imperfect instrument of knowledge. God is love and love is God. Human life is perishable but art and beauty are eternal. The birds like the Nightingale know no sorrow.

NOTES

An eminent critic said, "Keats, when he died, gave promise of becoming the greatest poet of his generation and one who would have united the free inspiration of Romanticism with the formal principle of the schools of the past."

In Cazamian's view, "The Pre-Raphaelites and the English aesthetes originate in part from him."

With the profound veracity of Wordsworth, the weird touch of Coleridge, he united Shelley's passion for beauty, the beauty he pursued was comparatively less visionary, more concrete, definite and quiescent, the beauty not of energy but of luxurious repose.

Shelley created a larger body of work than Keats. This difference in bulk perhaps coincides with a difference in the volume of genius of the two writers. Further, while it is not improbable that if Shelley had lived, he would have gone on writing better and better, the same probability is to be more sparingly predicted of Keats.

Keats has proved more of a germinal poet than Shelley. Although the latter was greater, his poetry had little that was national or imitable. His influence was vast; but it was the inspiration of his unsurpassed, exciting power that influenced other poets. Keats, as no one of his contemporaries did, felt, expressed and handed on the exact change wrought in English poetry by the great Romantic movement. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott, Southey were the authors of this but not the results. Byron was not in sympathy with this movement. Shelley, an effectual angel, was hardly a man and still less an Englishman. Keats is the father directly or at short stages of descent, who has not been a mere 'sport' or exception. He begot Tennyson and Tennyson begot all the rest.

Saintsbury opines, "The pouring of new English blood through the veins of old subject -- classical, mediaeval, foreign and modern, this was to be the note of the best English poetry of the Century. The English poets were to conquer the

whole world of poetical matter and Keats was the first poet who started the adventure."

NOTES

2.2.3 ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,

Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,

Sylvan historian, who canst thus express

A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape,

Of deities or mortals, or of both,

In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone;

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;

Bold Lover, never, never, canst thou kiss,

Though winning near thy goal-yet do not grieve;

She connot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,

For ever piping songs, forever new;

More happy love! more happy, happy love!

For ever panting, and still to be enjoy'd,

For ever panting, and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd

A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?

To what green altar, O mysterious priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,

And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?

What little town by river or sea-shore,

Or mountain built peaceful citadel,

Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy steets for evermore

Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V

O' Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede

Of marble men and maidens overwrought,

With forest branches and the trodden weed:

Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought

As doth eternity; Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste,

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'.

NOTES

Introduction

The ode is the complete expression of the idea which was in Keats' mind when he wrote, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." The ode is composed of numerous elements, all of which had long been pondered over by the poet. His love of Greek art, his sense of the nearness of pain and pleasure, of the contrast between the wild nature of the passions, and the severity of the ideal, of the charm of the old Pagan worship -- all are blended here. By intense meditation on a thing of beauty, Keats rises to the inspired affirmation of the last two lines.

The inspiration for the Ode was partly derived from a marble urn belonging to Lord Holland, and still preserved at Holland House. But it is also certain that Keats is thinking of Greek sculpture in general, as revealed to him by the famous Elgin marbles.

Critical Appreciation

Poem Inspired by Greek Sculpture

The poem was inspired by a collection of Greek sculpture which Keats saw in the British museum. Possibly, partially the inspiration for the poem was derived from a marble urn which belonged to Lord Holland. In giving us the imagery of the carvings on the urn, Keats was not thinking of a single urn but of Greek sculpture in general. Keats had a native sympathy for, and a natural affinity

with, the Greek mind. This ode shows the full force of Hellenic influence acting on a temperament basically romantic.

Its Concrete and Sensuous Imagery

NOTES

A prominent quality of Keats's entire poetry is fully revealed in this ode. Keats had a genius for drawing vivid and concrete pictures mostly with a sensuous appeal. The whole of this poem is a series of such pictures as passionate men and gods chasing unwilling maidens, the flute-players playing their ecstatic music, the fair youth trying to kiss his beloved, the happy branches of the tree, the worshippers going to a place of worship in order to offer a sacrifice with a mysterious priest to lead them, a little town which will eternally remain desolate. The passion of men and gods, and the unwillingness of maidens to be caught is wonderfully depicted in the following two lines:

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?

What mad pursit? What struggle to escape?

Here is the picture of a bold lover trying to get a kiss which will never materialize:

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal-

The ecstasy of the passion of youthful love is portrayed in the following lines:

More happy love! more happy, happy love!

For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd

For ever panting and for ever young.

The Superiority of Art over Life

A significant idea in this ode is that art is superior to real life in some respects. The things depicted on the urn will always enjoy spring. The flute-players shown on the urn will ever keep playing tunes which are forever new. The passion of the lovers depicted on the urn will never decline, and the beauty of the beloved will never fade. Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter.

The music of the flute-players depicted on the urn has a sweetness which music in real life can never attain.

NOTES

The second and third stanzas express with perfect poetic felicity and insight the vital differences between life, which pays for its sole prerogative of reality by satiety and decay, and art, which in forfeiting reality gains in its place a permanence of beauty, and the power to charm by imagined experience even richer than the real.

Sidney Colvin, a prominent critic, perceives a dissonance between the idea of the second and third stanzas and that of the fourth. The fourth stanza, he points out, speaks of the arrest of life as though it were an infliction in the sphere of reality, and not merely, like the examples of such arrest given in the preceding stanzas, a necessary condition in the sphere of art, having in that sphere its own compensations. But Sidney Colvin would prefer to reconcile himself to this dissonance.

Beauty and Truth

The original thought of this ode is the unity of Truth and Beauty. Beauty and Truth, says Keats, are not two separate things. They are one and the same thing seen from two different angels. What is beautiful must be true, and what is true must be beautiful. There can be no question of Beauty being separated from Truth. Every piece of art which is based on truth or reality must be beautiful; and every beautiful work of art must have a hard core of truth in it. Thus Keats appears to reject the school of gross realism in art on one side, and the school of ornament for ornament's sake on the other. Keats may have no right to frame a law for the artist, but the idea contained in the final stanza of the poem may rightly be regarded as his main contribution to speculative thought.

Blend of Intellectual and Emotional Elements

The ode is representative of the maturity and the height of Keats's poetic power. His poetry is fundamentally imaginative and emotional, but his greatest poems possess also an intellectual appeal. This ode, for instance, represents an fine fusion of the imaginative, emotional, and intellectual elements. The moral of the urn, namely, that Beauty is Truth and Truth Beauty, has an intellectual basis. But, apart from this, the poem is essentially surcharged with emotion and shows

rich imagination. The first three stanzas, especially, have a passionate quality about them.

Its Technical Merits

NOTES

This ode is written in a regular stanza of ten lines, consisting of a quatrain and a sestet. Thus it does not observe the pattern of the long unequal stanzas of the Ode To Psyche.

Like most of his other poems, this ode shows Keats's genius for coining original, striking, and apt phrases. "Sylvan historian", "Leaf-fringed legend", "a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd", "Cold pastoral", and "Fair attitude" are some of the few examples; while the statement "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty", is a neat and compressed expression of a profound fact—an expression which is one of the most often quoted from English poetry.

2.2.4 ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,

But being too happy in thine happiness,-

That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,

In some melodious plot

Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,

Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple- stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray airs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

Though the dull brain perplexes and retard:

Already with thee! tender is the night,

And haply the queen-Moon is on her throne,

Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;

But ere there is no light,

Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown

Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,

Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet

Wherewith the seasonable month endows

The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;

White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;

Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;

And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,

The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

VI

Darkling I listen; and for many a time

I have been half in love with easeful Death,

Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,

To take into the air my quiet breath;

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,

To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

NOTES

While thou art pouring forth the soul abroad

In such an ecstasy!

Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain-

To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII

Thou was not born for death, immortal Bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down;

The voice I hear this passing night was heard

In ancient days by emperor and clown:

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,

The same that oft-times hath

Charm's magic casements, opening on the foam

Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell

To toll me back from thee to my sole self!

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well

As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades

Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

Up the hill-side; and now' tis buried deep

In the next valley-glades;

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music: Do I wake or sleep?

CRITICAL APPRECIATION

NOTES

Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* is regarded as one of the finest odes in English Literature. It reveals the highest imaginative powers of the poet. The poem was inspired by the song of a nightingale which the poet heard in the garden of his friend, Charles Brown. The sweet music of the nightingale sent the poet in raptures and one morning he took his chair from the breakfast table, put it on the grass-plot under a plum tree and composed the poem. When Brown returned he found the poem to be of great quality. Thus the poem is an expression of Keats' feelings rising in his heart at the hearing of the melodious song of the bird.

The song of nightingale moves the poet to the depth of his heart and creates in him a heartache and numbness as is created by the intake of hemlock or some opiate. He thinks that the bird lives in a place of beauty. When he hears the nightingale's song he is entranced by its sweetness, and his joy becomes so excessive that it changes into a kind of pleasant pain. He is filled with a longing to escape from the world of cares to the beautiful place of the bird.

The poem presents the picture of the tragedy of Human life. It brings out an expression of Keats' pessimism and dejection. He composed this poem at the time when his heart was full of sorrow -- His youngest brother Tom had died, the second one had gone abroad, and the poet himself was under the agony of the passionate love for Fanny Brawne. All these events had induced in the poet a mood of sorrow. He could not suppress it. Thus the poet enjoys the pleasure in sadness and feasts upon the very sadness in joy. This complex emotion gives the poem its unique charm.

When the poet hears the song of the nightingale he finds a refuge from the agonies of the world. With the help of imagination he reaches the place quite away from the ordinary human experiences. Then comes the richest moment of his life when he offers himself to die:

To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad

In such an ecstasy!

In the seventh stanza of the poem, Keats makes the nightingale immortal. Robert Bridges regarded this passage as fanciful, and Miss Lowell as Platonic. Garrod, avoiding these errors, suggests that the nightingale is immortal because Keats thinks of it as a Dryad.

Those critics who complained that the nightingale, like man, is born for death, forget that it is the one that sang to Ruth, than it was for Wordsworth to imagine he was listening to the same cuckoo he had heard as a child.

NOTES

In any case the apparent irrationality of stanza seven is transcended when the underlying symbolism is understood: the song of the bird is the song of the poet. Keats is contrasting the immortality of poetry with the immortality of the poet. This is the high point of the poem and the point where the different themes harmonized the beauty of the nightingale's song, the loveliness of the Spring night, the miseries of the world, the desire to escape from those miseries by death, by wine, or by poetry. But when Keats wrote the Epistle to Reynolds the problems of life spoiled the singing of the nightingale, the song now acquired a greater poignancy from the miseries of the world.

The Ode is an expression of a series of moods. From being too happy in the happiness of the bird's apparent joy and the misery of the human condition, from the thought of which he can only momentarily escape by wine, by poetry, by the beauty of nature, or by the thought of death. In the seventh stanza, the contrast is sharpened: the immortal bird, representing natural beauty as well as poetry, is set against the' 'human generations' of mankind. The contrast is followed back into history and legend with Ruth in tears and the 'magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas'- which, as in the Epistle to Reynolds, conceal a bitter struggle for survival. Even the fairylands are forlorn. Reality breaks in on the poetic dream and tolls the poet back to his self. Fancy, the muse of escape poetry, is a deceiving elf. Keats expresses with a maximum of intensity, the desire to escape from reality, and yet he recognizes that no escape is possible.

The great mastery displayed by Keats in this ode is worth noting -- the continuous shifting of view-point. We are transported from the poet in the garden to the bird in the trees; in the second stanza we have glimpses of flora and Provence, followed by one of the poet drinking the wine; in the fourth stanza we are taken up into the starlit skies, and in the next we are back again in the flower-scented darkness. In the seventh stanza we range furthest in time and place. The nightingale's song is unrestricted by either time or space. The voice of the nightingale is made immune first to history, and then to geography. It can establish a rapport with dead generations or with fairy lands. In the last stanza we start again from the Hampstead garden, and then follow the nightingale as it disappears in the distance.

The poem is a representation of the poet's love of romance, deep delight in nature and his interest in the Greek mythology. In the poem the reference to Flora, Dryad, and Bacchus is made which are all related to Greek mythology. It shows that Greek mythology had a deep hold on the mind of the poet.

NOTES

The poem contains concrete imagery, richness of colouring and the elements of charm and deep human interest. The mastery of poetic language is perfectly seen in the poem. The style of the poem is Shakespearean. The expressions are unsurpassed. The expression in the lines is called the pillars of Hercules of human language. Thus:

Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam

Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Rossetti writes, "The passage about magic casements shows a reach of expression which can almost be called the pillars of Hercules of human language. For greater things have been said by the greatest minds; but nothing more perfect in form has been said, nothing wider in scale and closer in utterance by any mind whatsoever pitch of greatness."

2.2.5 ODE TO AUTUMN

ODE TO AUTUMN

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;

To bend with apples the mossed cottage-tree,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,

And still more, later flowers for the bees.

Until they think warm days will never cease;

For summer has o'er brimm'd their clammy cells.

NOTES

II

Who hath not seen Thee oft amid thy store?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,

Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;

Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep

Drowsed with the fume of poppies, hile thy hook

Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook;

Or by a cider-press, with patient look,

Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Aye, where are they?

Think not of them,-thou hast thy music too,-

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

Among the river-sallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;

Hedge-crickets sing, and now with treble soft

The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Introduction

NOTES

This poem was written in September 1819, when the poet was living at Winchester, about 48 miles from London. About the composition of this poem Keats wrote to his friend Reynolds from Winchester: "How beautiful the season is now! how fine the air—a temperate shortness about it. Really, without joking, there is chaste weather…. I never liked stubble fields so much as now; aye, better than the green of the spring. Somehow, stubble plain looks warm, in the same way some picture looks warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it."

Keats' Ode to Autumn is one of the finest and purest poems of Nature in the entire range of English language. Some consider it as the greatest achievement among the odes. The poet does not allow his personality to intrude upon the scene that he describes in this poem. Nature depicted here is neither moral nor philosophic, as we find in Shelley or Wordsworth. She merely moves from sensation to sensation. Keats in this poem has captured her in its fair mood.

Autumn is the season of misty air and of ripening fruits and corn. The warm sun is its helpmate and its associate, and they together hatch a scheme of filling all nature with fruits and flowers. The vines that run round the thatch-eaves are loaded with bunches of sweet grapes. The apple-trees are bent with the burden of ripe apples. All the fruits become ripe to their core. The gourd is enlarged and the hazel-nuts are filled with sweet kernels. Autumn is very kind towards the bees whose hives are already brimming with sweet honey gathered during the summer. Autumn sets more and more of later flowers blooming so that the bees should never feel perturbed about the dreadful winter that is fast approaching.

Autumn is depicted in many human forms. Sometimes he takes the form of a peasant sitting carelessly on the floor of his barn with his air softly blown about by the wind that helps him in winnowing the grains. Now and then he appears in the form of a reaper who has suddenly been sent to sleep by the powerful smell of poppies growing along with the corn. He is seen dozing, sickle in hand, in the middle of his job. Sometimes he appears as a gleaner going across a brook with a large bundle of corn on his head. And sometimes he appears as a

brewer who sits patiently for long hours watching the cider coming out of his cider-press drop by drop.

NOTES

O Autumn, you need not worry about the songs of Spring. You are by no means inferior in this respect; you too have a peculiar music of your own. In the rosy evening with the sinking sun surrounded by blooming clouds and stubble-plains touched with rosy colour, small bands of gnats hum a mourning tune over some stream or river as they are carried along upon a gentle breeze. From some fold afar on highland plains fully-grown lambs bleat loudly. Crickets sing in hedges. The Robin Redbreast whistles now and then in her soft treble voice from a garden space. And the circling swallows twitter in the sky.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE POEM

A Nature Poetry

Keats' *Ode to Autumn* is considered by many critics as his finest achievement as a piece of lyric poetry. It is a perfect piece of nature poetry. As Sidney Colvin remarks, "*Ode to Autumn* opens not on such far-reaching thoughts and feelings as the Ode to a Nightingale or the Grecian Urn, but in execution it is the completest of them all. In the first stanza the beauty and in the last the pensive mood of the times are expressed, and nature herself and the season seem speaking to us, while in the middle stanza the touches of literary art and Greek personification have an exquisite congruity and lightness."

His Most Perfect Ode

Many critics think that it is the most perfect of all Keats' odes. It was composed in a mood of serene contentment. The poet, for whom "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever", has realistically portrayed the beauty of the season, which he observed in his walks in Winchester in September 1819. It is a pure contemplation of the beauty of nature by the most sympathetic mind. Though brief, this ode appears complete. The unity of effect is not marred by needless contemplation of human misery or by the conscious contrast seen between the ideal world of nature and the sorrowful life of man.

Captures the Nature's Serene Mood

In this poem Keats has captured the quiet and serene mood of nature. He pictures the autumn as truly as he can. The details are based on fine perception.

To Keats, Autumn is the "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness." It fills all nature "with ripeness to the core." In his simple, direct, and innocent attitude to Nature, Keats comes very close to the ancient Greeks. His Paganism is most noticeable in this poem. The figures and forms that Autumn is shown to have assumed are not mere abstractions; they are quite true and alive. Each gesture is expressive of patience, and each pose is expressive of contentment and ease. All nature is, as it were in a relaxing mood. Poets have often thought of autumn as a season of decay. Some others have seen in its stormy phase the prophecy of a far-off golden future. It is not so with Keats, who is led by autumn's beauty from joy to joy.

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Very Impersonal Poem

Of all his odes, the *Ode to Autumn* is the most perfect in form and detail, and also the most difficult to penetrate below the surface, for it is apparently the most objective and descriptive. The personal melancholy of the poet is not allowed to intrude anywhere and thus disturb the beautiful quiet of the season. The emotion has become completely fused with object and expresses itself completely through it. There are no questions and no conflicts in the poem: the season of ripeness and fulfillment is seen as though it is final. Keats sees it as a still pause in time when everything has reached fruition and when ripeness is all. The old question almost raises its head in the last stanza:

Where are the songs of Spring? Aye, where are they?

Think not of them,-thou hast thy music too.

But the grumbling tone is immediately stilled and the poem ends with the quiet relapse of consciousness into the soft natural loveliness that surrounds it.

The Structure of the Poem

The poem fully satisfies the imagination of the reader in three artistically perfect stanzas. In the first stanza the benevolent influence of autumn is shown in the form of its making all nature rich with ripe fruit and with 'later flowers.' Like the bees, we too are made to feel that "warm days will never cease." In the second stanza the timeless activities of man in the lap of Nature have been personified into four exquisitely reposeful figures. The reposeful beauty of the season has

become blended with happy faithful labour of man. The picture of the reaper is perhaps the best:

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Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,

Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook

Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers.

An equally impressive sensuous image is encountered in the third stanza in the form of the wailing gnats:

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn:

Among the river-sallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies.

The stanza-form used in the poem is the same as used in *Ode to a Nightingale*, except that the poet introduces an additional line in the second part of the sestet. Thus each stanza consists of eleven iambic pentameter lines with the rhyme scheme a b a b, c d e, c d d e. But the first stanza has another variant of the sestet: c d e, d c c e.

2.2.6 "KEATS NEVER BEHELD AN OAK, WITHOUT SEEING THE DRYAD."

"Keats never beheld an Oak, without seeing the Dryad." Discuss.

Sensuousness has been seen as the paramount bias of Keats poetic genius. This is, in large measure, unassailably true. He was a man of perception rather than of contemplation or speculation. Perception has to be with perceptible things, perceptible things must be objects of sense, and the mind which dwells on objects of sense, must ipso facto be a mind of the sensuous order. But the mind which is mainly sensuous by direct action may also work by reflex action, and pass from sensuousness into sentiment. It cannot fairly be denied that Keats mind constantly did thus; it had direct action potently, and reflex action amply. He saw so far and so keenly into the sensuous as to be penetrated with the sentiment which to healthy and large nature is its inseparable result. We might say that, if the sensuous was his atmosphere, the breathing apparatus with which he respired was

sentiment. In his best work, for instance, in all the great Odes the two things are so combined that the reader can only savour the sensuous nucleus through the sentiment, its medium or vehicle. One of the most compendious and elegant phrases in which the genius of Keats' has been defined is that of Leigh Hunt: "He never beheld an Oak tree without seeing the Dryad." In immediate meaning Hunt looks at the mythical sympathy or personifying imagination of the poet; but if we accept the phrase as applying to the sensuous painting, along with its ideal aroma or suggestion in his finest work, we shall still find it full of great import.

By his early death he was doomed to be a poet of youthfulness, by being the poet of youthfulness he was privileged to become and remain enduringly the poet of engrossed expectation and passionate delight.

But we should look for the genius qualifications of his fame within the limits of that work; and highest among them we should rate his unequalled and unrivalled odes. Of these perhaps the two nearest to absolute perfection, to the triumphant achievement and accomplishment of the very utmost “beauty possible to human words may be that to Autumn and that on a Grecian Urn, the most radiant fervent and musical is that to a Nightingale; the most pictorial and perhaps the most tender in its ardour of passionate fancy is that to psyche; the subtlest in appeal of thought and feeling is that on Melancholy. Greater lyrical poetry the world may have seen than any that is in these; lovelier has it never seen nor ever can it possibly see.”

From the divine fragment of an incomplete Ode to Maia we can but guess that had it been completed it would have been praiseworthy of a place beside the highest. His remaining lyrics have many beauties about them but none perhaps can be called thoroughly beautiful. He has certainly left us one perfect sonnet of the first rank; and certainly he has left us but one.

On these detached criticisms many of the main qualities of Keats' poetry have been incidentally brought out: there is one, as yet unmentioned, which claims the first place in a general description, and there is the very real of his poetic birthright, the highest gift of all in poetry, that which sets poetry above the other arts. I mean the power of concentrating all the far-reaching resources of language on one point, so that a single and actually effortless expression rejoices the aesthetic imagination at the moment when it is most expectant and exacting, and at the same time astonishes the intellect with a new aspect of truth. This is

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only found in the greatest poets, and is rare in them; and it is surely for the possession of this power that Keats has been often likened to Shakespeare and very justly, for Shakespeare is of all poets the greatest master of it. The difference between them here is that Keats' intellect does not supply the second factor in the proportion or degree, that Shakespeare does indeed, it is chiefly when he is dealing with material and sensuous subject that his poems afford illustration; but these are, as far as they go, not only like Shakespeare, but often as good as Shakespeare when he happens to be confining himself to the same limited field.

2.2.7 KEATS' HELLENISM

"Keats was essentially a Greek, though born out of time." (Prof. Hales)

Write a short critical note on Keats' Hellenism.

Shelley said that Keats was a Greek. Surely, he was a Greek, and that in a much more special sense than the Romanticists of his century, most of whom found themes in classical myth, life and thought. Keats really is a Greek, though born out of time. Prof Hales says, "There was in Keats the keenest sense and enjoyment of Beauty, and this gave him a fellow feeling with the great Greek Masters. He recognized in them the most perfect representation of the beautiful and this, so far as literature went, through translations. But it was only one side of the Greek art that he saw. He saw its beauty, but he did not see its purity, its self-restraint, is severe refinement. He did not learn from it that the fancy must not be merely indulged."

To begin with he was a Greek in his power of assimilating Greek mythology and legends; his Endymion and Hyperion being his greatest tributes to what he calls the mythology of Greece.

Secondly, he was a Greek in his total dedication to the cult of art and beauty, and his frank paganism which reveals in the delights of the senses and which is entirely non-moral in character.

Thirdly, in the simplicity and directness of expression which belonged to Homer and the Greek tragedians.

Fourthly, he is Greek in his gift for the personification of the power in Nature, as for instance in his *Ode to Autumn*.

Fifthly, he is Greek in the human interest which he, at times, as in *Lamia*, allows to dominate minor details.

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Sixthly, Keats is Greek in the delight he invariably shows in the myths: the "beautiful mythology of Greece", as he calls it in the preface to *Endymion*. The interest in Elgin Marbles; which 'Haydon' had awakened in him, gave a special the beautiful turn to Keats' Hellenism. To this motive we owe his *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

Lastly he is Greek in the manner of his response to the appeal of Nature, in the realization of primeval, physical kinship with art and ready sensitiveness to its magic of colour, sound, odour and touch, and in the imaginative apprehension and the living forces about him, which gives them a local habitation and name, and figure them forth as deities of words and streams of sky and sea.

Prof. Hanford writes, "Keats was a Greek, was more generous than apt, he was near akin to the Elizabethans, near to Wordsworth, near even to Shelly himself, but he recovered more completely than any of them the intense humanizing vision of nature of which primeval myth was born."

2.2.8 SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

Lines: *Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn*

Among the river-sallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;

Explanation: This passage has been taken from the third stanza of Keats' *Ode to Autumn.* This is one of the most celebrated pen-pictures in his poetry where he consoles Autumn. The poet reminds it that in the golden light of the sinking sun we can hear variety of sweet sounds coming from riverbanks, gardens, fields and the sky. One of the sweetest of these sounds is the low humming tune of gnats among the weeds growing along the riverbanks. The music of the gnats appears sad because they seem to be expressing their sorrow for the dying sun. Their sound resembles the sound of grief-stricken weeping or a song of lamentation

sung in chorus. As they sing, they float high or low on the mild breeze that is blowing. They rise high in the air when the gentle wind blows and they sink low when the wind dies for a while. Their song is also governed to some extent by their rise or fall.

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Lines: *And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;*

Hedge-crickets sing, and now with treble soft

The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Explanation: These are the closing lines of Keats' *Ode to Autumn*. In these lines the poet continues with his appreciation of the songs of autumn. Here he speaks of the sounds made by birds and beasts as the music of autumn. From some open space in hills, fully-grown lambs bleat loudly. Hedge-crickets sing in the hedges. Now and then the robin redbreast makes a whistling sound from some open space in a garden. Her soft treble sound is really very sweet. And now we hear the swallows twitter in the high skies as they circle overhead.

2.3 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. Discus briefly Shelley's poetical characteristics.
2. Give a note on the Keats' legend in the background of *Adonais.*
3. Examine *Adonais* as a Pastoral Elegy.
4. Give an estimate on Keats' sensuousness.
5. Keats was a Shakespearean. Discuss.
6. Give a brief account of Keats' philosophy of life.
7. Give a critical appreciation on *Ode to a Nightingale*
8. "Keats' was essentially a Greek, though born out of time." Write a short critical note on Keats' Hellenism.

2.4 LET US SUM UP

After having read Unit II you have sufficiently made yourself acquainted with P. B. Shelley and John Keats. You have become competent enough to discuss the life and works of these two great poets of their times. You can also give critical appreciation Shelley's *Adonais* and *Ode to the West Wind* and also of the three poems by Keats— *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Ode to Autumn*.

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UNIT-III CHARLES LAMB

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Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In Unit III our objective is to let you know about Charles Lamb and his style along with further discussion on some of his select and more popular essays. We have chosen *Christ's Hospital*, *Imperfect Sympathies*, *The New and the Old School Master*, and *Poor Relations*. You will be able to:

- Tell about the essayist and his essays.
- Offer an outline of his essays.
- Present the poet's worth as an essayist.

3.1 CHARLES LAMB

His Family Circle

Charles Lamb was born on February 10, 1775 in Crown Salt. His father John Lamb was confidential clerk to Mr. Samuel Salt a bencher of the Inner Temple. His mother Elizabeth Field served as House Keeper at Blakesware in

Hertfordshire. Charles Lamb was the youngest son of Lamb's family. His brother John and his sister Mary Anne were favourite to him. But his sister Mary became insane and in a fit of madness killed her mother and wounded her father. She was confined in a madhouse.

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His Education

Following his father's death in 1797, Charles Lamb wished to take care of his sister. He got his education at Mr. William Bird's school near Patter lane. In 1782 he was admitted to Christ's Hospital where he got education for six years. His schoolfellow and friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge was a source of inspiration to him. He left school at the age of fifteen. He was employed in the South Sea House. Afterwards he was promoted to the service of East India where he remained till 1825.

His Friends

Charles Lamb had a wide circle of friends. His chief friend was Mr. James White, the author of letters of Sir John Falstaff. He expressed his sentiments in verse at the encouragement of S. T. Coleridge. He spent his holidays at Blakesware where his maternal grandmother served as a housekeeper of the Plumers.

Marriage and Shocks

Charles fell in love with Alicia Winterton of Anna Simmons. Lamb refers to Anna in a letter to Coleridge on March 27, 1796: "My head ran on you in madness, as much almost as on another person, who I am inclined to think, was the more immediate cause of my frenzy." Charles spent six weeks in a madhouse at Hoxton. The possible cause of his insanity was the coldness and indifference of his wife Anna. She left Charles and married Bart Anna pawnbroker. He could not bear the shock of his tragedy and faced a sort of mental collapse. He was soon cured. He faced many family worries. His father suffered from dementia, his mother was declared invalid and his aunt was half senile.

His Death

In 1817, Lamb was settled in Russell Street, Covent garden. There Lamb came in touch with many theatrical personages. In December 1934 he had a slight fall and fell ill of a disease. He died of it in December 1834.

His Literary Career

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Charles lamb came in contact with Mr. Daniel Stuart, editor of the "Morning Post". He published in 1802 'John Woodwill' and 'Fragment of Burton'. In 1803 he wrote a fine poem of 'Hester Savory' a quaker girl. He met Hazlitt in 1804 and was greatly influenced by his writings. The poems by Lamb and Lloyd were included in the second edition of Coleridge's poems (1797). In 1798 Lamb published. 'A Tale of Rosamund Gray' and 'Old Blind Margaret.'

George Sampson says: "It is sombre and tragic narrative, but it can hardly be said to survive, except Lamb's sake." Lamb published 'John Woodwill' in 1802. It is a tragedy and a delightful poetry shoddily put together. It lacks dramatic interest and originality. In 1806, Lamb's farce Mr. H. was loved and appreciated in the literary circle. In 1807, he published a series of stories founded on Shakespeare. His next works were published in 1808 viz., 'The Adventures of Ulysses' and 'Specimens of Dramatic Poets'. In the years 1809 he published 'Poetry for Children'. In 1810 Lamb wrote essays, a few essays on 'Garrick' and 'Hogurth' and some poems like 'Farewell to Tobacco.' These were published in 'The Reflector'.

In 1820 Lamb wrote for the 'London Magazine' under the name of Elia. His essay on the death of his father was 'Dream Children'. Southey writes: "The essays of Elia are as wanting only a sounder religious feeling to be a delightful as they are original". Lamb expressed his feeling of resentment in a letter of Elia to R.S. Esq. appeared in the 'London Magazine' of October 1823.

Lamb was introduced to Mr. Hood Hone, editor of the 'Everyday Book'. He contributed some material into it. Lamb wrote 'The Memoir of Mr. Liston' in the 'London Magazine". He kept contributing to this magazine from October 1820 to December of 1823. In these essays he evoked his past memories and imparted them freshness by the humorous blend of poetry and truth. Thus, his whole genius was revealed.

3.1.1 CHARLES LAMB AS AN ESSAYIST

Charles Lamb As an Essayist

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His Personality

Lamb's personality is revealed from his essays. His friends have called him ‘gentle-hearted Charles’. The nobility of his nature and goodness of his heart are revealed in his essays.

Proctor writes**,** "He had originality and delicacy of thinking, sincerity without a spot, firmness and kindness of heart, friendship that went beyond words and toleration for the infirmity of all men". In his essay 'Old and New School Master' he expresses pity and sympathy for the poor schoolmaster.

His Essays

Lamb's essays reveal all aspects of London life. According to a critic Charles was a warm friend, an engaging host, a gentle humourist, a companion, a devoted and self-sacrificing brother.

Lamb had been familiar with the works of great writers. He had free access to the large library of Samuel Salt. He had a habit of keen observation. His essays are full of wisdom and truth. He loved pictures and prints and he constantly refers to them in his essays. He gives an account of his character and personality in his preface to the 'Essays of Elia, second edition.'

Lamb's Essays reveal his personality and character. He was a lover of old and antique things. He had early associations with the Temple and the Christ's Hospital. He loved old books, old writers and old tombs. His essay 'Modern Gallantry' is full of pathetic details.

Lamb had a deep sense of melancholy. He spent a life a heroic struggle against great odds. His failure in love, death of his mother, madness of his sister contributed a great deal in making his mood gloomy. His essays ‘New Year's Eve’, in ‘Witches and other Night Fears', 'Confessions of a Drunkard', are full of melancholy.

The Inner Gloom

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Lamb's essays are full with his internal gloom. He refers to the death of his brother in the essay 'Dream Children'. He writes, "Though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is between life and death. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness and wished him to be alive again to be quarrelling with him rather than not have him again." This essay is also full of his sad longing for wife and children.

Lambs' style has an antique flavour, but is tinged with his own imagination and choice. His style is varied, flexible and changes according to his mood and sentiments. He writes frankly on different themes. His style is the reflection of his own personality. He makes frequent use of allusions primarily taken from the Bible. In 'Christ Hospital' there are many allusions like the secure district of Goshen, the miracles of Gideon and Pythagoras. In "The Old and New School Master", the allusions of Achilles and the sirens are found. Some of his quotations are pretended, some are transformed and a few are single- word quotations. Thus his style is quaint and affected.

Influence of Other Writers

Lamb's style is the product of his literary tastes, his liking for humour and pathos and his vision of life. He was very much influenced by the writings of the Elizabethan and Restoration periods. Saintsbury says, "Lamb's style is as indefinable as it is inimitable and his manner and method defy selection and specification as much as the flutterings of a butterfly."

The works of the old English authors influenced the style of Lamb. Their memories became an integral part of his literary personality. He tried to absorb their phrases, obsolete words and rhythm and added them to his style. He adopted their diction and imparted novelty and originality to it by his art. He borrowed ideas from other writers and chewed, digested and assimilated them.

The Autobiographical Element

The autobiographical element in Lamb's essays is very dominant. The charm of his essays arises from the charm of his personality. He is the most autobiographical of English essayists. All the aspects of his personality are reflected in his essays. He has revealed himself to be a perfect egotist. The focus

of his essays is Lamb himself. He takes his readers into his confidence and reveals his mind and heart to them.

Personal Experiences

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In his essays on Christ Hospital, he depicts the grievances of schoolboys and the charming excursions into the countryside. He draws the humorous picture of some of the regulations and traditions of the school. There are some details about his friends and relations. His sister Mary is the cousin Bridget and his brother John Lamb is the James Elia. In the 'Dream Children' there is a pen-portrait of his grandmother Mrs. Field and Mrs. Alice, his disappointment in love with a lady, who did not marry him became a constant cause of melancholy. The pathetic wistfulness of the essays appeals the readers very much. It is a good example of self-revelation "The New Year Eve' gives an account of his mighty terror and fear of death.

His Language in Prose

Charles lamb's prose was very fascinating and gloomy as well. According to Thompson, “The language of his favourite authors, closely woven into the texture of his mind, found its way without an effort into his power prose, where transmuted by his alchemy, it was issued under a new and authentic coinage. The words in their new context became his own, and the elusiveness with which he clocked his fortunate thrift is the part of his charm.” Definitely he was a great prose writer.

Saintsbury says**,** "Lamb's style is as indefinable as it is inimitable and his manners and method defy selection and specification as much as the flutterings of a butterfly." Lamb was the master of his own style. He was very fond of quotations and allusions. He gives fresh contextual meanings to them. He often quotes lines from eminent writers and poets. In his essays the echo of ancient dramatists, poets and prose writers is clearly visible.

3.1.2 ESSAYS OF ELIA

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Essays of Elia

First Appearance

The essays of Elia are famous in the history of English prose. Charles Lamb chose 'Elia' as the pen name in his essays. His essays first appeared in the 'London Magazine' in 1821-22 under the name of Elia. Afterwards these essays were published in the book form under the title 'Essays of Elia'. Lamb wanted to identify himself with Elia.

Last Essays of Elia

The Essays of Elia were published in a collected form in 1823 in the name of 'The Last Essays of Elia'. The first volume had twenty-five essays. The subject matter of the essays was left on the choice of the writer.

Theme of the Essays

The theme of the essays was autobiographical. Lamb recollected his of past life and his experiences in these essays. These essays are a window to the mind and heart of Lamb. He talks about his memories of different places. He describes about his memories of past life and different places in a very dignified manner. He speaks about his relations and friends in his essays. He gives an idea of his likes and dislikes in his essays. His psychological fears and doubts are also revealed in them.

Wide Appreciation

The essays of Elia received wide popularity. He started with a new trend, a new message and a new style in these essays. His tone and method echoed the previous essayists. His contribution was a new sort of egotism by way of essays. He displayed his humour, intelligence, observation, and sensibility and sense of right and wrong in them. Edmond Blunden says, "Lamb's essays are not very numerous, but they include a surprising variety of subject, of experience of treatment in subject. Their autobiographical animation is sustained from the child Elia's small and magic world."

His New Technique

Lamb had changed the technique of his essays. The essays exhibit infinite variety. They are a fine collection of his ideas and thoughts, likes and dislikes and critical opinions.

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Subjective Tone

The essays of Elia are a sort of self-revelation. They are subjective in tone. Lamb remains as a detached narrator in them. Compton Rickett says, "His essays are regarded as autobiographical fragments from which we may reconstruct with little difficulty the inner life and not little of the outer life of Lamb." Lamb's whole life experiences are to be seen in them.

A Rich Picture Gallery

The essays of Elia may be regarded as a rich picture gallery of immortal figures like Elia, Bridget Elia, Mrs. Battle George Dyer and Joseph Munden. There is an ironical picture of Jackson and his daughters in their cottage on the Bat Road. Flora Mason says, “The essays of Elia contain most of the best of all. His best poetry will be found in their prose most searching and suitable criticism; situation so pathetic and so ridiculous that they bring tears and laughter without the help of any stage or curtain. Their charm and fragrance, their inherent value in our written language, are to be summed up in their own simple title.”

A Collection of Ideas

The essays of Elia are fine collection of his ideas and thoughts. Lamb gives an account of his birth, parentage an early childhood in some of these essays. He describes the members of his family in the essay, My Relation' and a Dream Children'. In ‘Oxford in the Vacations' he expresses his desire of getting higher education. He describes his bitter experiences of life in the essay 'The South Sea House'.

A Record of Life of Lamb

A short biographical sketch of Charles Lamb may be constructed on the basis of his essays. These are the records of his life.

His Mystification

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Lamb had to mystify many things in his life. There is a fusion of fact and fiction in them. In the 'Dream Children' he conceives of his wife and two children who never existed. He assumes the personality of Coleridge to describe the pitiable condition of Coleridge at Christ Hospital.

The Background of Life

Lamb's essays provide enough background to his life, his friends, his family and his employment. They have the most factual records of his impressions. He sees life in various shades and tries to present them in his essays. His criticism of mannerism is very fine.

The Charm of Essays

The charm of Essays of Elia lies in their profound philosophy and the universal appeal they convey. George Sampson says**,** "It is tempting to say tat Lamb's are the best essays in English because they are rich in the charm that is one of the rarest gifts of genius. The magic of his style is enhanced by its intensely literary."

A Blend of Humour and Pathos

There is a judicious blend of humour and pathos in his essays. His humour includes witty remarks, ironical comments and funny retorts. He even enjoys fun at his own expense.

3.1.3 SUMMARIES OF ESSAYS

Summaries of Essays

Christ Hospital

Publication of the Essay

The essay 'Christ Hospital' (Five and thirty years ago) was published in the 'London Magazine' in November 1820. Another essay 'The Recollection of Christ's Hospital' was published earlier. He tells us about the limitations and

shortcomings of the Charity School. The essay has been written in the person of Coleridge.

Summary of the Essay

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Lamb studied in Christ's Hospital from 1782 to 1789. Edward VI founded the school in the thirteenth century. He met Coleridge there and formed intimacy with him. Lamb was a favoured boy there. He enjoyed certain privileges that were denied to other students. He enjoyed his Sunday mornings with his relations. He could eat the food brought to him from his parental kitchen. On Monday morning he ate bread and butter. His aunt usually brought delicacies for him. His schoolfellows satisfied themselves with the meagre and tasteless school food.

Coleridge was a poor and friendless boy. His parents and friends lived far away from school. He suffered from homesickness and often shed tears in deep sorrow. He felt his loneliness all the more of holidays when many of the students enjoyed the company of their relatives. They had bathing excursions and had free access to the zoo. They had become familiar to the wardens.

The Pathetic Condition of Younger Boys

The senior students at the Christ Hospital school were very furious. They tormented the junior ones and cut jokes at them. A poor student was frequently beaten heartlessly. Some of the junior students were forced to walk in their shirts in cold winter nights and then whipped. They were denied the warmth of fire. They were forbidden to drink water when they felt feverish. Thus the younger boys faced the tyrannies of the older students and masters.

Coleridge recalls how he was called out of his bed in the coldest winter nights to get punishment. Mr. Hodges pampered an ass by starving forty students of his hostel and the ass brayed. The dishonest nurse stole enough food of the poor students. A poor student collected the remnants left on the dinner table and carried them secretly on Sundays and holidays. He gave those crumbs to his parents. After this the management of Christ Hospital allowed regular allowance to the parents of that particular poor student.

The method of punishing the boys was very harsh. A boy at the first offence was put in fetters and for further offence was confined to solitary cell

without any food or water. He was flogged in an open court and expelled later on. Rev. James Boyer and Rev. Matthew were the master of upper and lower school Grammar. Mr. Boyer would occasionally flog his students.

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The Upper and Lower Masters

Coleridge was frightened to see a boy with chains on his legs on his very first day at school. The boy had tried to run away from the school. The solitary confinement often resulted in the boy's going mad. The method for the punishment was very severe. The boy was dressed in a most uncouth and appalling attire and before expulsion he was whipped mercilessly in front of the whole school till his back became knotty and his flesh turned blue.

James Boyer was the upper master and Matthew Field was his junior. Mathew Field being a lenient and indulgent teacher allowed the boys to have their way. He used rod as a symbol of his authority. His students become gentlemen and true Christians but could not turn into eminent scholars. James Boyer had two wigs, one of which was well powdered, smooth and neat, and the other wigs was old, discoloured and shabby. Sometimes, Mr. Boyer read a newspaper and whipped the boys after each paragraph. He had two scholars, Lancelot Pepy Stevens and Dr. Trollope and both of them became co-grammar masters at Christ's Hospital itself.

Lamb mentions a student Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, who became a bishop in Calcutta. Another boy was Richard, the author of one of the most spirited of Oxford Prize Poems. Towards the end Charles Lamb writes in his own person and thus discloses his identity. He mentions the name of Coleridge and other schoolfellows.

Imperfect Sympathies

Introduction:

This essay was first published in the London Magazine of August 1821. Lamb tells about his prejudice, his dislike for the Scotch, the Jews, the Negroes and the quackers.

Summary:

Sir Thomas Brown, the author of the *Religio Medici* was slave to his prejudice. He cannot like what all people like. He does not like the Scotch. Lamb

is different from them. He makes a difference of ideas between Scotchmen and the anti-Caledonians. The minds of the letter are suggestive than comprehensive. The Scottish people have their special moods of thinking.

Lamb respects the Jews as a race. He maintains religious and historical grounds to hold his views about them. The Christians and the Jews have been hating each other for a long time. some of the Jews' women are very cruel. Lamb hates Negroes on racial grounds. He does not like them due to their colour.

Lamb does not like the quackers. He likes their religion, but does not like or appreciate their views. They are against the good things of life. Lamb ends the story of the astonishing composure of the quackers.

The Old and the New School Master

Publication of the Essay

This essay was first published in May 1821 in the 'London Magazine'. Lamb compares the schoolmasters in the past and in his own days. He begins the essay with an account of his own lack of knowledge. He makes the readers laugh.

Summary of the Essay

Lamb confesses his lack of knowledge of the various art and sciences. He has no elementary knowledge of History and Geography. He is even unable to enjoy the company of the rustics. His study of old English plays and treatises is quite odd. He does not locate even important continents on the globe. He cannot locate any planet or star in the globe. He knows his own language nothing about Botany or Zoology. He is afraid of the fact that he cannot face a lonely strange man even for fifteen minutes. He has not been exposed so far in life. Everybody wants to display his knowledge to others. None tries to test the knowledge of others.

He was journeying from Bishopgate to Shaklewell. He happens to meet a man who is more than thirty years of age. He takes Lamb on different topics viz, the merits of the fare, the civility and punctuality of the driver and the convenience of Coach. That man asked a question concerning the cattle fair in Smithfield. Lamb tried to avoid the question, because he had never seen the fair. The coach reached Norton Folgate.

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The Curiosity of School Master

The gentleman saw the price list of cotton goods displayed at a shop and he remarked about the low price of cotton. Lamb took part in the discussion because he had the knowledge of raw materials. The man asked Lamb if he had ever calculated the rental value of all the retail shops in London. The gentleman got down at a station. Lamb thought that the gentleman must be a schoolmaster. He wanted to collect information on different subjects. He had a keen desire to know something of everything.

Lamb reflects upon the difference between the old and the new schoolmaster. The old school master knew well Latin and Grammar and despised all other knowledge. His main concern was teaching of the language.

But the new schoolmaster has little knowledge of Grammar. He is expected to know a little of all subjects. To him universe is a great book which he must read. He is busier during the vacations than during the working days. They accompany the teacher in holidays and gain practical knowledge. His mental stature does not develop and he is unable to adjust himself to the men of his period. He poses a didactic hypocrisy and is always in mood to teach. He gives lessons from the book of nature outside the class. He gets information by putting questions even to strangers.

The Mental Growth of Boys

He has a boy following him even in school interval and the vacations. Boys are capital fellows in their own way but they are unwholesome companies for grown-up people. Their company can be enjoyed for a short time. The constant company of the elders spoils the sport of children. The grown up people show little sympathy towards children. They lose respect and there occurs mutual dislike. They don't have mutual love and affection.

The constant company of elders retards the mental growth of the young boys. They lose the confidence of their own powers. The elders are dragged down intellectually. A schoolmaster does not get relief in the company of his equals. He does not try to mix with them. His sense of superiority makes himself conscious and awkward.

In fact the schoolmaster is a lovely person. He is forlorn among his equals; but his juniors cannot be his friends. They do not love him and instead they respect him. A schoolmaster does not love his wife. He fails to get the affection of his children. A schoolmaster complained that his wife considered him a schoolmaster to whom any expression of love is improper. She was once gentle and loving.

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Poor Relations

Introduction and Summary

This essay was first published in the London Magazine, May 1823. This is one of Lamb's finest essays and illustrates in a very fine manner the combination of humour and pathos in his writings. The opening of the essay is sheer wit, but the writer is led to relate depressing and pitiful things in the process. Lamb himself says: "I do not know how upon a subject which I began with treating half-seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital (the life of Favell) so eminently painful." But this is Lamb's way, he cannot even laugh at people without placing himself in their place and taking their view of the matter. He begins the essay in a very brilliant and witty manner, but slowly and gradually goes on to narrate the tragic life history of Favell, who was his contemporary at Christ's Hospital. Favell was a poor boy who had a high sense of dignity and prestige. He was compelled to leave Oxford University because of the excessively obsequious and servile manner of his father. He joined the forces and was among the first who were killed there. Lamb had a wide sympathy with all classes and conditions of men, and particularly with people of the lower classes. His sympathy appears before us in the description of the old man who used to come to his house on Saturdays. Lamb describes his bearing and behaviour in a very delicate manner.

Lamb begins the essay in a very witty style, saying that a poor relation is the most undesirable and unwelcome sort of person and compares him with many things of the same nature. A poor relation is like a hateful shadow which lengthens at the height of your glory and prosperity, a constant source of expenditure, a kind of check on your progress, a spot on the honour of your family, a reminder to you of your humble origin, a person who does not pay your proper regard. He is like a beggar (Lazarus) at your door, a person for whom you have to make apology to your friends and the like.

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You can make out that a poor relation has come to visit you by the manner of his knocking at the gate. His rap is something between familiarity and respect. He enters in a smiling yet embarrassed manner. At the dinnertime when he sees that the table is full, the other guests are there in the house, he offers to go back. But he can be easily induced to stay. He will never come on days when you have no visitors in your house. He remembers birthdays quite accurately but shows that he is lucky enough to have come on a birthday just by chance. At the dinner table he refuses many things, but when requested, accepts them. He is asked to join the party at the table, refuses on the basis of poverty, and shows resentment at being left out. He will relate some past ordinary and unimportant anecdote of your family when it was not so rich and prosperous. He will also try to offend you by praising some ordinary and cheap thing in the house in comparison to more costly ones.

A female poor relation is a bigger evil. About the male poor relation you say to your friends that he is of a very unusual nature and wears an ordinary dress though he can afford a much better one. You want to have such a man with you and therefore you are pleased to have him in your house. But no woman is so whimsical as to wear a more ordinary dress than she can afford and therefore you cannot hide facts in this manner. Others will know the truth very quickly.

Richard Amlet, a character in Vanburgh's play confederacy (son of a vulgar, rich tradeswomen) is a clear example of disadvantages to which a young man is exposed if he has a whimsical and perverse kind of parent. But Amlet possessed lightheartedness, which enabled him to bear the perversity of his mother. Then Lamb relates a very tragic case of a young man who was ruined because of a perverse father. Favell was Lamb's contemporary and a Grecian at Christ's Hospital. He was a very good student and a youth of promise. He had only one failing and that was too much pride. He was a poor student who wanted to maintain his self-respect and dignity. From Christ's Hospital he went to Oxford University. But there also he remained a servitor and had to wear a particular gown. He always felt himself looking ridiculous in that gown. To escape from this feeling he started living almost entirely in the secluded places in the college or in his own room and devoting almost all his time to studies. At this time a great misfortune fell on Favell and was the arrival of his father who started living in the same city. His father did the humble job of house painting. He came to that city in the hope of getting a job for his own self. The difficulty, however, was that the

temperament of Favell's father was totally opposite to his own. His father was a very submissive and servile type of man who used to bow also before those students who were Favell's equal in standing or his roommates. Favell in the beginning gave hints to his father not to behave in this manner and then openly expressed resentment at his behaviour. But his father did not pay any attention to him. Favell had no alternative but to leave Oxford. He fled from there and accepted a commission in a regiment about to embark for Portugal. He was among the first who died in the war.

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Though Lamb has related this tragic life history of Favell, yet he says that his earliest impressions on the subject have nothing painful or embarrassing about them. A mysterious type of old man used to come to his house on every Saturday. He was a very serious looking old man who spoke very little in his house. He always sat in a particular elbow chair. He was always entertained with a particular sweet pudding which was specially made on the occasions of his visit. Lamb only knew this much about him that he came from the Mint. Frequently there was quarrel between this old man and his father. The reason behind it was that both belonged to different groups at Lincoln. At Lincoln the houses were divided between the dwellers on the mountain and the dwellers below on the plains. His father was the leader of the boys living above, while the old man was the leader of the boys living below. This sometimes occasioned a quarrel between them which his father always avoided by changing the topic. Once this old man requested to take another plate of the sweet pudding which he refused. Lamb's aunt also asked him to accept but he taunted him by saying that he did not get it everyday. The old man took his revenge (a little later) by saying to his aunt that she was in her dotage. He died after some time at the Mint, leaving a very small amount of just five pounds, fourteen shillings and a penny, which was sufficient to pay for his funeral expenses. The old man was thankful to God that in his lifetime, and even after his death, he was never obliged to anybody even for a very small amount of money. This was the case with one of the poor relations of the writer.

3.1.4 SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

Lines: *There was love for the bringer; shame for the thing brought, and the manner of its bringing; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it; and,*

at top of all, hunger (eldest, strongest of the passions!) predominant, breaking down the stony fences of shame and awkwardness, and a troubling over-consciousness.

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Context: This passage has been taken from 'Christ's Hospital', an essay written by Charles Lamb. At the Christ's Hospital Charles Lamb enjoyed certain privileges. He used to go to the city to see his relatives in the town. He used to go to his aunt Hotty. She loves Lamb very much and used to show affectionate care to Lamb at Christ's Hospital.

Explanation: Lamb describes the noble nature of his aunt. She used to bring food for him cooked in her kitchen. He remembers the feelings of love and shame hanging over his head. He felt ashamed at the manner of food brought to him by the aunt. The quantity of food was meagre and the quality was low. He had sympathy for ill-fed poor students. He also felt ashamed at his own poverty and its curses. Hunger is strongest of all the feelings.

Lines: *Nothing comes to him, not sophisticating medium of moral uses. The Universe—that Great book, as it has been called—is to him, indeed, to all intents and purposes, a book out of which he is doomed to read tedious homilies to distasting schoolboys.*

Context: This passage occurs in the essay 'The Old and New School Master' by Charles Lamb. A modern schoolmaster seldom bothers about grammar rules. He is expected to teach the science of gases, chemistry, mechanics, statistics and geography. He wants to tell something useful to his students.

Explanation: The duties of a schoolmaster may sometimes become unpleasant. He has no sense of beauty. He tries to approach everything didactically. He collects some important knowledge from subjects of universe in order to deliver lectures to boys. He does not look into everything for intrinsic beauty. He utilizes all his experience and knowledge to serve some moral purpose. His entire approach is academic and moralistic. He believes that his services should be devoted to the moral uplift of the students. He draws lectures from the vast book of universe.

3.2 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. Discuss Charles Lamb as an essayist.
2. *Give a summary of the essay* Christ Hospital.
3. *Give a summary of the essay* The Old And New School Master.
4. Give a summary of the essay *Poor Relations*.

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3.3 LET US SUM UP

Having gone through Unit III you have become familiar with Charles Lamb and his style and also with some of his select and more popular essays. You are now capable of summarizing and critically appreciating the essays *Christ's Hospital*, *Imperfect Sympathies*, *The New and the Old School Master*, and *Poor Relations*.

UNIT-IV JANE AUSTEN, SIR WALTER SCOTT

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Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In Unit IV our objective is to familiarize you with Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott. We shall tell you about their lives and further discuss their select works for our study—Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Scott's *Kenilworth*. You will be able to:

- Talk on the author and their prescribed work.
- Give an outline of their works.
- Critically analyze their salient features.

4.1 JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen was born on December 16th, 1775 to the local rector, Rev. George Austen (1731-1805), and Cassandra Leigh (1739-1827). She was the

seventh child among eight children. She had one older sister, Cassandra. In 1783 she went to Southampton to be taught by a relative, Mrs. Cawley, but was brought home owing to a local outbreak of disease. Two years later she attended the Abbey Boarding School in Reading, reportedly wanting to follow her sister Cassandra, until 1786.

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Mostly she was educated at home, where she learned how to play the piano, draw and write creatively. She read frequently and later came to enjoy social events such as parties, dances and balls. She hated the busy life of towns but preferred the country life where she took to long country walks.

In 1801 Jane, her parents, and sister moved to Bath, a year after her father's retirement, and the family would often visit the coast. While on one of those coastal holidays she met a young man where apparently a romantic involvement occurred that ultimately ended in tragedy as the young man died. It is believed by many of her fans that her novel, "Persuasion", was inspired by this incident.

After her father's death in January of 1805, which left his widow and daughters with financial problems, they moved several times until finally moving into a small house, in Chawton, Hampshire, owned by her brother Edward, which is reminiscent of "Sense and Sensibility". It was in this house that she produced most of her works.

March 1817 saw her health deteriorating and she was forced to abandon her current work of Sanditon, which never completed. Jane had Addison's disease. In April she wrote out her will and then on May 24th moved with Cassandra to Winchester, to be close to her doctor. It was in Winchester where she died, in the arms of her sister, on Friday, the 18th of July 1817, at the age of only 41. She was buried the 24th of July at Winchester Cathedral. Jane never married.

During her formative years, Jane wrote plays and poems. At 14, she wrote her first novel, "Love and Friendship" and other juvenilia. Her first submission to a publisher, however, was in 1797 titled "First Impressions" (later "Pride and Prejudice"). In 1803 "Susan" (later "Northanger Abbey") was in fact sold to a publisher for a mere £10 but was not published until 14 years later, after her death. Her first accepted work was in 1811 titled "Sense and Sensibility", which was published anonymously as were all books published during her lifetime. She revised "First Impressions" and published it entitled "Pride and Prejudice" in 1813. "Mansfield Park" was published in 1814, followed by "Emma" in 1816, the same year she finished "Persuasion" and began "Sanditon", which was eventually

left unfinished. Both "Persuasion" and "Northanger Abbey" were posthumously published in 1818.

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4.1.1 JANE AUSTEN'S LIMITED RANGE

Jane Austen's Limited Range

3 or 4 Families in a Country Village

Jane Austen was commendably conscious of her potentialities as well as her limitations. Surely she may be described as a very conscientious novelist. She confined her creative activity to the depiction of whatever fell within her range of personal experience, and this range being extremely narrow, she worked on a very small canvas. She was the daughter of a country parson, and most of her life was spent at Steventon, Bath, Southampton and Chawton, small villages which remained unaffected by the great political upheavals and revolutionary changes in the social structure. But she had minutely observed the domestic involvements of the parishioners and she decided to write about them only.

In a letter to her niece Anna Austen, Jane Austen wrote, "3 or 4 families in a country village is the very thing to work on". These three or four families belong to the gentry, as it is the life of the genteel people that she deals with. She omits the lower classes—servants, labourers, etc. altogether. She barely touches the aristocracy, and if she does, it is only to satirise it. The country gentry may sometimes include people like the Gardiners, who are in trade, but that is very rare. Jane Austen religiously adhered to this range—"I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way." And all through she does keep herself to her 'little bit (two inches wide) of ivory'.

Jane Austen's Familiar Theme of Love and Marriage

Jane Austen's common theme is love and marriage. In almost all of her six novels, there are beautiful girls waiting for eligible bachelors to get married to them. Their mothers and aunts are always contriving how to trap these eligible bachelors. There is no other pursuit to keep them engaged. This was a period of the American War of Independence, of the French Revolution and of the Napoleonic Wars. But Jane Austen's characters are blissfully not aware of these tumultuous events. The only relevance of the militia in a Jane Austen novel is its ability to provide girls with handsome military officers to flirt with and if possible to elope or marry. There is very little religion in her novels. Her characters are incapable of any deep spiritual insights or religious speculations. She is a fine delineator of social manners but shuns all discussion of spiritual or metaphysical

issues. Lord David Cecil aptly observes that Jane Austen studies men in relation with each other and not in relation to God, to politics or to abstract ideas.

Jane Austen draws characters from very ordinary life. Her men do not have any soaring ambitions. Without any opposition her women accept their social position and engage themselves exclusively in matrimonial pursuits. In her novels there are no great villains, no great saints, no eccentric characters, no cynics, no passionate people; for her there are no Iagos, no Micawbers or Betsy Trotwoods, no Rochester or Jane Eyres. Her characters enjoy a very smooth tenor of life. They spend their time in balls and dinners, walks, playing cards and visiting friends. In her world no surprising events take place, no adventures, no mysteries. The greatest villainy that ever disrupts the evenness of a Jane Austen novel is an elopement—Wikham may elope with Lydia or Henry Crawford with Maria.

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Jane Austen's view is fundamentally ironic. She does not deal with the passionate, the tragic, and the widely humorous. She selects for treatment only those aspects of social behaviour that can lend themselves to ironic treatment, hypocrisy, pretentiousness, incongruities of speech and conduct, and self-deception. She cannot scale the giddy heights of romantic love nor fathom the depths of despair and frustration. But she can chuckle at the subtle inconsistencies of human behaviour one comes across and can share her amusement with her readers.

Jane Austen signifies a ‘feminisation of English novel'. She writes as a woman and on themes of interest to women. But here also Jane Austen imposes certain limitations on herself. Margaret Kennedy writes, “We sit in the parlour with girls to whom one-half of the human race are fathers, brothers, uncles, cousins and suitors, but never husbands”. She further adds, “And in a virgin's life, only those experience are selected which furnish material of comedy.” In her novels men appear except in the company of women. There are no exclusively male sports like hunting. The novels are very neat and clean. There is no obscenity, no vulgarity, nothing that is capable of corrupting a maid's innocent heart. Secondly, the action in her novels is unfolded from her heroines' point of view. In *Pride and Prejudice* everything is looked at through Elizabeth's eyes.

Jane Austen's limited range has given rise to some very scathing criticism. Edward Fitzgerald criticises her narrow range, "She never goes out of the Parlour". He finds Jane Austen “quite capable in a circle I have found quite unendurable to walk in". H.W. Garrod finds fault with the monotonous uniformity of her materials, "A drab scenery the worse for use, a thing plot unfashionably cut and by turning, relining, and trimming made to do duty for five or six novels; a dozen or so stock characters—these are Miss Austen's materials.” Charlotte

Bronte chides her lack of passion, "She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him by nothing profound. The passions are perfectly unknown to her; she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood."

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That Jane Austen's range is undeniably limited yet the same may be defended. About her themes, Scott observes, "The subjects are not often elegant and certainly never grand; but they are finished up to Nature, and with a precision which delights the reader."

About her character, Macaulay comments: **"**She has given us a multitude of characters, all, in a certain sense, commonplace, all such as we meet each day. Yet they are all as perfectly discriminated from each other as if they were the most eccentric of human beings."

She is an ironist and a detached observer of life, but it does not mean that she lacks a moral concern. As Andrew H. Wright points out, irony in her hands is "the instrument of a moral vision, it is not a technique of rejection". To conclude, we may say that her range may be limited and her materials trivial, but her achievement is not insignificant. "Working with materials extremely limited in themselves", says Andrew H. Wright, "she develops themes of the broadest significance; the novels go beyond social record, beneath the didactic, to moral concern, perplexity and commitment."

4.1.2 JANE AUSTEN'S ART OF CHARACTERISATION

Jane Austen's Art of Characterisation

The range of Jane Austen's characters is rather narrow. She draws her characters from the landed gentry in the countryside. Sir Walter Scott very accurately describes this range:

> *(Jane Austen) confines herself chiefly to the middling classes of society. Her most distinguished characters do not rise greatly above well-bred gentlemen and ladies; and those which are sketched with most originality and precision, belong to a class rather below that standard.*

She omits the servants, the labourers, even the yeomanry. Servants appear wherever they are needed. But we never personally meet him. Aristocracy also is hardly touched. And if Jane Austen does take an aristocratic character, it is only to satirise him. Lady Catherine de Bourgh in *Pride and Prejudice* is arrogant, pretentious, stupid and vulgar. The Honourable John Yates in *Mansfield Park* is inconsiderate, insensitive and silly. Viscountess Dalrymple and her daughter in

Persuasion are, in Anne Elliot's words, 'nothing'. Jane Austen finds herself at home only with the country gentry and their usual domestic involvements.

Despite such a limited range to choose from, Jane Austen never repeats her characters. "In her six books, she never repeats a single character", says Lord David Cecil. He further says, "The snobbishness of the Rev. Mr. Collins is unlike that of the Rev. Mr. Elton. Isabella and Lucy Steele are both calculating flirts but not the same sort of calculating flirts. There is all the difference in the world between the vulgarity of Mrs. Bennet and the vulgarity of Mrs. Jennings. Out of her small parsonage house Jane Austen's gay wand conjures innumerable troops of unique individuals." Exactly the same view is held by Lord Macaulay, who, conceding that her characters are commonplace, declares:

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> *Yet they are all as perfectly discriminated from each other as if they were the most eccentric of human beings.*

Characters Revealed Dramatically and through Direct Comment

Jane Austen usually presents her characters dramatically through their conversation, their actions, and their letters. She makes a very careful use of conversation which, in Robert Lynd's view, is three-fourths of life in her world. Darcy and Wickham, Lydia and Caroline reveal much of themselves through their actions, while some of them, like Collins and Lydia, are revealed through their letters. A direct comment is sometimes made, but that is often in the form of an explicit statement of what has already been suggested dramatically. Thus in the first chapter of *Pride and Prejudice*, the mean understanding of Mrs. Bennet and the sarcastic humour of Mr. Bennet have already been revealed in their dialogues before the novelist makes a direct comment about them. Similarly earlier she herself tells us that Mr. Collins is not a sensible man, we have already become aware of the fact from his letter.

Character Revealed though Comparison and Contrast

Although Jane Austen does not conceive her characters in pairs as Thackeray usually does, her characters are considerably revealed through comparison and contrast with others. Lady Catherine and Mrs. Bennet balance each other in their vulgarity as well as their matchmaking manoeuvres. Wickham serves as contrast to Darcy while Bingley serves as foil to him. Different merits of Elizabeth's character are brought into prominence as she is compared and contrasted with Jane and Caroline Bingley. It is also befitting to compare Elizabeth with Emma or Anne or Mr. Collins with Mr. Elton.

Jane Austen builds characters by piling unlimited details about them. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the Elizabeth-Darcy relationship is done through countless

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minute details like Darcy's dislike of Mrs. Hurst's leaving Elizabeth to take his disengaged arm as they walk in the Netherfield Park or his coming to stand near Elizabeth as she plays on the piano at the Rosings, details which look trivial and insignificant in the first instance but whose significance is realised only when one has finished reading the novel.

Jane Austen is a great realist in art. Her characters are not creatures of an airy utopian world. They are all flesh in their verisimilitude to life. Jane Austen studies her characters sympathetically but objectively. As regard to their appearance, she treats them quite generally, trying to fix them with a few bold strokes, but she is diligent in providing details about their disposition, bearing, manners and accomplishments. She tries to penetrate to the very core of their being. Lord David Cecil writes, "She is not content just to dash down her intuitive impressions of the people". He further adds, "Her lucid knife-edged mind was always at work penetrating beneath such impressions to discern their cause, discover the principles of her subject's conduct the peculiar combination of qualities that go to make up his individuality. And she shows us surface peculiarities always in relation to these essentials."

Jane Austen's minor figures are flat. They do not grow, and they do not surprise us. They are fully developed when we first meet them. Then as the action progresses and we observe them in different situations, our first impressions of them get confirmed, but they do not reveal any new facts of their personality. Mrs. Bennet has been shown to be stupid right from the very first scene. Her subsequent appearance at the Netherfield Park or her reaction to Lydia's elopement simply confirms her stupidity and vulgarity. This is true of almost all of her minor characters.

But her major characters are ever-changing and ever-growing. Usually self-deceived in the initial stages they are capable of understanding, of growth and maturity. They are both complex and dynamic. They are the type of intricate characters that Elizabeth (or Jane Austen) says she likes most. Her heroines blinded by their ego, vanity or over-confidence in their understanding commit gross errors of judgment and suffer bitter reverses in the beginning. But by virtue of their perception they are gradually disillusioned and thus they grow.

In Jane Austen's hands, even the familiar and commonplace characters become very interesting. An eminent critic describes Jane Austen as a prose Shakespeare: "What, in other hands, would be flat, insipid, intolerable piece of impertinent dullness, becomes, at her bidding, a sprightly versatile, never-flagging chapter of realities." Thus, touched by the magic wand of Jane Austen's art, even the fool and bore of real life become amusing characters.

Her Failures

There is hardly any Jane Austen's character that fails to impress us. Still there are a few characters that do not look enough life-like or relevant. Mary Bennet fails to impress, nor is she even indispensable to the story. Jane Fairfax in Emma is rather shadowy. Margaret in *Sense and Sensibility* never comes to life. Jane Austen somehow fails over Marianne too, for although she does not have much sympathy for her, she is made to look like a heroine in a tragedy. But these minor failures do not detract much from her reputation as one of the greatest delineators of characters.

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4.1.3 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: AN OUTLINE STORY

Pride and Prejudice: An Outline Story

The chief business of Mrs. Bennet's life was to find suitable husbands for her five daughters. As a result she heard with elation that Netherfield Park, one of the great houses of the neighbourhood, had been let to a London gentleman named Mr. Bingley. Gossip such as Mrs. Bennet loved reported him a rich and overall eligible young bachelor. Mr. Bennet heard the news with his usual dry calmness, suggesting in his mild way that perhaps Bingley was not moving into the country for the single purpose of marrying one of the Bennet daughters.

Mr. Bingley's first public appearance was at a ball in the neighbourhood. With him were his two sisters, the husband of the older, and Mr. Darcy, Bingley's friend. Bingley was an immediate success in local society, and he and Jane, the oldest Bennet daughter, pretty girl of sweet and gentle disposition, were attracted to each other at first sight. His friend, Darcy, however, created a bad impression, seeming cold and extremely proud. In particular, he insulted Elizabeth Bennet, a girl of spirit and intelligence and her father's favourite. He refused to dance with her when she was sitting down for lack of a partner, and he said in her hearing that he was in no mood to prefer young ladies slighted by other men. On future occasions, however, he began to admire Elizabeth in spite of himself. At a later ball she had the satisfaction of refusing him a dance.

Jane's romance with Bingley flourished quietly, aided by family calls, dinners and balls. His sisters pretended great fondness for Jane, who believed them wholly sincere. The more critical and discerning Elizabeth suspected them of hypocrisy, and quite rightly, for they made great fun of Jane's relations, especially her vulgar, garrulous mother and her two ill-bred officer-mad younger sisters. Miss Caroline Bingley, who was eager to marry Darcy and sensibly aware

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of his growing admiration for Elizabeth, was especially loud in her ridicule of the Bennet family. Elizabeth herself became Caroline's particular target when she walked three muddy miles to visit Jane, who was sick with a cold at Netherfield Park after a ride through the rain to accept an invitation from the Bingley sister. Until Jane could be moved home, Elizabeth stayed there to nurse her. During her visit Elizabeth received enough attention from Darcy to make Caroline Bingley wish sincerely for Jane's recovery. Her fears were not ill-founded. Darcy admitted to himself that he would be in some danger from the charm of Elizabeth, if it were not for her inferior family connections.

Elizabeth now acquired a new admirer in the person of Mr. Collins, a ridiculously snobbish clergyman and a distant cousin of the Bennets who would some day inherit Mr. Bennett's property because that gentleman had no male heir. Mr. Collins's patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, had asked him to marry, and he, always obsequiously obedient to her wishes, hastened to comply. Thinking to alleviate the hardship caused to the Bennet sister by the entail which gave their father's property to him, Mr. Collins first decided to propose to Elizabeth. Much to her mother's displeasure and her father's joy, she firmly and promptly rejected him. He almost instantly transferred his affections to Elizabeth's best friend, Charlotte Lucas, who, twenty-seven and somewhat homely, accepted at once his offer of marriage.

During Mr. Collins's visit, the younger Bennet sisters, Kitty and Lydia, on one of their many walks to Meryton, met an attractive new officer, Mr. Wickham, stationed with the regiment there. Being outwardly charming, he became a favourite among the ladies, and even with Elizabeth. She was willing to believe the story that he had been cheated out of inheritance left him by his godfather, Darcy's father. Her suspicions of Darcy's arrogant and greedy nature deepened when Wickham did not come to a ball given by the Bingleys, a dance at which Darcy was also present.

After the ball, the entire Bingley party suddenly left Netherfield Park. They departed with no intention of returning, as Caroline wrote to Jane a short farewell note which hinted that Bingley might soon become engaged to Darcy's sister. Jane accepted this news at face value and believed that her friend Caroline was telling her gently that her brother loved someone else, and that she must cease to hope. Elizabeth, however, was sure of a plot by Darcy and Bingley's sisters to separate him and Jane. She persuaded Jane that Bingley did love her and that he would return to Hertfordshire before the winter was over. Jane almost believed her until she received a letter from Caroline assuring her that they were all settled in London for the winter. Even after Jane had given her this news, Elizabeth remained convinced of Bingley's affection for her sister and deplored

the lack of resolution which made him a pawn in the hands of his scheming friend.

About that time Mrs. Bennet's sister, Mrs. Gardiner, a likeable and intelligent woman with a great deal of affection for her two oldest nieces arrived for a Christmas visit. She suggested to the Bennets that Jane should return to London with her for a rest and change of scene and thus to renew her acquaintance with Bingley. Elizabeth, although not too hopeful of the success of the plan, pointed out that proud Darcy would never let his friend call on Jane in the unfashionable London street on which the Gardiners lived. Jane accepted the invitation, however, and she and Mrs. Gardiner started for London.

The time drew near for the wedding of Elizabeth's friend, Charlotte Lucas, to the obnoxious Mr. Collins. Charlotte asked Elizabeth to visit her in Kent. In spite of her feeling that there could be little pleasure in such a visit, Elizabeth promised to do so. She felt that in taking such a husband Charlotte was marrying simply for the sake of an establishment, as was really the case. Since she herself could not sympathize with her friend's action, Elizabeth thought their days of real intimacy were over. As March approached, however, she found herself eager to see her friend, and she set out with much happiness on the journey with Charlotte's father and sister. On their way, the party stopped in London to see the Gardiners and Jane. Elizabeth was sure Bingley had not been told of Jane's presence in London and blamed Darcy for keeping it from him.

After arriving at Collins's home, the whole party was warmly welcomed, as Mr. Collins repeatedly assured them, by a dinner invitation from Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Darcy's aunt and Mr. Collins's patroness. Elizabeth found Lady Catherine a haughty, ill-mannered woman and her daughter thin, sickly and shy. Lady Catherine was extremely fond of inquiring into other people’s affairs and giving them unasked advice. Elizabeth turned off the meddling old woman's questions with cool indirectness, and saw from the effect that she was probably the first who had dared to do so.

Soon after Elizabeth's arrival, Darcy came to visit her aunt and cousin. He would frequently pay visits at the parsonage; he and Elizabeth resumed their conversational fencing matches. His rather stilted attentions were suddenly climaxed by a proposal of marriage, but one couched in such proud and condescending terms that Elizabeth indignantly refused him. When he requested her reason for such an emphatic rejection, she mentioned his part in separating Bingley and Jane, and also his mistreatment of Wickham. He became angry and left the place abruptly, but the next day brought a letter answering her charges. He did not deny his part in separating Jane and Bingley, but he gave as his reasons the improprieties of Mrs. Bennet and her younger daughters, and also his sincere

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belief that Jane did not love Bingley. As for his alleged mistreatment of Wickham, he proved that he had acted most generously toward the unprincipled Wickham, who had repaid his kindness by attempting to elope with Darcy's young sister. Elizabeth, at first incensed at the proud tones in which he wrote, was finally forced to acknowledge the justice of all he said, and her prejudice against him began to fade. Without seeing him again she returned home.

She found her younger sister clamouring to go to Brighton, where the regiment formerly stationed at Meryton had been ordered. When an invitation came to Lydia from a young officer's wife, Lydia was allowed to accept it despite Elizabeth's protests. Elizabeth herself was asked by the Gardiners to go with them on a tour which would take them into Derbyshire, Darcy's home county. She accepted, reasoning that she was not very likely to meet by going into the same county with them. While they were there, however, Mrs. Gardiner decided they should visit Pemberley's home. Elizabeth made several excuses, but her aunt was insistent. Then learning that the Darcy family was not at home, Elizabeth agreed to go.

At Pemberley, an unexpected and most embarrassing meeting took place between Elizabeth and Darcy. He was more polite than Elizabeth had ever known him to be, and asked permission for his sister to call upon her. The call was duly paid and Elizabeth's party was suddenly cut short when a letter came from Jane telling Elizabeth that Lydia had run away with Wickham. Elizabeth told Darcy about the incident, and she and the Gardiners left for home at once. After several days the runaway couple was located and a marriage arranged between them. When Lydia came home as heedless as ever, she told Elizabeth that Darcy had attended her wedding. Elizabeth, suspecting the truth, learned from Mrs. Gardiner that it was indeed Darcy who brought about the marriage by giving Wickham money.

Shortly after Lydia and Wickham left, Bingley came back to Netherfield Park and with him came Darcy. Elizabeth, now more favourably inclined to him than ever before, hoped his coming meant that he still loved her, but he gave no such sign. Bingley and Jane, on the other hand, were still in love with each other, and became engaged, to the great satisfaction of Mrs. Bennet. Soon afterward Lady Catherine paid the Bennets an unexpected call. She had heard it rumoured that Darcy was engaged to Elizabeth. Hoping to marry her own daughter to Darcy, she had charged down with characteristic bad manners to order Elizabeth not to accept his proposal. The spirited girl was not to be cowed by the bullying Lady Catherine and coolly refused to promise not to marry Darcy. She was far from certain she would have another chance, but she had not long to wonder. Unfortunately Lady Catherine repeated to Darcy the substance of her own

conversation with Elizabeth, and he knew Elizabeth well enough to surmise that her feelings toward him had very much changed. He returned to Netherfield Park, and he and Elizabeth became engaged, Pride had been humbled and prejudice dissolved.

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4.1.4 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AS A DOMESTIC NOVEL

Pride and Prejudice as a Domestic Novel

A domestic novel deals with the homely life of a family, preferably belonging to the middle class. Its range is very narrow. It takes no cognisance of the social movements or political upheavals that might affect the general tenor of life. There is nothing philosophic in it to give it depth, nothing overtly romantic to save it from being mundane and earthly, and no crime or suspense to make it exciting. Its characters are all pedestrians, the homely people given to a narrow range of interests. The usual theme of a domestic novel is love and marriage and the various stresses and strains of married life.

A domestic novel is consequently a piece of art with a very limited scope. But it would be wrong to think that its limitedness detracts it from its greatness. For greatness is a matter of presentation or treatment. A good novelist, taking a very ordinary theme with limited possibilities of development might invest it with universal significance, whereas a less talented writer might take a great theme only to spoil it through poor representation. The wideness of the canvas is no indication of the quality of a painting. Its quality is determined by the vision of the painter and the delicacy of the artistic touch with which that vision is projected in it. In addition, love and marriage are the pivots of life and the society exists in small family units. Thus the most significant and formative human experiences are usually gained in the limited family sphere. A novelist using these domestic experiences as his material can portray a meaningful picture of life.

Jane Austen has correctly been described as a writer of domestic novel. She is known for never going 'out of the parlour'. She has made a very frank confession that for her 'two or three families in a country village' are enough to work with. Thus *Pride and Prejudice* deals with the domestic life and aspirations of the Bennets, the Lucases, the Bingleys, and the Darcys with scattered references to a few other families. These are all middle class families. The Bingleys and Darcys are comparatively affluent. Since they are all land-owners, they don’t have anything to do to earn their living. The usual tensions of working life are absent from their life. Their major activities are giving dinners, paying visits or arranging balls. Ladies knit, play on the pianoforte or the harpsichord,

ladies and gentlemen play cards or indulge in idle gossip. At the most, they go on small family trips to places of scenic beauty or health resorts. *Pride and Prejudice* consists of a ball at Meryton, another at Netherfield, Jane's visit to Netherfield, and Elizabeth's visits to the Hunsford Parsonage and the Rosings.

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Apparently, *Pride and Prejudice* is concerned with husband-hunting. The chief aim of Mrs. Bennet, the vulgar and stupid mother of five marriageable daughters, is to strike suitable matches for them. The Lucas family, with Charlotte Lucas plain and rapidly ageing, is confronted with the same problem. Miss Bingley is eager to secure Darcy's hand for herself. Lady Catherine is equally interested in her daughter's marriage with Darcy. Thus the action of the novel centres on the efforts of ladies either to secure suitable husbands for their daughters or for themselves.

However below the surface, Jane Austen has a more serious concern with life. She is interested in discussing the importance of marrying where there is intellectual understanding and emotional compatibility, and not just where there is skin-deep beauty or the allurement of money. Mr. Bennet marries for beauty and for good looks but soon gets disillusioned with marriage, for his wife has a weak understanding and an illiberal mind. Her tastes are also vulgar. Thus, a disappointed Mr. Bennet seeks comfort in his library or in his walks. He grows careless and indifferent. Love and respect vanish from their married life. Charlotte Lucas knows that Mr. Collins is a pretentious ass. However she agrees to marry him because he is in a position to offer her financial security. She too never finds real happiness in life. The presence of her husband gets on her nerves. Sometimes, when they are in company, he makes her feel embarrassed and humiliated by his absurd remarks. So she heaves a sigh of relief when he leaves the house. Lydia too is captivated by Wickham's handsome features. That he is utterly unprincipled is obvious to everybody, for he shifts from Elizabeth to Lydia with great felicity. But Lydia prefers to ignore this fact. And she too ruins her life.

Jane Austen has a rich comic vision. Lord David Cecil rightly observes, “Jane Austen's English drawing-rooms are theatres in which elemental human folly and inconsistency play out their eternal comedy”. This comic vision is projected through the ironic treatment of situations, episodes and characters. Mrs. Bennet, in her anxiety to entrap suitors, drives them away. Lady Catherine, in trying to prevent the marriage of Darcy and Elizabeth, helps them to resolve to get married. Miss Bingley in the process of maligning Elizabeth in the eyes of Darcy raises her in his esteem and spoils her own prospects. Elizabeth prides herself on her perception but discovers that she has been morally blind. She tells Mr. Collins that she is not the type of girl who will reject the first proposal to marriage and accept the second, but this is just what she does. Mr. Darcy tells Bingley that

Elizabeth is not handsome enough to tempt him to dance with, but the girl who is not good enough to dance with is good enough to marry. In addition, a great deal of comedy is provided through the three great comic characters, Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine.

Thus *Pride and Prejudice* is a domestic novel that represents a gripping drama of universal import. The greatness of Jane Austen's art lies in giving a homely and pedestrian theme a great moral dimension and in presenting it so dramatically that one is pressed on to read it with sustained interest.

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4.2 SIR WALTER SCOTT

A History of the Historical Novel

Walter Scott was born on August 15, 1971 at Edinburgh. He has as his birthplace a city alive with associations of Scottish greatness and glory. As a child he was delicate and ailing, the result of an illness while still an infant, but his fragile physique at this time lent a more vivid life to his imaginative sensibilities. When he was thirteen he became familiar with Percy's *Reliques*, while the romance of Tarso and Spenser's' *Faerie Queene* proved more congenial than ordinary book-learning. He tried to tell stories to his companions with an aptitude only equalled by another eat popular writer, Charles Dickens. Even when called to Bar, in 1792, he proved to be a more promising story teller than a lawyer." It is said of him that he was born in the right country and at the right place. His mother, Anne Rutherford, was a woman of imagination and inexhaustible memory; a great genealogist, full of stories and local legends which was a resource to Scott even when he was in full career as a romantic novelist. He had the past in his blood. Scottish history and tradition were his meat and drink.

Scott had become lame as a result of an infantile ailment, and was sent to live at Sandy Knowe, a farmhouse in Tweeddele, where with some breaks he stayed till he was eight and old enough for school. The bracing air did not cure his infirmity, which was incurable, but made him robust and active, and the still more bracing tales of Border life, the rough and hearty characters, and the romantic scenery left an indelible impression on his mind.

Scott devoted much of his leisure to the exploration of the Border country. During his youth, while he travelled from one farmhouse to another, he had gained an intimate knowledge of the byways of Scottish life, while his retentive memory seized upon every association, treasuring it up till he could make use of it later as a literary artist.

Tales so stirred his young heart that all his life he remained an engrossed listener to tales and a teller of them. He delighted in outdoor country life and in collecting old arms, as well as old ballads and stories. Until the last years of his life, he was an outdoor man, surrounded by the horses and dogs he loved.

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Eclipsed to some extent by Byron as a poet, in spite of the great popularity of his verse romances, he now turned his attention to the novel as a vehicle for giving expression to his wide erudition, his humour, and his sympathies. The change of literary expression was by no means so marked as it seemed. He had always been a story teller in verse rather than a lyric poet. He now became a story teller in prose, using the same fount of inspiration, and it was quite clear that the new medium suited him better than the old one, giving him great elbow room and opportunity to exhibit his rich sense of broad imagery, that had found no opening in verse. In 1814 he left poetry and started writing prose. In the same year was published Waverley and for the next sixteen years he wrote twenty-nine stories.

This work of Scott took the world by storm. The success gained by Waverley was well maintained and even increased by the other prose fictions of Scott that followed. From this time till his death, Scott was the foremost, and one of the most popular men of letters in Great Britain. Scott's poems and novels, before he reached middle age, made him a rich man. He was made Baronet in 1820, and with his wealth he began to build his now well-known seat, Abbotsford. The following novels came out one after the other: 'Guy Mannering' in 1815 and 'The Antiquary' in 1816. 'The Black Dwarf' and 'Old Mortality' were published together in 1816 as the first series of 'Tales of my Landlord'. Then came 'Rob Roy' in 1817 and 'The Heart of Midlothian' in the second series of 'Tales of My Land Lord' in 1818. 'The Bride of Lammermoor', 'Ivanhoe' in 1819: 'The Monastery' and 'The Abbot' in 1820; 'Kenilworth' and 'The Pirate' in 1821. 'The Fortunes of Nigel' in 1822 and 'Quentin Durward' in 1823. In 1825 came out 'The Talisman'.

Scott was thus reaching to the zenith of his popularity. Then suddenly he received a setback. In 1825, Constable, the publisher of most of his novels failed; with him the Ballantynes (his other publisher) came to ruin and the whole of Scott's fortune, except a little settled on his wife and children, became liable for Ballantyne's debt. He devoted himself whole-heartedly to the task of earning through literary output with the result that within a period of three years, he cleared off 40,000 Pounds. But the effort proved too strenuous for him. Early in the year 1829, he had an attack of paralysis and his health started declining rapidly. After a fruitless visit to Italy, undertaken to recruit his failing strength, he returned in 1832 to Abbotsford, where he died on the 21st of September 1832. John Gibson Lockhart, Scott's biographer and son-in-law writes in *Life of Scott*: "The 21st of September, the day of his death, was a beautiful day, so warm that every window was wide open, and so perfectly still that the sound of all others

most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes."

Scott's remaining debt was paid off from the profits of his past literary output and from the money brought by his biography, written by his son-in-law Lockhart. The two sons of Scott having died issueless within a few years of Scott's death, the property of Abbotsford passed on to children of Sophia and Lockhart, in whose possession it still exists. Sophia was Scott's elder daughter and was married to John Gibson Lockhart, who was himself a reputed man of letters and had written Scott's biography.

4.2.1 OUTLINE SUMMARY OF KENILWORTH

OUTLINE SUMMARY OF *KENILWORTH*

Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex are two favourite Earls in the Court of Queen Elizabeth. Although they are devoted to the queen but they hate each other because they are rivals. The Earl of Leicester is more young and handsome and ambitious than the Earl of Sussex. The queen is very fond of him and it is expected that she will marry Earl of Leicester. Though he is aspirant for the hand of Elizabeth but in his heart he is afraid that the Queen will dominate him after marriage. He is also aware that queen has many aspirants to her hand and that she is in habit of with Amy Robsart, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Devenshire. She is only eighteen and is considered as beautiful as an angel. Amy Robsart is aware of her physical charm and aspires to a better position in her married life. Therefore, though she is betrothed to Edmund Tressilian of Cornwall, she fell in love with the Earl of Leicester. The Earl's master of the horses, Richard Varney who is related with the Robsart family, introduces her to the Earl of Leicester. At last she agrees to flee away with Richard Varney in the hope of becoming one day. A secret marriage takes place between the Earl of Leicester and Amy Robsart and she is secretly kept in an old mansion at the village of Cumnor. Anthony Foster keeps watch over her and Amy has only one companion, Janet, daughter of Anthony Foster.

Old Sir Hugh Robsart is severely ill by the shocking news of his daughter's elopement. Edmund Tressilian, her young talented scholar lover is very much pained by the calamity that befalls Sir Hugh Robsart. He, therefore, moves out in search of this young lady with the hope that she be restored to her ailing father. The Robsart family and even Edmund Tressilian is under the wrong impression that the villain Richard Varney has kidnapped Amy. This heightens the grief of the family. Tressilian believes that Varney has forcibly detained Amy and she is in danger. Tressilian goes out in search of Amy Robsart with an intention to restore her to her father. He reaches at Cumnor Place and stays at Black Bear Inn owned by one Giles Gosling. He pays an adventurous visit to

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Cumnor Place along with Michael Lambourne a nephew of Giles Gosling who has no vocation. Anthony Foster accepts Lambourne in his service and Tressilian returns back to the inn though he gets an opportunity to talk to Amy Robsart. Amy Robsart is not willing to leave the Cumnor Place without the Earl's permission even to see her ailing father. Tressilian is helpless and before he leaves the Cumnor Place from the postern gate he meets Varney and indulges in a duel with him but is interrupted by Michael Lambourne. Giles Gosling advises him to leave the Inn as a watch is being kept over him. Giles Gosling arranges for a horse and Tressilian leaves the inn early in the morning. On the way his horse is deprived of forefoot shoe and in search of a blacksmith he is directed to Wayland who is undertaking this job. The boy who took him to Wayland Smith is Dickle Sludge popularly known as Hobgoblin. This blacksmith who is tired of his present occupation willingly accompanies Tressilian. He tells Tressilian that he has some acquaintance with astrology and alchemy. Tressilian reaches Lidcot Hall, the seat of Sir Hugh Robsart alongwith Wayland and finds his health deteriorating. Wayland Smith administers such a dose that Sir Hugh Robsart gets sound sleep. Tressilian reports the presence of Amy Robsart at Cumnor Place to Sir Hugh Robsart and procures necessary powers from Sir Hugh Robsart to make an appeal on his behalf in the court. He then receives a letter from the Earl of Sussex intimating his serious illness. Tressilian along with Wayland therefore, rushes towards London. There Wayland Smith makes certain purchases in medicines and treats the Earl and succeeds in curing him. In the meantime, queen, on hearing of the serious illness of the Earl deputes the Royal Physician to attend but the Earl being strictly in the treatment of Wayland Smith has to go back without attending upon the Earl. The Queen treats it as an insult. When the Earl comes to know about the incident he sends Raleigh and Blount to the queen to apologize for they were responsible for the misconduct. Raleigh pleases Queen by his manners and conversations. Leicester and Sussex are ordered to attend the court by the queen where she tries to make these two rival lords friends. The Queen also raises the issue of Amy Robsart and in the presence of the Earl of Leicester Varney declares Amy as his beloved and wife. Earl says nothing. At last queen proposes to meet this lady Amy Robsart and the Kenilworth Castle is fixed as the meeting place.

Wayland Smith sees his old master somewhere in the city of London and as he is very much afraid of him he wants to leave the place immediately. Tressilian has no other alternative but to relieve him. He however, assigns him a new duty. He gives him his ring and asks him to go to Giles Gosling and to see what happens there.

Since Earl of Leicester is ambitious, he is persuaded by Varney, who is equally ambitious to neglect Amy and to crave for the affection of the Queen. He also engages one astrologer Alasco by name to predict about his future chances. This same astrologer had prepared the slow poison which was put in the food of the Earl of Sussex. As his medicine failed Varney asks him the reason of the

failure of his drug. The astrologer tells that only he knew the medicine that could have saved the Earl's life. He thinks that only fate has saved the Earl from death. He has, however, doubt over Wayland Smith, who was once working under this very astrologer and must have known the secret of art.

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Finally Varney deputes Alasco to Cumnor Place alongwith Lambourne and orders him to prepare another slow poison that might produce depression of spirits, nausea, headache and an unwillingness to change of place. This he intends to use on Amy. Wayland Smith visits the Cumnor Place in disguise of a peddler and enters the main hall. He hands down a medicine to Janet. This he declares to be remedy of any sort of poison. He also warns Janet to be very careful in attending to her mistress.

Varney requests the Earl to persuade Amy to declare herself for sometime wife of Varney but Earl says that Amy will reject this proposal. He however gives a letter to this effect to Varney and asks him to go to Amy and to try for himself. Varney reaches Cumnor Place but is not able to manage the affair. The only alternative remains before him is to use the medicine over Amy. Foster brings the cup of medicine but because of Janet he is not able to hand it over to Amy. When Janet leaves her Amy is compelled to drink the medicine. When Janet learns this news she is least disturbed because she had already administered the antidote purchased from the peddler. Janet also informs Amy that the same peddler is waiting outside the Cumnor Place to take her away from that place. Amy leaves the Cumnor Place by the horse which the peddler has brought but she insists to be taken to Kenilworth where she wants to receive further orders from the Earl. In the way Wayland Smith and Amy change their dress so that they may not be recognized. They enter the castle from the side gate. Amy is given the room which was allotted to Tressilian. Wayland Smith takes a note from Amy for the Earl and leaves her.

He waits for Tressilian but fails to search him out. When Tressilian reaches at his allotted room he finds it locked and on entering the room finds Army. Tressilian again persuades her to accompany him to her father's place but Amy turns down the proposal. She, on the contrary, requests Tressilian not to divulge anything at least for twenty-four hours. When Wayland sees Tressilian, he puts his hand in the pocket to take out the letter written by Amy to the Earl, he finds that it has been removed. The letter is actually removed by Dickel, the naughty boy. Wayland is very frightened and he decides to run away. When Queen arrives and inquires about Amy, a medical certificate is produced giving an excuse that Amy was seriously ill. At first Tressilian objects to the validity of certificate but says nothing being bound by the words of Amy. He, therefore, asks for twenty-four hours time. Varney again persuades the Earl to gain favour of the Queen and become king of England.

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As the Countess remains alone in her apartment, Lambourne thinking her to be mistress of Tressilian, comes over drunk and tries to catch hold of her. On hearing her shriek Staple rushes in and they both have a fight. Countess gets an opportunity and rushes out of the room into the open garden. There she waits for proper opportunity.

It so happens that before going out on a chase, queen comes out in the garden early in the morning conversing with the Earl. It is at this hour that Earl proposes to the queen. She is so much perturbed that she wants to remain alone for some time. When she is left alone she sees Amy standing in the garden. Amy discloses her identity but objects to be called wife of Varney so that queen takes her to the Earl. By the time Amy reaches before the Earl, she realizes her position and so feigns herself to be mad. Immediately Varney also rushes in and declares that his wife has gone mad.

Earl now becomes angry over the Countess. Varney suggests him to conceal his union with Amy in order to gain favour of Elizabeth. Earl speaks to Amy but she again refuses to remain under the name of Varney's wife. Earl being dependent on Varney at first persuades and then commands but Amy refuses to obey any such command. Eventually he comes to the conclusion that he or Amy must perish.

Varney now adopts another course. He describes the visit of Tressilian in such a way as creates doubt in the mind of Earl about the character of Amy. The Royal physician on the orders of the queen medically examines Amy. As Amy gives reply to no question she is declared mentally unfit. He also obtains permission from the Earl to dispose off Amy in whatever way he likes. In the meantime Varney removes Amy from the castle to execute the wishes of the Earl.

After twenty-four hours are over. Tressilian seeks an interview with the Earl. They meet in the open field of the castle in the night. Wayland disturbs them. He hands over the lost letter. When Earl reads this letter he realizes his mistake but it is too late. He rushes to the queen and commits before her everything. Queen immediately orders Master Secretary to secure bodies of Richard Varney and Alasco dead or alive.

On the way Wayland finds Lambourne dying, as a bullet had passed through his body. In his attempt to detain Amy and Varney he is shot by Varney. Thus a troublesome witness is removed for Varney. On reaching Cumnor Place Amy is kept in such a chamber upstairs which has wooden gallery. There is a mechanical device which removes the wooden plank in case of emergency for protection from external attacks. Varney shows this device to Foster and asks him to use it in destroying Amy. Foster hesitates and before leaving the room warns Amy not to come out of the room in the night. Amy promises him to do so. But Varney adopts another method. He goes out in the garden and from there whistles in the very same way in which Earl of Leicester used to whistle when he visited

the Countess at Cumnor Place. Hearing the whistle, Countess thinks it to be the sign of arrival of the Earl and rushes out of the room. She falls down in the open ditch in the dark and dies Alasco is searched but is found dead in some underground chamber mixing his chemicals.

Soon afterwards Tressilian and Raleigh enter Cumnor Place. Anthony Foster runs into some hidden place and is not traceable. Tressilian is horrified at the end the poor Countess had met. Varney is captured but he commits nothing and makes use of some strong poison prepared probably by Alasco.

Cumnor place is deserted immediately after the murder even then some noise is heard coming from some inner portions of the Cumnor Place. It is believed that it was the noise of Foster. After sometime Janet getting no news of her father becomes sole owner of Cumnor Place and joins hands with Wayland.

Earl is pitied for more than resented. He again becomes a favourite with the Queen. He also takes poison at some later period. Sir Hugh Robsart dies very soon after his daughter having settled his estate on Tressilian. Tressilian remains gloomy for the rest of his life. Wherever he goes he sees the disfigured corpse of the Earl and only object of his affection, the Countess. He goes with his friend Raleigh for the Virginia expedition, and young in years but old in grief, dies before his day in that foreign land.

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4.2.2 THE REAL CREATOR OF THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

Write a note on the historical novel with special reference to Scott.

Or

Examine Scott's claim to be regarded as the real creator of the Historical Novel.

Or

"The Historical Novel as created by Scott was an entirely fresh departure in fiction". (Compton Rickett)

George Lukac writes about the conception of Historical novel in his 'Historical Novel' thus, "The Historical Novel arose at the beginning of the nineteenth century at about the time of Napoleon's collapse. Scott's *Waverley* appeared in 1814. The so-called historical novels of the seventeenth century are historical only as regards their external choice of theme and costume. Not only the psychology of the characters, but the manners depicted are entirely those of the writer's own day. And in the most famous historical novel of the eighteenth century, Walpole's Castle of Otranto, history is like-wise treated as mere customary: it is only the curiosities and oddities of the milieu that matter, not an artistically faithful image of a concrete historical epoch. What is lacking in the so-called historical novel before Sir Walter Scott is precisely the specifically

historical, that is derivation of their individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age."

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Scott's historical novel is the straight continuation of the great realistic social novel of the eighteenth century. Scott's studies on eighteenth century writers, on the whole not very penetrating theoretically, reveal an intensive knowledge and detailed study of this literature. Yet his working compared with theirs, signifies something entirely new. His great contemporaries clearly recognized this new quality. Pushkin writes of him, " The influence of Walter Scott can be felt in every province of the literature of his age. The new school of French historians formed itself under the influence of the Scottish novelist. He showed them entirely new sources which had so far remained unknown despite the existence of the historical drama of Shakespeare and Goethe."

Earnest A. Baker in the *History of English Novel* writes: "The impotence of historical novelists before Scott was due to their entire lack of the historical imagination. It did not occur to them that to give any semblance of life to their revocation of bygone ages they must have a familiar knowledge of how people lived and carried on their private and personal concerns, and be able to think themselves back into a remote past, thrusting out of sight all that had happened, all that had been learned and had changed man's very being, in the intervening centuries. To present and interpret facts was the historian's business, to summon up a past epoch, to show men and women alive in it and behaving as they must have behaved in the circumstances, was the labour and joy of the genuine historical novelist."

Sir Walter Scott occupies a very central niche in English literature, for, as prime architect of the popular historical romance, he initiated a new era in story telling. Up till his day all the great English novels had been studied in contemporary life. Sir Walter, owing to the innate magic with which he had come into the world endowed, seemed to eliminate the time factor and make all life contemporary. For him the past, often by virtue of some chance revelation or contact, ceased to be the past, and became in his consciousness as immediate as the present. From inanimate things he, without any conscious volition of his own, drew life, passion, romantic visions, the actual vibration of events. For him dry bones re-assembled themselves and became clothed to flesh, and rubble re-constituted itself into settings for pageantry.

4.2.3 SCOTT'S MINGLING OF HISTORY AND ROMANCE

Discuss and illustrate Scott's mingling of history and romance.

Scott has fused together history and romance. He had Shakespeare as his Master and like Shakespeare he let his imagination play on the bare historical accounts.

"As Shakespeare was the first to write a historical play that continued to attract theatre-goers, it was rather natural that Scott should take him as his master. Shakespeare read in Holinshed that Prince Henry statement, and he worked up that impressive single combat scene between Hotspur and Prince Hal, with all its high poetry and rich detail from the age of Chivalry. That is what we call the literary and romantic treatment of history. Scott stands on an old battle field, knowing some details of the battle that once took place there, and he constructs in his imagination the whole scene; he places the armies, dresses up the combatants in appropriate dialect and costume, arranges his moon, stars, and fog, and then lets the fight begin. He visits an old Kirkyard where the Covenanters have long slept and neglected, he raises them to life and tells one just how they looked, what fantastic clothes they wore and what strange and insane things they did. He reads an old ballad on Cumnor, a few pages in an antiquarian, a contemporary account of the revels of Kenilworth and has the facts and, and then moves on to create a machinery of a great historical tragedy.

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Shakespeare thought himself justified in tampering with history for dramatic ends. He compressed events, changed their order, and introduced into his own imaginative history events, which never occurred at all, and for which there was no authority in the chronicles. Scott did exactly the same thing. But Scott was not as skilled in manipulating history as was Shakespeare.

The central interest in Scott's historical novels is often not historical and the historical interest is at least always divided with a purely fictitious interest. In 'Waverley' the hero and heroine are not historical: and the same is true of 'Old Mortality, 'Ivanhoe', ‘The Fortunes of Nigel', and ‘The Abbot’. Kenilworth is different only in appearance. Amy Robsart bears a historical name but she is really the typical tragic heroine, and Leicester is the conventional villain with some facts taken from the Earl of Leicester's life for historical semblance. The attention is thus distracted from Elizabeth, Mary, James, Cromwell and the young Stuart. In adopting this method of dealing with history, which was in part Shakespeare's also, Scott was able to give within the vaguely defined boundaries of fact and legend a very free play to his imagination.

The inability or incapacity of historical novelists before Scott was due to their entire lack of the historical imagination. It did not occur to them that to give any semblance of life to their revocation of bygone ages they must have a familiar knowledge of how people lived and carried on their private and personal concerns, and be able to think themselves back into a remote past, thrusting out of sight all that had happened, all that had been learned and had changed man's very being, in the intervening century. Scott never showed history in the making, as Shakespeare repeatedly did. He chose the exact opposite, to show characters as they were made by history. He preferred to be a romancer, on the fringes of history, but the result was that his men of action do not quite fill the part.

Consequently, Scott was a realist when dealing with lowly life, but his prevailing mood was romantic with historical bias.

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4.3 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. Write a critical note on Jane Austen's Limited Range.
2. Discuss *Pride and Prejudice* as a Domestic Novel.
3. Give the outline summary of *Kenilworth*.
4. Write a note on the historical novel with special reference to Scott.
5. Examine Scott's Claim to be regarded as the real creator of the Historical Novel.
6. Discuss and illustrate Scott's mingling of history and romance.

4.4 LET US SUM UP

Unit IV has familiarized you with the life and works of Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott. The Unit has further enlightened you regarding their select works for critical study—Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Scott's *Kenilworth*.

UNIT-V LORD BYRON, WILLIAM HAZLITT

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Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In Unit V we shall tell you about Byron and William Hazlitt. We will further discuss Byron's *Childe Harold*, and Hazlitt's essays. You will be able to:

- Discuss their life and works.
- Give a summary of the prescribed works.
- Offer an analysis on their prescribed works.

5.1 LORD BYRON

Byron and His Poetry

Introduction

Though a child of his age in every sense of the term, Byron stood apart from his great contemporaries and a romantic poet par excellence. He was a great admirer of the classical poetry of Pope and his followers and a voluntary exile from his own country, his poetry and personality worked out a tremendous vogue over the continent which only the reputation of Shakespeare can rival. Byron's poetry came upon his contemporaries like an avalanche and his personality was

like a storm that swept them off their feet and in the following lines of Memorial Verse (1850). Matthew Arnold paid rich tribute to Byron. He had made touching reference to the impact that the great poet's work and personality produced not only on the minds of his own countrymen but also, and more especially, on the continent of Europe.

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When Byron's eyes were shut in death,

We bow'd our head and held our breath,

He taught, us little; but our soul

Had felt, him like the thunder's roll

With shivering heart the strife we saw

Of passion with Eternal law;

And yet with reverential awe;

We watch'd the fount of fiery life,

Which serv'd for that Titanic Strife.

In yet another poem, *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse* (1855), Matthew Arnold said the same thing in very powerful words:

What helps it now, that Byron bore,

With haughty scorn which mock'd smart

Through Europe to the Aetolian shore

The pageant of his bleeding heart?

That thousands counted every groan,

And Europe, made his woe her own?

Byron's Life

There is hardly any other poet in English language whose life-history makes such interesting reading as that of Byron. The poet, who loved to cultivate the cult of solitude, lived an eventful life of intense activity and combined in himself passionate enthusiasm with extra-ordinary capacity for action. His whole life, from the beginning to the end, was characterized with strange actions and mysteriously shocking and obnoxiously painful events happened almost throughout his life but the great poet was not destitute of the noble qualities of human nature and human character.

Byron was born on January 22, 1788 in London. Singularly unfortunate in both his parents, his early life was very unhappy. His father squandered his wife's

fortune and deserted her with her child George Gordon Byron. His mother sometimes showed over-indulgence and immediately after goaded him into fury by her cruel taunts at his lameness. Byron was brought up in comparative poverty and was sent to a day-school at Aberdeen, but failed to learn anything worthwhile. While he was ten years of age, Providence disposed of various heirs to the title (Byron at his birth had not been expected to inherit) and made him George Gordon, sixth, Lord Byron. He was sent to Harrow school and thereafter he entered Cambridge in 1805. Although Byron made no profession of serious study in Cambridge, he was an omnivorous reader, particularly interested in oriental history. His behaviour as a student was very shocking and to the alarm and indignation of the college authorities, he kept bulldogs in his room, and a bear cub that he jokingly said was "in training for a fellowship."

It was at Cambridge that Byron published *Hours of Idleness* (1807) and when, the following years, the Edinburgh Review, attacked it, Byron, who was at work on a satire on English Bards, angrily enlarged his subject and in 1809 published English Bards and Scotch Reviewers. On coming of age in 1809 Byron took his seat in the House of Lords but he had nothing to do with party politics. In the years 1809 he, along with his friend Hobhouse, left English for his first tour on the continent. When he came back in July 1811, he brought with him a manuscript of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*. Byron himself did not believe them to be very good, but a friend persuaded him to publish them and their success was amazing and emphatic. On the tenth of March 1812, Byron awoke and found himself famous because *Childe Harold* had been published. For a brief moment Byron was the sensation of London society. He was reckless, handsome and magnetic. He was a traveller with the glamour of far lands about him. He was a lord. He was a poet whose melancholy had stirred a nation, the great suffering soul which cried out for sympathy. And sympathy he was given in lavish measure, particularly by the feminine half of society.

After the publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, Byron continued to write and his popularity went on increasing. One of his books 'The Corsair' sold in unprecedented number 10,000 copies on the day of publication. It was during these days that the poet, who had become famous throughout the country and abroad, was thinking of marrying and settling down, "if any one will have me." "A wife would be the salvation of me," he once wrote in his journal, and in September 1814, he became engaged to Anne Isabella Milbanke and they were married in January 1815. Byron's marital life was very unhappy; he and his wife lived a life of financial embarrassment and painful disagreements. Though the faults must have been on both the sides, Byron takes the blame on himself, "where there is blame, it belongs to myself, and if I cannot redeem I must bear it".

A year later Lady Byron, taking her baby girl with her, went, apparently for a brief visit, to her parents. A few weeks later her father informed Byron that Lady Byron would not return to him and on April 21, a legal deed of separation was made.

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This sudden separation of Byron from his wife gave rise to a storm of scandal and criticism but at the root of this widespread upsurge of strong feelings against the poet was his habit of mocking which brought for him nothing but hatred and indifference. The accumulated venom of jealousy, distrust, and hatred that had been gathering against him during his mocking triumphant career was released. He had mocked the Tories. He had mocked the middle classes. He had let scandal gather as it might. Ready to fight at the slightest taint of his personal honour (and fighting in those days was with deadly weapons), he had allowed gossips to brew their scandal, snuffing in corners, and they had brewed a broth for him to boil in. The very fact the Lady Byron advanced no public explanation did him the greatest possible damage which could have been done. In default of any plain charge, any rumour might be true. And through London rumour ran like fire through dry straw. Four days after the deed was signed, Lord Byron left England never to return and he stopped in Switzerland to compose a stanza for a new canto of *Childe Harold*. It was in Switzerland that he came in contact with Shelly and his wife. The two poets became friends and there were several months of companionship, during which Byron was writing steadily. From Switzerland Byron went to Venice and stayed there for some years (1816-1819). It was in Venice that the fourth canto of Childe Harold was written after the poet had been able to take a trip to Florence and Rome. He began another work *Don Juan* in Venice in 1818 and from Venice also began that torrent of letters with which the lonely exile showered his friends, letters which alone place Byron among the great writers. During these days Byron's poetic energy was prodigious and the two cantos of *Don Juan* his best and most well-known work were written during this period and when these two cantos were published in 1819, they caused a great uproar in England.

The last phase of Byron's life was his expedition to Greece, and it was the perfect end for the great Byron drama. The Greeks had revolted from Turkey, and the Greek committee elected Byron as member in the spring of 1823. He accepted the responsibility and prepared to go to Greece to assist on the field while the committee acted in London. The imaginative poet became a practical politician, and the unrestrained libertine changed into a sturdy military disciplinarian. "I have come to help none of you as a partisan, but all of you as a friend". Byron devoted himself heart and soul to the Greek struggle for independence and although he knew that Missolonghi was a fever trap and he was suffering from

fever, he nevertheless went there when he was needed most. He reached there on January 5, 1824 and found the conditions extremely depressing. He had to sleep on a mat. In the midst of incompetence, treachery, murder and mutiny, Byron passionately held fast to the cause which he regarded as noble. He was almost dying when his personal troops whom he most trusted revolted for more pay, and he got up from his bed to subdue them. In his own sector of duty, he kept the revolution alive. He died on April 19, 1824 and on the night of his death a great thunderstorm broke and there was a wild flaring of lightning over his body and his body was given a grand funeral in England that had cast him out.

The Poetry of Byron Reflects the Age

Byron's poetry was very popular in his own lifetime and there were certain reasons for it. G.H. Mair and A.C. Ward write: "In the first place he appealed by virtue of his subject matter- the desultory wanderings of Childe Harold traversed ground every mile of which was memorable to men who had watched the struggle which had been going on in Europe with scarcely a pause for twenty years. Descriptive journalism was then and for nearly half a century afterwards unknown, and the poem by its, descriptiveness, by its appeal to the curiosity of its readers, made the same kind of success that vividly written special correspondence would today; and it had the charm of metre superadded. Lord Byron gave his readers something more than mere description. He added to it the charm of a personality, and the personality was enforced by a title. When it proclaimed its sorrows as the age's sorrows, endowed itself with an air of symbolism and set itself up as a kind of scapegoat for the nation's sin, its triumph was complete. Most men have from time to time resisted the temptation to themselves; many do not even resist it. For all those who chose to believe themselves blighted by pessimism, and for all the others who would have loved to believe it, Byron and his poetry came as an echo of themselves. Men found in him as, their sons found more reputable in Tennyson a picture of what they conceived to be the state of their own minds."

The above valuation of the tremendous appeal of Byron's poetry suffers a little from under-estimation. It is not proper to describe the impact of Byron's poetry as shallow or to compare him with Tennyson who was the poet laureate of his age and who identified himself with the typically Victorian attitude. It is an Indian critic of English poetry, Sri Arvind, who gives a brief view of the appeal of Byron, "But his fame was no accident or caprice of fortune; it was his due from the Time-Spirit. His hasty vehement personality caught up and crowded into its work in a strong though intellectually crude expression an extraordinary number of the powers and the motives of the modern age. The passion for liberty found in him its voice of Tyrrhenian bronze. The revolt and self-assertion of the individual

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against the falsities and stifling conventions of society, denial, unbelief, the scorn of the sceptic for established things, the romance of the past, the restlessness of the present, the groping towards the future, the sensuous, glittering, artificial romance of the pseudo-East, the romance of the solitary, the rebel, the individual exaggerated to himself by loneliness, the immoral or amoral superman, all the flawed romanticism, passionate sentimentalism, insatiable satiety of sensualism, cynicism realism which are the chaotic fermentation of an old world dying and a new world in process of becoming -- a century and a half's still unfinished process -- caught hold of his mood and unrolled itself before the dazzled, astonished and delighted eyes of his contemporaries in the rapid succession of forcible ill-hewn works impatiently cut out or fiercely molten from its first rhetorical and struggling outburst in *Childe Harold* to the accomplished ease of its finale in *Don Juan*."

Bowra's makes an apt remark about Byron: "He was more typical of his time than either Wordsworth or Shelley, for while their outlooks were limited by their private philosophies, Byron absorbed the life around him and expressed what thousands of his contemporaries felt. Indeed, so wide was his understanding that he's a poet not merely of England but of all Europe."

5.1.1 BYRON'S TREATMENT OF NATURE

Byron's Treatment of Nature

Byron, like his contemporaries, loved Nature intensely and passionately and he has given expression to this love at many places in his poetry. He speaks of his love for the high mountains which have been a feeling to him:

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part

Of me and of my soul, as I of them?

Is not the love of these deep in my heart

With a pure passion? Should I not condemn

All objects if compared with these?

No other poet in English language has so powerfully described the live sense of wonder and delight in the glories of Nature:

The morn is up again, the dewy morn

With breath all incense and with cheek all bloom

Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,

And living as if earth contained no tomb.

And glowing into day we may resume

The march of an existence.

Nature gives to the poet an intoxicating delight and in the midst of the beautiful objects of Nature he finds a company that he misses in human society.

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To sit on rocks, to muse O'er flood and fell,

To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,

Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,

And mortal foot had ne'er or rarely been.

To climb the trackless mountain all unseen

With the wild flock that never needs a fold,

Alone O'er steeps and foaming falls to lean-

This is not solitude: 'tis but to hold

Converse with nature's charms and view her stores unroll'd

As a poet of Nature Byron was inspired by a love for the high places of the earth and for the elemental forces of Nature, in the storms at sea and the storms among the Alps, in the rolling waves of the dangerous and all destroying ocean and in the peaks of the mighty mountains. Byron has himself described his attitude towards nature.

Sky-mountains-river-woods-lighting ! ye !

With night, and clouds and thunder-and a soul

To make these felt and feeling.'

In his own way Byron also has a religion of nature, and we need not disbelieve him when he says:

My altars are the mountains and the ocean,

Earth-air-stars,-all that springs from the great whole

Who hath produced, all will receive the soul.

Cazamian aptly points out that it is in his paintings of the scenes from nature that Byron is most original, "without forgetting himself, he paints admirable pictures of the elements, in their calm and above all in their fury. The emotion infused in these landscapes is born of the delightful relaxing of a sorrow-

laden soul, that yearns for untrammelled expansion; in its moments of greatest ardour, this egoistical effusion borders on a mystic communion". Byron found in nature the passionate freedom which the conditions of the human lot denied to man. The world of external nature was mysterious power that was essentially benignant and helpful towards rebellious spirits because it ignores the orthodoxies that exist in human societies. Those who have to suffer torments because of their attitude of revolt against the cramping customs and conventions of society, derive courage and fortitude from those mighty forces of nature which are also possessed of the strong feeling which they themselves have. Of all the romantic poets it was only Byron who was able to face the cruel and inhuman aspects of nature. He sees nature as it is and is not afraid of dwelling on its sinister side. The storm in his Don Juan stands in marked contrast to the storm in *The Ancient Mariner* of Coleridge. While Coleridge catches the alluring magic of a wild moon and dancing stars, Byron dwells on the sullen, brooding atmosphere before the storm comes:

'T was twilight, and the sunless day went down
Over the waste of water; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose the frown
Of one whose hate is masked but to assail,
Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was shown
And grimly darkled O'er the faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days had Fear
Been their familiar, and now Death was here.

No other poet of English has described the power and majesty of the ocean in such powerful words as Byron has done and his invocations to the mighty fill us with a feeling of awe, admiration:

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean – roll !
Ten thousand fleets weep over thee in vain:
Man marks the earth with ruin – his control
Stops with the shore; upon the water plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When for a moment like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd uncoffin'd, and unknown.

5.1.2 CHILDE HAROLD

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Childe Harold

The first two cantos of Childe Harold, which appeared in 1812 when Byron was only twenty-four, made him famous as a poet. Referring to the contemporary reputation of the first two cantos of Childe Harold, Sir Walter Scott has observed: "It was in 1812, when Lord Byron returned to England, that Childe Harold's Pilgrimage made its first appearance, producing an impact upon the public at least equivalent to any work which has a appeared within this or the last century. Reading is indeed so general among all ranks and classes, that the impulse received by the public mind on such occasions is instantaneous through all but the very lowest classes of society, instead of being slowly communicated from one set of reader to another, as was the case in the days of our father. "The Pilgrimage", action of such an extensive medium, was calculated to rouse and arrest public attention in a peculiar degree. The fictitious personage, whose sentiments, however, no one could help identifying with those of the author himself, presented himself with an acknowledged disdain of all the attributes which most men would be gladly supposed to possess. Childe Harold is represented as one satiated by indulgence in pleasure, and seeking in change of place and clime a relief from the medium of a life which glided on without an object. The assuming of such a character as the medium of communicating his poetry and his sentiments indicated a feeling towards the public, which, if it fell short of condemning their favour, disdained, at least, all attempt to propitiate them. Yet the very audacity of this repulsive personification, joined to the energy with which it was supported and to the indications of bold, powerful, and original mind which glanced through every line of the poem, thrilled and surprised the readers, and placed at once upon Lord Byron's head the garland for which other men of genius have laboured long. He was placed pre-eminent among the literary men his country by general acclamation. Those who had so rigorously censured his juvenile essays, and perhaps 'dreaded such another field', were the first to pay warm and, we believed, sincere homage to his matured efforts; while others, who saw in the sentiments of Childe Harold much to regret and to censure, did not withhold their tribute of applause to the depth of description, and the energy of sentiment which animated the 'Pilgrimage'. If the volume was laid aside for a moment, under the melancholy and unpleasing impression that is seemed calculated to chase hope from men, and to diminish his prospects both of this life

and of futurity, it was instantly and almost involuntarily assumed again, as our feeling of the author's genius predominated over our dislike to contemplate the gloomy views of human nature which it was his pleasure to place before us. Something which was set down to the angry recollection of his first failure, which might fairly authorise to a high mind to hold the world's opinion with disdain; something was allowed for the recent family losses to which the poem was alluded, and under the feeling of which it had been partly written; and it seemed to most readers as if gentler and more kindly feature were, at times, seem to glance from under the cloud of misanthropy, which the author had flung around his hero. Thus, as all admired the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, all were prepared to hail the author with that fame which is the poet's most coveted reward, and which is chiefly and most justly due to one who, in the exhausted days, strikes out a new and original line of composition.

It was in the middle of such feeling of admiration that Lord Byron entered, we may almost say for the first time, the public stage on which he has, for four years, made so distinguished a figure. Everything in his manners, person, and conversation tended to maintain the charm which his genius had flung around him; and those admitted to his conversation, far from discovering that the inspired poet sunk into ordinary mortality, felt themselves attached to him, not only by any noble traits, but by the interest of a mysterious, undefined, and almost painful curiosity.

Byron wrote the third and fourth cantos during his self-imposed exile from England. They are written in a different key and there we find Byron a nature thinker and artist. Comparing the first two cantos with the third and the fourth cantos, Brandes writes in his book *Main Currents in 19th Century Literature*: "The stanzas (of the first cantos) which Byron showed Dallas are melodious, sincere in feeling, and occasionally grand; they were the first of the full, harmonious strains which were henceforward to issue from the lips of the poet as long as he breathed the breath of life. But they only faintly forecast what the man was to be with whose fame ten years later the continent of Europe rang. As yet, powerful renderings of nature from the main ingredient this poetry; the lyric outbursts are few and far between; the casual reader these stanza would seem simply to convey world-weary young English aristocrat's impressions of travel, ennobled by the stateliness of the style as the tone of Childe Harold is as idealistic and serious as that of Don Juan is realistic and humorous.

Childe Harold (in the first draft Childe Byron) leaves his country after a badly spent youth, in a mood of splenetic glumness, leaving behind no friend and no loved and no loved one. His is the youthful weariness of life induced by a constitution and state of health inclining to melancholy, and by an all too early satiety of pleasure. There is not a trade in him of the confident jollity of youth or of its desire for amusement and fame; he believes, little as he has seen of life, that he has done with everything; and the poet is so completely one with his hero that not for one moment does he ever soar above him on the wings of irony.

All this made such a powerful impression on the public of Byron's day, is unappealing and nasty to a critical modern reader; the aim at effect is plainly discernible, and the time when vague world weariness was interesting his past. But no one with a practiced eye can fail to see that in this case the mask—for mask it is—covers an earnest and suffering countenance. The mask is that of a hermit; pluck it off, and there still remains a man of a solitary nature! The mask is grandiose melancholy; throw it away; beneath it there is real sorrow. Harold's shell-bedecked pilgrim's cloak is nothing but a kind of ball domino; but it covers a youth of ardent feeling, with a keen understanding, gloom impressions of life and an unusually strong love of freedom. In Childe Harold's better Ego there is no insincerity; Byron himself will be answerable for all hero thinks and feels. And to those who remember what Byron's own conduct, immediately after he wrote Childe Harold, was, and who see a direct contradiction between the fictitious personage's youthfully ardent pursuit of sensual pleasures, we reply that the reason of the apparent contradictions is simply this—that Byron, who in his poetry was still an idealist was not able to reveal his whole nature in the earlier cantos of Childe Harold. All that is there is certainly Byron's but there was in him another different man; and it was not until he wrote Don Juan that he succeeded in introducing this other Byron, as he lived and thought and spoke into his poetry. The incompleteness of the self-description must not be mistaken for simulation or affectation.

When he had become for the second time a homeless and lonely pilgrim, Byron began to preoccupy himself again with the poem of travel in which his youthful sentiments had found expression. He added the third and fourth cantos to Childe Harold. He turned back and felt the youthful feelings once again. The chord he struck in the First and Second Cantos was composed of three notes—the note of solitariness, the note of melancholy, and the note of freedom. Each one of these had become clearer and richer.

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During the first half of the work it is the feeling of loneliness, but communion with nature; true solitariness was to wander amidst 'the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,' unloving and unloved. The outbursts in the stanzas referred to are evoked by remembrances of the poet's childhood, spent in the gorgeous mountain districts of Scotland, or of his visit to the hermit's home on 'lonely Athos'. This was still a love of the solitude of nature which resembled Wordsworth's and which was based upon fear of an unknown, strange world of men and women. The difference between Wordsworth's and Byron's' feeling was no more than this that Wordsworth lived quietly on the natural impression, in the manner of the country man and the landscape painter, while Byron seized it with the longing, nervous ardour of the townsman; and, moreover, that Wordsworth loved nature best in her quite moods, Byron in her wrath.

In the second half of the work the character of the poet's loneliness adopts a different shape. There is a marked difference between the desire for solitary communion with nature which Harold felt as an experienced youth, and that which he felt as a man at the end of his first circumnavigation of the world of men and things. Now it was no longer a fear of human beings, but disgust with them and the things associated with them, which drove him to take refuge in nature. Society the best society of a great metropolis, which to the untaught eye seemed so humane, so right thinking, so refined and chivalrous, had turned its wrong side towards him; and the wrong side is interesting, but not beautiful. He had learned how much friendship the ruined man may consider, had learned that the only force, which he who is making plans for his future can exactly calculate, is the self-love of his fellowmen, with its consequences. So he withdrew into himself again; and the poetry he wrote at this time is not for men of a sociable nature. But a man who has even a little experience of what it is to turn his back on his fellowmen, who in his desire to escape from them has left his home, his country, in search of a new earth and new skies, who in the solitudes of his choice has felt the sight of an approaching human being equivalent to a foul spot on his pure, free horizon in the souls of this man and his like, Byron's lyric outbursts will find an echo.

Childe Harold is solitary. He has learned that he is 'the most unfit of men to herd with men,' because he is not able 'to submit his thoughts to other… to yield dominion of his mind to spirits against whom his own rebelled.'

Amongst men he drops like a wild born falcon with clipped wing. But in his case, to fly from them, is not to hate mankind. It is not dissatisfaction or

defiance which keeps his 'mind deep in its fountain', but fear lest it should 'overboil in the hot throng'.

He believes that it is better to be alone, and thus to become a portion of what surrounds him. High mountains are a 'feeling' to him, but the hum of the human cities is a torture. The mountain, the sky, and the sea are a part of him, and he is a part of them, and to love them is his purest contentment, pleasure. In solitude he is least alone; than his soul is conscious of infinity, a truth which purifies it from self. Harold has not lived the world, nor has it loved him. He is proud of not having 'flattered its rank breath,' nor 'bowed the knee to his idols' nor smiled hypocritically, nor expressed the cries of the crowd. He was among them, but not of them. But he desires that the world and he should part fair foes.

His feeling of solitariness steadily becomes the feeling of melancholy. This note, too, had been struck in the first two cantos; but their melancholy was nothing but the discontent of youth. With a wasted youth behind him, he had stood, like a phlegmatically mournful Hamlet, at the grave of Achilles, declaiming, with a skull in his hand on the worthlessness of life and fame—this young poet who had not yet tasted the sweetness of celebrity, and who in reality hungered for nothing so much as for the very fame which, with so much argumentative philosophy, he feigned to despise. Now he has tasted it, and learned how little nourishment is to be derived from such food.

In his deep sorrow he turns to the element in nature which, by its contrast with his present mood, solaces his sufferings -- the sea, the free open sea, upon whose mane he had laid his hand as a boy, and which knows him as the horse knows his rider. He loves the sea because it is unconquerable, since time cannot even write a wrinkle on its brow, and it rolls now as it rolled at the dawn of creation. But all things in nature remind him of suffering and warfare. The peal of distant thunder is to him an alarm-bell, 'of your departing voices is the knoll of what in me is sleepless-if I rest'. Even the beautiful calm lake of Nemi does not remind him of anything calm and sweet; he calls it 'calm as cherished hate'.

In the first Canto of *Childe Harold* we already find the love of freedom (the third note in the chord struck by the poem) exalted as the one force capable of emancipating from the despair with which the universal sadness has overwhelmed the soul. It has this power because it provides a practical task. During his first visit to Portugal, Childe Harold exclaimed: 'Oh that such hills upheld a freeborn race!' And to the Spaniards he cried: "But his love of liberty at that time was of a purely political nature; it was the free-born Englishmen's indignation at seeing

other nations unable to sake of a foreign yoke to which his own nation would never have dreamt of submitting."

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"Now he has learned what liberty in the wide, full, universal meaning of the word is. Now he feels that free thought is the first essential of all requisite life."

"The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind.' And it is his intention not merely to ponder, but to act. Invoking Time, the great avenger, whom he reminds that he has borne the hatred of the world with calm pride and he has experienced all its varieties of hatred."

He concludes with the prayer: "Let me not have worn this iron in my soul in vain!"

Now, his personal despair shrinks into thing when he beholds the gigantic ruins of Rome; and he feels the insignificance of his fate compared with that has swept away the cities of Greece. He writes: "And when, dissatisfied with liberty of thought alone, he turns his attention to practical matters and occupies himself with the great political struggles of the day, he does not content himself with repeating the old invocations to the departed, on with crying to Venice that she has drowned the glory and honour of centuries in the mire of slavery, and that would be better for her to be whelm'd beneath the waves. Now, he daringly attacks the mighty, the victors, of Waterloo, whom he scornfully calls 'the apes of him who humbled once the proud' and then passes from the outward, political aspect of the great European conflicts, to their, social significance."

To all appearance, he says, France has uprooted old prejudices, and laid in ruins "things which grew, breathed from the birth of time, only to see dungeons and thrones rebuilt upon the same foundation. 'But this will not endure'. Man-kings have at last felt their strength. And even though France 'got drunk with blood to vomit crime."

5.2 WILLIAM HAZLITT

Introduction

William Hazlitt occupies a distinguished position among the brilliant essayists of the first decade of the 18th century who used newspapers, magazines and articles as medium to express in them the awakening of the world in various

fields e.g. Science, art etc. He was stirred by the inventions of Science. He observed the Social and Political changes of his time. He stands in the very front rank of essayists, one who might almost challenge comparison with Lamb. Hazlitt has adorned his writings with ample force while Lamb's essays were distinct by tenderness and charm.

NOTES

Parentage and Birth

William Hazlitt, the fourth child of a Unitarian minister of Irish blood was born on 10th April of 1778 at Maidstone, in Kent. He was brought up in an atmosphere of advanced thought in 1780. His father resigned from his charge and went to Ireland. Then in April 1783 he sailed for America. Later in the year 1783 he got a settled charge at Wem in Shropshire. Here Hazlitt continued to go to school. He studied with this father and learnt French with the girls of neighbouring family.

Hazlitt's Seeding Time

In the Hackney theological college he paid more attention to social and political problems than to Theology, which annoyed his tutors at the college. It soon became obvious that the subjects in which he had been interested exercised no compelling influence upon his energies and he dropped the idea of becoming a priest. He, then passed next few years, apparently doing nothing but taking interest in reading, painting, brooding and struggling to make an expression of his inner feelings in words. His first success as a writer was an essay on the "Principles of Human Action". But this slow progress could not satisfy him. Apart from his little success the discovery of certain treasures of great literature—the sentiment of Rousseau, the majesty of Milton imparted him delight.

The year of 1798 was Hazlitt's wonder year when he got imaginative acquaintance with the poets Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron etc. His fondness of portrait painting enforced him to leave for Paris to study art and he remained there from 1802 to 1803 despite many difficulties. But in 1805 he abandoned this profession and for the first time, devoted his energies to literature.

His First Publication

In 1805 his essay 'On the Principles of Human Action' and a pamphlet entitled 'Free Thoughts on Public Affairs", were published. And in the year 1807 he produced another essay 'To Reply Malthus'.

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Hazlitt's Marriages

Soon after he gained recognition as a writer he was married to John Stoddart Sarah but that marriage resulted in divorce. He was again married to a widow, Mrs. Bride Water in 1824 and enjoyed a relaxed honeymoon by visiting many countries. His collected impressions were published in a volume in 1826. But his union was brief and it was in Switzerland that they left each other. For the third time he married Sarah in Southampton Buildings, situated in Chancery Lane.

Hazlitt and the French Revolution

The aspect of Hazlitt's life and personality that reveal his essentially romantic character found expression in his enthusiastic response to French Revolution. In his youth he was fond of saying:

"I started in life with the French Revolution".

Hazlitt and Reviewers

In the age of Hazlitt there were a number of Reviews as the Quarterly Review. The Edinburgh Review and Blackwoods Magazine. His first book 'Table Talk' was reviewed in Blackwood's Magazine and the table talker was criticized as ‘an ULCER than a man’. He was shocked by such criticism in various periodicals and they expressed the same sort of bad disposition.

Hazlitt as a Lecturer

The years 1819-1820 were marked in a special sense Hazlitt's "Lecture Years". At the Surrey Institution in the Black Friars Road he delivered three series of Lectures -- Lectures on the English poets, Lectures on the English Comic Writers’ and lectures chiefly on the 'Dramatic Literature' of the reign of queen Elizabeth. Two other important publications -- A letter to William Gifford Esq. and political Essays by Hazlitt belong to the year 1819. His 'Round Table' and 'Character of Shakespeare' plays were published in 1817. The 'Characteristic' of 1823 was an attempt to imitate the Maxims of Laroche Foucault. Sketches of the principle picture in England (1824) recalls the adventures of the early painting days. In 1825 appeared the spirit of the age or contemporary portraits, a series of character sketches less distorted than his earlier ones. In 1826 he saw the publication of 'The Plain Speaker' a collection of essays matching the table talk. In the same year, the notes of a journey too, mentioned earlier, was published. These were his later works.

Sickness and Death

In August 1830 Hazlitt fell critically ill. Poverty increased his miseries. So much that even the material help from his old editor Lord Jeffrey proved in vain. He left this world for his heavenly abode on the 18th of September 1830 at the age of fifty-two.

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5.2.1 HAZLITT AS AN ESSAYIST

Discuss Hazlitt as an Essayist?

Hazlitt occupies a unique place in English Literature. He is considered next to Lamb in the field of essay writing, in fact one of those rare writers who are essayists by temperament. Referring to this Hugh Walker has observed in his 'Essay and Essayists': "William Hazlitt is one of those who stand in the very front rank of ordinary matter he has left, might almost challenge comparison with Lamb himself." He wrote two types of essays--miscellaneous and critical. The main traits of his essays are Unity of purpose, abrupt opening, the personal note, purity of diction, criticism of life and literature.

Unity of Purpose

Unlike Lamb, Hazlitt was a professional writer, yet there is a unity of purpose running through all his works. They display his own personal experiences. The subjects are not argued but pictured in them. Each essay dominated by a single idea as 'On Going a Journey' contains the views on going on a journey.

Personal Touch

Hazlitt is always personal and intimate with his readers in his miscellaneous essays. He is never afraid of exposing his innermost secret in the essays. He confesses freely his ideas, feelings and prejudices in his essays. As Hugh Walker brings out: "In Hazlitt we have to deal with a man hardly less emphatically an essayist in temperament, than are Montaigne and Lamb."

Striking and Fine Openings

His essays have striking and fine paragraphs right in the beginning. Sometimes he begins his essay with a paradox and very soon proceeds to emphasize his point of view.

NOTES

Variety of his Interest

One of the secrets of the charm of Hazlitt's essays is the variety of his interest. He was interested in book of all sorts, politics, sports and games, prize fighting, pictures, music and the stage. His subjects reveal his wide knowledge, wisdom and wit. As in the essay 'On the Ignorance of the Learned' he displays his all-round knowledge when he writes, "The mere scholar knows nothing of the pictures of the colouring of Litian, the grace of Raphael, the purity of Domenichino. He is equally ignorant of music; he knows no touch of it from the strains of all accomplished Mozart to the shepherd's pipe upon the mountain."

Absence of Morality

Hazlitt is not a moralist. He does not write his essays with the idea of conveying a moral lesson. In fact he sometimes scoffs at the old time-honoured beliefs as rebel. The essay 'On the Ignorance of The Learned' is obviously written in this very spirit. He exposed the ignorance of the scholars in such a manner that the readers are left with little respect for them. But his essays are full of commonsense and practical wisdom, as he reflected in these lines.

"I would rather be a wood-cutter, or the meanest hind..... than wear out my life, So 'twixt dreaming and awake".

Presence of Gusto

Hazlitt forever writes with great gusto. But when he feels emotionally stirred, he becomes highly poetic and imaginative. Unlike Lamb who is always humble and charming Hazlitt is aggressive, compelling and dominating whatever subject the takes up, deals it powerfully and presents it in a convincible manner.

Movement of Emotion

Hazlitt is very much aware of the tragedy of life. The essay 'On the Feeling of Immortality in Youth' depicts the tragic awareness of life. Such essays are devoid of monotony. We breathe the living air in these delightful essays, and come to know the secrets of life.

Criticism of Life

Though primarily an artist and his main business was to express in words his feelings and sentiments, yet he was a thinker in his own way. His writings contain the reflection on human life and the criticism of life and age.

Purity of Diction

His essays reveal a purity of diction. He had used right words at right place. He has used familiar words, which he interprets or defines in a striking original manner. As he defines cleverness as "a certain knack or aptitude at doing certain things". Further we read that 'Talent is the capacity of doing anything that depends on application and industry such as writing, making a speech, study the law".

NOTES

Combination of Colloquial with the Literary

He takes the help of reason and imagination. Because of it he was taken as a model by the essayists like Stevenson. The art, concealing art was his silent trait.

Conclusion

Thus Hazlitt as an essayist is always interesting. He is capable of maintaining the interest of the reader from the beginning to the end. He gives abundant force and vitality to his essays on account of this own dominating personality and forceful expression. That is why we never feel bored and instead enjoy his highly intellectual and imaginative compositions. W.E. Henley gives high praise to Hazlitt and writes that "at his highest moments Hazlitt is hard to beat and has not these many years been beaten".

5.2.2 THE STYLE OF HAZLITT

Describe the style of Hazlitt as an essayist.

Introduction

William Hazlitt occupies a distinct place among the prose writers of the English Language. Hazlitt's successors in the field of essay writing paid him tall tributes and recognized his merits. Stevenson opines, "We may all be mighty fine fellows but none of us can write like William Hazlitt". In the words of Priestley "He was the essayist of inspired commonsense and of remarkable impassioned enjoyment." His style has been adorned with many qualities which are mentioned here.

NOTES

Originality

The first extraordinary quality of his style is its originality. Unlike Lamb and De' Quincy, Hazlitt has a peculiar style of his own, what he had to say, he said in his own way.

Aphorism

Hazlitt is regarded as the great master of aphorism. He has the capacity of expressing his ideas in a few words that can normally be expressed in the whole page or many pages. For instance in the essay 'On the Ignorance of the Learned' there are found a number of sentences which contain rich store in a little room as—'Learning is, in too many cases but a foil to commonsense, a substitute for the knowledge'. Many more examples may be given to show his genius as an essayist.

Familiar Conversation

He had a deep sense of modesty. He never had a high opinion of his own vocation. It is his modesty which makes us feel his intellectual works inferior to the mechanical skill of the Indian jugglers. 'What abortions are these essays. Yet they are the best that I can do'. This reveals the tone of familiar conversation ringing in his essays.

Use of Suitable Quotations

Hazlitt has a habit of inserting in his essays suitable quotations from other writers and sources. For example in the essays "On the Ignorance of the Learned" a few quotations are added. The essay begins with a poetic stanza from a poem by Butler. Some other quotations used in the essay are-"Leave me to my repose" "To take up his bed and walk" etc. He often misquotes. He has taken more quotations from Shakespeare than anyone. Next to Shakespeare are Milton, Bible, Spenser, Dryden, Pope etc. whom he chose to quote.

Paralleled Constructions and Contrasts

Another characteristic of Hazlitt's style is that it contains parallel constructions and contrast which give his essays a balance. As he writes in his essays "On the Ignorance of the Learned", "The learned man prides himself in the knowledge of names and dates, not of men and things. He thinks and cares nothing about his next-door neighbours but he is deeply read in the tribes and castes of Hindoos characteristics. Thus he talks about the present, past and future events, thought and action, writing and speaking etc."

Copious and Lively

Occasionally Hazlitt's style is copious though not verbose. He takes pleasure in giving several illustrations to clarify his point of view. His style is lively and contains sensible literary conversations that have been adorned with spontaneity and simplicity. His literary and conversational style offers him variety and helps him to communicate his sincerity. It has a weight of thought and emotion.

NOTES

Their Unique Quality

Apart from all the other qualities Hazlitt's style possesses a blend of grace, vigour and individuality. Some times he offers solemn and stately music. He sees poetic visions and images everywhere and expresses them.

Conclusion

The style of Hazlitt, on the whole is the style of a highly intellectual person. It consists of terse, strong, nervous sentences expressing the idea of a trained thinker and sometime even a single word enters to the earth of the subject. He is never diffused or obscure. As H. Walker points out, "Hazlitt's sentences fall like the blows of the hammer on the anvil. He is compelling, not winning if he gains victory, it is a victory of the intellect rather than of the emotions".

In brief Hazlitt had a style of his own as a prose writer. It is creative, vivid and vigorous. Referring to this he has observed, in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, "Hazlitt seems never to have been without the word which would express with directness and vividness what was in his mind."

5.3 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. Discuss Byron and his poetry.
2. The poetry of Byron reflects the Age or the Spirit of the Times. Discuss.
3. Give an estimate of Byron's Treatment of Nature.
4. Write the summary of *Childe Harold.*
5. Discuss William Hazlitt as an Essayist.
6. Describe Hazlitt’s style as an essayist.

NOTES

5.4 LET US SUM UP

Through Unit V we have discussed Byron and William Hazlitt. Further discussion on Byron's *Childe Harold* and Hazlitt's essays has made you capable enough to summarize and critically evaluate these works.

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Edward Albert A History of English Literature
2. Hudson An Outline History of English Literature
3. Ifor Evans A Short History of English Literature
4. M H Abrams A Glossary of Literary Terms
5. M. H. Abrams (ed.), The Norton Anthology of English Literature, London: Norton
6. Pat Rogers (ed.), The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature, London, Oxford University Press.
7. A N Jeffares (ed.), The Macmillan History of Literature, London, Macmillan.