高等学校英语专业系列教材

英国文学经典选读

刁克利 编著

Classical Readings of English Literature

（下）

外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

“高等学校英语专业系列教材”是为英语专业本科生和研究生编写的教材，包括语言知识和相关专业知识三个方面。本系列教材具有科学，注重时代性、知识性与实用性，技能的基础上进一步扩展知识领域，

本书是供高等学校英语专业学生使用的英国文学教材，涵盖了从Anglo-Saxon时期到20世纪的主要作家作品。全书分上、下两册，共44个单元，可供一个学年使用。本书具有以下特点：

- 在介绍作家和文学作品的同时，巧妙地融合了文学史的内容，体系更完整。
- 将文学批评方法和理论热点融入到每一单元，帮助学生提高文学欣赏和文学批评水平。
- 每单元设有课后问答题，便于学生更好地理解内容，也有助于学生准备英语专业研究生入学考试。
- 每单元后的课堂活动可激发学生的学习积极性，活跃课堂气氛。

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前言

文学作品既是一种语言精华的体现，也是一个民族文化、精神与情感的反映。

英国文学学习至少有四个目的：一是阅读最优美的英语；二是系统地学习英国文学知识，提高作品欣赏能力，启迪并发展文学批评能力；三是开阔视野，了解与文学相关的英语文化和思想潮流的产生和发展；四是丰富情感体验，提高人文素养和思想水平。

根据多年课堂教学经验，一本理想的英国文学教材应当包括：学习要点提示、系统的背景介绍、经典的作品遴选、详尽的注释、文学评论要点综述、富有启发性的思考题、灵活多样的课堂活动以及作家名言选录等。而正是这些构成了本教材的基本内容。

全书分上、下两册，由 7 个部分组成，共 44 单元，结构如下表所示：

上册	第 1 部分 1～4 单元	中世纪文学，英语文学的形成时期
	第 2 部分 5～7 单元	16 世纪文学，即文艺复兴时期文学
	第 3 部分 8～11 单元	17 世纪文学
	第 4 部分 12～21 单元	以启蒙运动为背景的 18 世纪文学
下册	第 5 部分 22～29 单元	以诗歌为主要形式的浪漫主义文学
	第 6 部分 30～37 单元	维多利亚时期的文学
	第 7 部分 38～44 单元	20 世纪文学

在对英国文学内容进行了全面梳理和系统讲解的基础上，本书对教材形式进行了较大的创新。大致框架如下：

每一部分首先介绍了学习要点和背景知识，然后是分单元讲解的作家作品。学习要点由关键词组成，放在各部分前面，明确教学目标，提示学习重点，在正文中出现时都以黑体标记。这也有利于在学习中加深印象，以及对相关参考书目的选择。背景知识主要介绍与作家作品相关的文学思潮，及其生成的社会、历史、文化背景，以及不同文学体裁的转换原因和新特点，还有对代表性作家作品的概述。

每一单元（1～3单位除外）以作家为标题，主要内容是作家介绍与作品选读，以及注释、评论要点、问题思考、课堂活动和作家名言等。

• 作家介绍（life and writing）：包括作家在文学史中的地位和总体评价，作家的生活经历、文学思想和创作风格的形成，以及作家的重要作品与影响。

• 作品选读（selected works）：遴选文学史中有定论的一流作家的代表作，讲解部分主要包括作品的内容概述、结构分析、语言欣赏、艺术特色和主题思想等。

• 注释（notes）：涵盖语言点、专用词汇和文学术语解释，以及精彩句子点评、文学现象延伸讲解和重要段落的意思总结等。

• 评论要点（critical points）：概括经典作品的魅力所在，综述作品批评的历史沿革和不同的阐释角度，引导文学欣赏与批评的新方法，有助于文学论文写作和深入研究。对于热爱文学、想进一步探索研究的同学，这一部分会有很大的帮助。

• 问题思考（questions）：既促进思考，又是重点内容提示，强调对文学作品意义的思考和体验。

• 课堂活动（class activities）：有写作训练、角色扮演、作品朗诵、分组讨论、主题报告和演讲等，鼓励同学交流和师生互动，以多种形式促进文学学习。教师可根据实际情况采用。

• 作家名言（quotations）：选录作家在不同作品中的精彩句子，有助于理解作家的文学思想。

本教材的特点可以概括为以下几个方面，这同时也是学习英国文学需要注意的地方：

一是注重文学规律，清楚作家作品产生的社会背景、文化背景，及其在文学思潮中的发生和流变；阅读文学作品的同时学习文学批评和文学思潮的更迭。

二是注重作品解读，提高文学欣赏和批评水平。对作品从内容结构、情节安排、表意层面，音韵格律、写作特色和技法等方面进行详尽地分析，对作品的意义表述从情、理、思三个方面进行透彻地剖析。

三是以作家年代先后为线索编排内容，注重作家思想的来源、文学风格的形成，及其对文学史的贡献和影响。

四是强调教学互动。问题思考、课堂活动和作家名言等的设计旨在启示新的教学方法和学习、体验文学的新思路，以达到更好的教学效果。奇文共欣赏，疑义相与析。相互交流和切磋会使学习过程生动有趣。

教材主要服务于教学实践。全书（上下册）的内容和形式均符合

两个学期的课程安排和每周一次课的教学需要。每次课可以是 2 到 4 个学时。授课对象为英语专业本科高年级学生。在实际教学中，根据学生兴趣和实际需要，对部分作家作品可以有所取舍，各单元内容的讲解也可以有所侧重。

文学教材的目的不仅只是教授知识，也要培养学生对文学的终生热爱。维护这种热爱的途径就是知道文学有趣、有益，同时懂得如何登堂入室。所以，本书的理念是在全面理解和执行教学大纲的前提下，提倡对文学的多层次学习和理解。

本书的编写特别感谢美国伊利诺伊大学厄巴纳－香槟分校英语系彼德 · 葛瑞特教授（Peter Garrett），我和他详细讨论过本书的选材和主要内容。从他的文学课堂，我获益良多。感谢查尔斯 · 兰福先生（Charles Lansford），他逐句审读了本书的课堂活动和问题思考部分。感谢中国人民大学外国语学院英语系的学生，他们的学习热情使我不断完善本书的构想。衷心欢迎读者提出宝贵意见。

刁克利

2008 年 7 月 17 日

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Part V

The Age of Romanticism (1789-1832)

Key Words

Romantic poetry	familiar essay
the novel of purpose	oxymoron
terza rima	epizeuxis
Byronic hero	ode

In a broad sense, **the Romantic period** in Britain/England lasts from about 1780 to about 1848. To be more exact, the Romantic period denoted the period between 1798, marked with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and 1832, when Sir Walter Scott died and other major writers were no longer productive, and when the Reform Bill was carried in Parliament, inaugurated the Victorian era of cautious readjustment of political power to the economic and social realities of a new industrial age.

Romanticism gets its name from romance, the literary form in which desires and dreams prevail over everyday realities. The movement may be regarded as the triumph of the values of imaginative spontaneity, visionary originality, wonder, and emotional self-expression over the classical standards of balance, order, restraint, proportion, and objectivity. It marks a profound transformation in artistic style, in cultural attitudes, and in the relations between artist and society in literature and other arts in the first half of the 19th century.

England experienced the critical change from a primarily agricultural society to a modern industrial nation, in which the balance of economic power shifted to large-scale employers, and with which appeared an immensely enlarging working class. This change occurred in the context of the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the American Revolution.

French Revolution

The early period of the French Revolution evoked enthusiastic support from English liberals and radicals alike. Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-1792) justified the French Revolution, and advocated for England a democratic Republic to be established by revolution. William Godwin's *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) foretold an inevitable but peaceful evolution of society to a final stage in which all properties would be equally distributed and all governments would wither away. Both works, together with Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), had an important influence upon William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and other Romanticists.

In the early period of the French Revolution, all the leading English writers were in sympathy with it, and Robert Burns, William Blake, Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, Robert Southey were among its fervent adherents. The younger writers William Hazlitt, Lee Hunt, Percy Shelley and Gorge Gordon

Byron felt its example comprised humanity's best hope. Under the influence of the American and French revolutions, the idea of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" inspired English writers, and the desire for personal freedom and individual rights encouraged a more daring and imaginative approach to both life and literature.

The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution had begun in the mid-18th century with improvements in machines for processing textiles, and was given immense impetus when James Watt perfected the steam engine in 1765. In the succeeding decades, steam replaced wind and water as the primary source of power in manufacturing, and began the ever-accelerating progress in economic and social conditions. This process introduced more efficient methods of agriculture and animal breeding required to supply a growing population; and it created a new landless class who either migrated to the industrial towns or remained as farm labourers, subsisting on starvation wages.

Meanwhile, the population was increasingly polarised into two classes: the land and factory owner and the wageworker, the rich and the poor. In London the leisure class enjoyed lavish display and moral laxity; in the provinces, the gentry in their country houses carried on their familial and social concerns almost untouched by great national and international events, as reflected in the novels of Jane Austen.

Literature Achievements

1) Romantic poetry

Most romanticists were poets because poetry was the best medium to express their feelings and passions. The Romantic period is, therefore, an age of poetry. As a whole, it is usually taken to represent a second renaissance of literature in Britain, especially in lyric and narrative poetry.

The characteristic features of Romantic poetry are as follows:

First, the poetic creation of Romanticism starts as a rebellion against the Neoclassicism. The Romantic poets explores new theories and innovates new techniques in poetry creation. Wordsworth, in the "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", calls for simple themes drawn from humble life expressed in the language of ordinary people. He advocates a quite different standard for the material, contents, theme, and language of poetry.

Second, the Romantic poets believe in the moral good of poetry. Their interpretation of poetry is that poetry was a healing energy, and it could purify both individual souls and society. Wordsworth defines the poet as "a man speaking to men"; Shelley believes that poetry can play a very important part in the spiritual life of society. "The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting on the cause." (Shelley: "A Defence of Poetry")

Third, subjectivity and spontaneity are especially emphasised in Romantic poetry. The Romantic poets establish a new relationship between poetry and poet. They claim the quality of poetry is the quality of the poet. Wordsworth's definition of poetry is "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, which originates in emotion recollected in tranquility." Shelley believes that "poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." Both express that poetry is the direct product of the poet.

Fourth, Romantic poets believe that imagination is the vital faculty that creates new wholes out of disparate elements, as Coleridge argues. Shelley defines the poetry to be " 'the expression of the Imagination': and poetry is connate with the origin of man." William Blake says, "where intelligence was fallible, limited, the Imagination was our hope of contact with eternal forces, with the whole spiritual world."

Fifth, a new connotation is given to the concept of nature. Nature is not only the major source of poetic imagery, but also provides the dominant subject matter. Wordsworth conceives of nature as "the nurse,/The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul/Of all my moral being." Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey rejected the excessively rational, as well as excessively materialistic world, and chose to live by the lakeside as to escape from the "madding crowd".

Sixth, Romantic poets also make bold experiments in poetic language, versification and design, and construct a variety of forms on original principles of organisation and style. Examples can be found in Blake's visionary prophetic poems, in Coleridge's mystic ballad, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", in Wordsworth's spiritual autobiography, *The Prelude*, and in Shelley's symbolic drama, *Prometheus Unbound*. In order to achieve the effect of the individual vision, the medieval or renaissance world is particularly favoured as the setting.

William Blake and Robert Burns are the two notable forerunners of romantic poetry. Later the works of William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Goerge Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats

represent the highest achievements in Romantic poetry. Robert Southey[1] and Leigh Hunt[2] are also influential figures of the Romanticism.

The Romantic poets are not only innovators of poetic creation but also thinkers of poetic theory. They make unique contributions to the development of literary theory, most notably in the writing of Coleridge and Hazlitt, and in major essays by Wordsworth and Shelley. "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" by Wordsworth, "A Defence of Poetry" by Shelley, *Biographia Literaria* by Coleridge, are three brilliant representatives.

Robert Southey, from a painting by John Opie, engraved by W. H. Eagleton

Leigh Hunt, a portrait drawn by J. Hayter, engraved by H. Meyer.

2) Familiar essays

The periodical essay in England began with Defoe in 1704, and was developed by Addison and Steele in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Addison divided *The Spectator* writings into series essays and occasional papers.

In the 19th century, periodicals increased in number and modern magazines came into being. In 1802, the *Edinburgh Review* started the modern type of periodical publication. In 1820 appeared the *London Magazine*, liberal in politics and contemporary in literary interests. It allowed considerable latitude to its writers, and set its literary standards high.

These new periodicals, by elevating the essay in literary dignity and quality, and making an author able to earn a living as a freelance essayist, served a

1 Robert Southey (1774-1843): English poet of the Romantic school, one of the so-called "Lake Poets", and Poet Laureate. Although his fame tends to be eclipsed by that of his contemporaries and friends William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Southey's verse enjoys enduring popularity. Moreover, he was a prolific letter writer, literary scholar, historian and biographer.

2 James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784-1859): English essayist, poet and writer.

great promotion for the tradition of English essays.

The familiar essay, as a commentary on a non-technical subject written in a relaxed and intimate manner, flourished in a fashion parallelling the course of Romantic poetry. Like the poets, the essayists are personal and subjective; their essays are often candidly autobiographical, reminiscent, self-analytic; the material is reflected in the temperament of the essayist. The subject matter of the essays, like that of poetry, exhibits an extension of range and sympathy for what is beyond the earlier limits of the leisure class and its fashionable concerns. The most important English essayists of this period were William Hazlitt[1], Leigh Hunt, Thomas de Quincey[2] and Charles Lamb.

William Hazlitt,
self-portrait, ca.1802

Thomas DeQuincey

3) Fiction of the Romantic period

Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott are two major novelists of the Romantic period, among many other novelists, romantic or gothic. In the period, two types of fiction were successively popular. One was the "Gothic novel", prominent in the late 18th century, exerted distinct influence upon poets that Gothicism is apparent in some of the Romantic poetry: in Coleridge's medieval terror poem "Christabel", in Byron's recurrent hero-villain, in Shelley's inclinations toward the fantastic, the macabre, and the exploration of the realm of the unconscious mind.

The second fictional mode popular at the turn of the century was **the novel**

1 William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was remembered for his humanistic essays and literary criticism, often esteemed the greatest English literary critic after Samuel Johnson.

2 Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859): English author and intellectual, best known for his book *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.*

of purpose, written to propagate the new social and political theories current in the period of the French Revolution. This kind of novels combines didactic intention with elements of Gothic terror. William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*[1] (1794) is a good example. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*[2] (1817) transforms a story about a fabricated monster into a powerful representation of the moral distortion imposed on an individual who is rejected by society as he diverges from the norm.

Mary Shelley

1 William Godwin (1756-1836): English journalist, political philosopher and novelist. Godwin is most famous for two books: *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, an attack on political institutions, and *Things as They Are: The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, which attacks aristocratic privilege, but also is virtually the first mystery novel. *Caleb Williams* (1794) is a three-volume novel, written as a call to end the abuse of power by what Godwin saw as a tyrannical government.

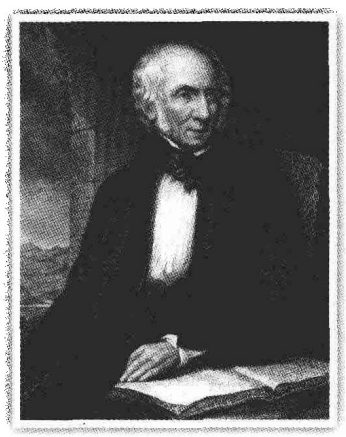
2 Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley (1797-1851): the daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, wife of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. She was also a novelist, authored *Frankenstein*. It is a novel infused with some elements of the Gothic novel and the Romantic movement. It was also a warning against the "over-reaching" of modern man and the Industrial Revolution, alluded to in the novel's subtitle, *The Modern Prometheus*. The story has had an influence across literature and popular culture.

Unit 22

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

William Wordsworth *was a leading English Romantic poet, and England's Poet Laureate from 1843 to 1850.*

Life and Writing



William Wordsworth, reproduced from Margaret Gillies' 1839 original

Wordsworth was born and grew up on the northern fringe of the English Lake District. His father was an attorney, but died when he was 13; his mother died five years earlier. Wordsworth was sent to school by his guardian uncles. He attended St. John's College, Cambridge, but disliked the academic course. In 1790 he went on a walk tour of France, the Alps, and Italy, and returned to France late in 1791; during his stay of one year in France he was fired by a passionate belief in the French Revolution and republican ideals, and also fell in love with the daughter of a surgeon, Annette Vallon, who bore him a daughter later. After his return to England he published in 1793 two poems in heroic couplets.

In 1795 his friend left him a legacy of 900 pounds, intended to enable him to pursue his vocation as a poet. Wordsworth settled with his sister Dorothy in Somersetshire. They lived a frugal life, and Dorothy made him turn his eyes to "the face of nature" and take an interest in the peasants living in their neighborhood. She also induced him to transform his observation of the landscape into the revelation of the beauty of nature in poetry. In 1797 he made friends with Coleridge. The intense friendship shaped their lives for the next 14 years and proved one of the most creative partnerships in English

Romanticism. Between July 1797 and September 1798, the Coleridges and the Wordsworths lived and worked intimately together in the Lake District, two miles away from each other. They devoted their time to writing poetry, and jointly published *Lyrical Ballads*.

Wordsworth spent the winter of 1798-1799 in Germany, where he wrote sections of what was to be *The Prelude* and the enigmatic "Lucy" poems. Then he and Dorothy settled in Dove Cottage of Lake District; he wrote many poems included in the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. In 1802 Wordsworth married Mary Hutchinson. The following years saw the birth of five children, travels with Dorothy and Coleridge, and new friendships with Sir Walt Scott and De Quincey. His domestic happiness was shadowed by the death of his sailor brother John in 1805, the early deaths of two of his children, and the physical deterioration of Coleridge. But his productivity continued, and his popularity gradually increased.

In 1813 he had been appointed stamp distributor for Westmorland, a post which brought him some £400 a year, and in the same year he moved to the northern Lake District, where he lived the rest of his life. In 1843 he was named Poet Laureate. He died at his residence after the publication of a finally revised text of his six-volume works.

Artistic Features

Wordsworth appeals directly to individual observation and enjoyment as the foundation of the creation and appreciation of poetry. He bases his own poetic theory on the principle that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", and poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility".

Wordsworth is a poet of nature. He inspires the reader that everything in life can be possibly made poetic. In his depression and isolation, he turns to nature to find spiritual comfort. His deep love for nature runs through poems such as "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud", "The Solitary Reaper", and "Daffodils".

The themes of many of his poems are drawn from rural life and his characters are ordinary people in countryside. The scenes and events of everyday life and the speeches of ordinary people are important material for his poetic creation.

Major Works

The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind

Wordsworth's masterpiece is generally considered to be *The Prelude*, an autobiographical, "philosophical" poem in blank verse. The work is a poetic reflection on Wordsworth's own sense of his poetic vocation as it developed over the course of his life. Its 14-book layout mimics the epic poem by John Milton, *Paradise Lost*.

Wordsworth wrote the first version of the poem when he was 28, and worked over for the rest of his long life without publishing it. He never gave it a title; he called it the "Poem to Coleridge" and in his letters to Dorothy Wordsworth as "the poem on the growth of my own mind". The final name was given by his wife.

Lyrical Ballads

Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems is a collection of poems by Wordsworth and Coleridge, first published in 1798. The book was a landmark of English Romanticism and the beginning of a new age in poetic writing.

As for the nature of their collaboration, Coleridge described it in *Biographia Literaria*, "it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural or at least romantic... Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday." Coleridge's contribution to the first edition is "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"; Wordsworth's includes ballads and narratives such as "The Idiot Boy", and "Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman", and more personal poems such as "Lines Written in Early Spring" and "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey".

Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802)

THE SUBJECT AND LANGUAGE OF POETRY

... The principal object, then, which I proposed to myself[1] in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations[2] from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language

1 proposed to myself: put forward for consideration.
2 incidents and situations: both minor events and state affairs.

really used by men; and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously[1], the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated[2], and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate[3] from those elementary feelings; and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men is adopted[4] (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived[5]; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions[6]. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious[7] habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle[8] tastes, and

1 ostentatiously: marked by or fond of conspicuous or vainglorious and, sometimes, pretentious display.
2 contemplated: looked at thoughtfully; observed in deep thought.
3 germinate: cause to grow or sprout.
4 adopted: used, applied.
5 derived: obtained.
6 unelaborated expressions: simple and plain expressions.
7 arbitrary and capricious: based on or subject to individual discretion or preference, or determined by chance or impulse.
8 fickle: often changing.

fickle appetites, of their own creation.[1]

I cannot, however, be insensible of the present outcry against the triviality and meanness both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge, that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonorable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy purpose. Not that I mean to say, that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but I believe that my habits of meditation have so formed my feelings, as that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a purpose. If in this opinion I am mistaken, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the being to whom we address ourselves, if he be in a healthful state of association, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections ameliorated.

1 It is worthwhile here to observe that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day. I here use the word Poetry (though against my own judgement) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Matter of Fact, or Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre; nor is this, in truth, a strict antithesis, because lines and passages of metre so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable. [Wordsworth's note]

I have said that each of these poems has a purpose. I have also informed my Reader what this purpose will be found principally to be: namely to illustrate the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement. But, speaking in language somewhat more appropriate, it is to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature.

WHAT IS A POET?

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, I ask what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions[1] and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than any thing which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves; whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate[2] external excitement.

But, whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt but that the language which it will suggest to him, must, in liveliness and truth, fall far short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

1 volitions: the capability of conscious choice, decision and intention.
2 immediate: direct.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that, while he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him, by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle on which I have so much insisted, namely, that of selection; on this he will depend for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which his fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

EMOTION RECOLLECTED IN TRANQUILLITY

I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous[1] overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity[2]; the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind and in whatever degree, from various causes is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will upon the whole be in a state of enjoyment. Now, if Nature be thus cautious in preserving in a state of enjoyment a being thus employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson thus held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language,

1 spontaneous: happening or arising naturally, or without apparent external cause.
2 tranquillity: a state of peace and quiet.

the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely, all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling, which will always be found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. I might perhaps include all which it is necessary to say upon this subject by affirming, what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once. ...

Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey

The complete title of the poem is "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798". The poem was printed as the last item in *Lyrical Ballads*. According to Wordsworth's note, "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol."

Tintern Abbey by William Gilpin in *Observations on the River Wye* (1782)

Wordsworth made his first visit to the Wye valley and the ruins of Tintern Abbey, in Monmouthshire in August 1793, when he was 23 and on a solitary walking tour. The poem was written five years later when he, with his sister Dorothy, paid the place a second visit. The difference between the present landscape and the remembered "picture of mind" gave rise to a meditation, in which the poet conveyed the effect of nature on the growth of his mind.

The poem is written in blank verse.

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.[1] — Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion;[2] 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[3],
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad[4] in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, 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[5] in the houseless woods,[6]
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by 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,

1 a soft inland murmur: suggesting the tranquillity of the place, as contrasted with the roaring waves in the sea.
2 a wild secluded scene impress/Thoughts of more deep seclusion: notice the harmony between the secluded scene and the more secluded mind of the poet. "A wild secluded scene" is a deserted place undisturbed by the outside world.
3 these orchard-tufts: the little hill was overgrown with fruit trees.
4 clad: clothed.
5 vagrant dwellers: wanderers who take rest in the wood.
6 Lines 1-20 gives a description of the present landscape.

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:[1] — feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
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 less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime;[2] that blessed mood,
In which the burthen[3] of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame[4]
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 and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable,[5] and the fever of the world,[6]
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart —
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye![7] thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

1 Lines 25-30 is a good illustration of the poet's idea that poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity".
2 Of aspect more sublime: of more sublime nature.
3 burthen: burden.
4 corporeal frame: human body.
5 the fretful stir/Unprofitable: irritating and useless human activity.
6 the fever of the world: worldly desire.
7 sylvan: of the woods. Wye: a river that runs near the Tintern Abbey.

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,[1]
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity[2],
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[3] of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.[4] — 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 wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite[5]; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past,
And all its aching joys[6] are now no more,

1 with gleams of half-extinguished thought: with the memory about this place growing dim.
2 a sad perplexity: the poet becomes sad because the scene now is different from what he visualized in his memory.
3 The coarser pleasures: the rough and crude pleasure in boyhood.
4 To me was all in all: Nature was the most beloved to me five years ago.
5 An appetite: a strong desire.
6 aching joys: intense joy. This is a use of oxymoron in rhetoric by putting together two words of entirely different meanings.

And all its dizzy raptures.[1] Not for this
Faint[2] I, nor mourn nor murmur, other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue.[3] 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 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,[4]
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.

1 Lines 66ff. contain the poet's famed description of the three stages of his growing up, defined in terms of his evolving relations to the natural scene: the young boy's purely physical responsiveness (Lines 73-74); the postadolescent's aching, dizzy, and equivocal passions – a love that is more like dread (Lines 67-72, 75-85: this was his state of mind on the occasion of his first visit); his present state (Lines 85ff.), in which for the first time he adds thought to sense.

2 Faint: lose heart and courage, become depressed.

3 hearing oftentimes ... /To chasten and subdue: as the poet advances in age, he is aware of the sorrows and miseries of human life, but with the influence of nature on him, they appear to him like quiet, soothing music, which has the power to purify and refine his soul.

4 Here Wordsworth expresses his view that the "creative sensibility" contributes to its own perceptions, which is often reiterated in *The Prelude*.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits[1] to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend[2],
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy 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 never did 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[3]
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, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be 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 pain, or grief,

1 genial spirits: creative powers; "genial" is here the adjectival form of the noun "genius".
2 my dearest Friend: the poet's sister, Dorothy.
3 inform: inspire.

Should be 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
Of past existence[1] — 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. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

The original experience of the poem was two years earlier of his composition of it. According to Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journal*, April 15, 1802, "It was a threatening misty morning — but mild. We set off after dinner from Eusemere — Mrs. Clarkson went a short way with us but turned back. The wind was furious and we thought we must have returned. We first rested in the large Boat-house, then under a furze Bush opposite Mr. Clarksons, saw the plough going in the field. The wind seized our breath, the Lake was rough. There was a Boat by itself floating in the middle of the Bay below Water Millock — We rested again in the Water Millock Lane. The hawthorns are black and green, the birches here and there greenish but there is yet more of purple to be seen on the twigs. We got over into a field to avoid some cows — people working, a few primroses by the roadside, wood-sorrel flower, the anemone, scentless violets, strawberries, and that starry yellow flower which Mrs. Clarksons calls pile wort. When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils close to the water side."

1 Of past existence: reminder of the poet's own "past experience" five years earlier (see Lines 116-119).

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of[1] golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance[2].

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,[3]
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;[4]
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

1 a crowd,/A host of: a large number of.
2 in sprightly dance: in lively dance, dance full of energy.
3 In vacant or in pensive mood: in a free or a deeply thoughtful state of mind.
4 They flash upon that inward eye/Which is the bliss of solitude: when alone, the poet recalls the beautiful scene, which gives him great pleasure.

The Solitary Reaper

Unlike most of his poems, this poem is not based on Wordsworth's own experience, but suggested by a passage in Thomas Wilkinson's *Tours to Be the British Mountains* (1824), which the poet has seen in manuscript: "Passed a female who was reaping alone: she sung in Erse [the Gaelic language of Scotland] as she bended over her sickle; the sweetest human voice I ever heard: her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious, long after they were heard no more."

The poem is written in iambic tetrameter. The rhyme scheme for each stanza is *ababccdd*.

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass![1]
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain[2];
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt[3]
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands[4]:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides[5].

1 Highland Lass: girl in the mountain area of Scotland.
2 a melancholy strain: a sad tune.
3 chaunt: chant (in old form).
4 Arabian sands: Arabian desert.
5 Hebrides: islands off the western coast of Scotland.

Will no one tell me what she sings?[1] —
Perhaps the plaintive numbers[2] flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay[3],
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending; —
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802

The poem was written in the early morning on September 3, 1802, although the experience was on July 31, 1802, when the poet was on a trip to France. The conflict of feelings attending Wordsworth's brief return to France, where he had once been a revolutionist and the lover of a French girl, evoked a number of personal and political sonnets.

The poem depicts a vivid picture of the quiet beauty of an urban morning. London, in its early morning, appears to be extremely serene and peaceful.

This is a sonnet following the Petrarchan form, with the rhyme scheme *abba*, *abba* in the octave and *cdcdcd* in the sestet.

1 Will no one tell me what she sings: The poet does not understand Erse, the language in which she sings.
2 plaintive numbers: a mournful song.
3 lay: a short lyrical poem meant to be sung.

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by[1]
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare[2],
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep[3]
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:[4]
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Critical Points

A summary of the main idea in "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*"

The Preface covers a number of issues and is wide-ranging in its survey of the place of *Lyrical Ballads* on the contemporary literary scene. The topics covered include the following:

1. The principal object of the poems. Wordsworth places the emphasis on the attempt to deal with "natural" man, arguing that such men live much closer to nature and, therefore, are closer to the well-springs of human nature. From this, we can see how much Wordsworth owes to that 18th century preoccupation with "natural man", associated particularly with the writings of Rousseau.

2. Humble and rustic life as subject matter. Wordsworth outlines his

1 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by: he who could pass by would be of a dull soul, that is, one must be a dull person if he could pay no attention to such a beautiful sight.
2 bare: empty; here it refers to the fogless and smokeless air in early London morning.
3 steep: let sit in a liquid to extract a flavor or to cleanse; soak; saturate.
4 The river glideth at his own sweet will: the river moves smoothly, effortlessly and imperceptibly at his own will. The river: the Thames River.

reasons: Because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil; our elementary feelings may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; the manners of rural life are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.

3. Language of the poems. For Wordsworth (and Coleridge) this choice of subject matter necessarily involves a rethinking of the language of poetry. They prefer the language of "ordinary men", a plainer and more emphatic language. They believe that such a language, arising out of the repeated experience and regular feelings is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language.

4. Definition of poetry. When Wordsworth attempts to define poetry, he pays much emphasis on its effects on the reader. "For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling". Clearly, poetry, for Wordsworth, has a vital role in educating the mind and sensibility of his readers, a moral purpose.

5. Definition of a poet. "What is a poet" is a question frequently asked and answered by Romanticism. Wordsworth's answer illustrates the poet as genius, as special person, capable of re-articulating thought and feeling so as to educate the reader.

The Preface is itself a masterpiece of English prose, exemplary in its lucid yet passionate defence of a literary style that could be popular without compromising artistic and poetic standards. Yet it is also vital for helping us to understand what Wordsworth and Coleridge were attempting in their collection of verses, and also provides us with a means of assessing how successfully the poems themselves live up to the standards outlined in the Preface.

Questions

Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*

Give a brief summary of the main idea for each topic, and

1) explain the difference of principles of poetic writing between Neo-classicism and Romanticism;
2) quote from the Romantic poems to reveal the great influence of the Preface upon the poem writing.

Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey

1. Is there any difference between the pleasure the poet takes in nature as a child and that he draws from it now? How does the poet's mind grow in his reflection on the past and nature?

2. Quote from *Lyrical Ballads* and the Preface to prove how the process of the composition and the conclusion of the poem illustrate the poet's idea of poetry creation.

I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud

1. Compare the prose description by Dorothy and the poem by Wordsworth, find how extensive Wordsworth's use of the prose description is, and see the difference between prose description and poetry.
2. How does Wordsworth's "poetry of nature" in this poem transform itself into "poetry of self-consciousness"?

The Solitary Reaper

Why does the poet present imaginative, exotic interpretations when describing the reaper's singing?

Class Activities

Write poems and read them in class. Following the standards illustrated in the Preface and the example of Wordsworth, write poems about how nature reflects your thoughts and how your mind is being nourished by your reflection of nature.

QUOTATIONS

Is there not an art, a music, and a stream of words that shalt be life, the acknowledged voice of life?

—William Wordsworth

The child is the father of the man.

—William Wordsworth

Unit 23

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge *was a poet, critic and philosopher of Romanticism. Coleridge, with his friend Wordsworth, is regarded as one of the two great progenitors of English Romantic spirit. In his poetry, Coleridge presents natural details with a magic power no other Romantic poets can match.*

Life and Writing

Coleridge was the youngest son of a vicar's family. After the early death of his father, he was sent to Christ's Hospital school, London, where his precocious classical reading and powers of inspired talk attracted a circle of young admirers, including Leigh Hunt and Charles Lamb. He entered Cambridge, but left without a degree.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, by Washington Allston, 1814

In the summer of 1794 he and his friend Southey invented Pantisocracy, a scheme to set up a commune in New England. To finance Pantisocracy, he and Southey gave political lectures in Bristol and collaborated on a verse drama; they also simultaneously courted and married two sisters, Sara and Edith Fricker. After quarrelling with Southey over money and politics, Coleridge retired with Sara to a cottage at Clevedon, where their first son was born. He edited a radical Christian journal, and published *Poems on Various Subjects* in 1796. He also took opium in periods of sickness and depression.

From 1795 he began the friendship with Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, and moved to live closely with them in the Lake District. Here Coleridge wrote

a moving series of blank verse "conversation" poems, he also composed his celebrated opium-vision "Kubla Khan". At Wordsworth's suggestion, Coleridge wrote "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", and started other three ballads. His poetry influenced Wordsworth and helped Wordsworth attain his characteristic mode. From Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, he learned to look at nature both largely and minutely.

During 1798 and 1799, he spent 10 months in Germany studying philosophy. In 1800 he lived with the Wordsworths. During the following years, he began to compile his *Notebooks*, daily meditations on his life, writing, and dreams, which have proved among his most enduring and moving works. In 1808 he began his series of *Lectures on Poetry and Drama*. His *Shakespearean Criticism* introduced new concepts of "organic" form and dramatic psychology. With his struggle against opium he fled to London, where between 1811 and 1814 he was on the verge of suicide.

From 1816 on, Coleridge lived in London with a physician so as to be able to keep working without a total breakdown in health. He completed *Christabel and Other Poems* (1816), included for the first time "Kubla Khan", which was published partly through Byron's influence.

The year 1817 saw the publication of his *Biographia Literaria, or Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, his most important prose work of poetic criticism, philosophy, and humourous autobiography. He defined the different roles of the poet and the critic: the poet was a creator and the critic was an assistant in the work of creation. The poet, as a man endowed with imaginative genius and fine perception, must be allowed to present the truth in his own way without regard to rules or models. And the critic must enter into the poet's purpose and art, and interpret ideas and beauty of the benefit of the reader. Coleridge can be regarded as the first critic of the Romantic school. *Biographia Literaria* contains some autobiographical notes and dissertations on many subjects. His discussion on the nature of poetry and the role of imagination are influential in literary criticism.

His later years enjoyed an almost legendary reputation among the younger Romantics, and became the centre of a new circle of young disciples. Lamb, described him as "an Archangel a little damaged", and dedicated the *Essays of Elia* to him. Coleridge can be seen as a Romantic conservative and Christian radical, who strangely foreshadows much of the spiritual "anxiety" of European existentialism.

Kubla Khan
or A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment

The poem takes its title from the emperor Kublai Khan of the Yuan Dynasty. In a note on a manuscript copy of Kubla Khan, Coleridge gave a more precise account of the nature of this sleep: "This fragment with a good deal more, not recoverable, composed, in a sort of reverie brought on by two grains of opium, taken to check a dysentery, at a farmhouse between Porlock and Linton, a quarter of a mile from Culbone Church, in the fall of the year, 1797." On awakening, he remembered having composed a poem of two or three hundred lines on the theme. Eagerly, he wrote down 45 lines. But a visitor came and interrupted the work. When returning to the poem an hour later, he could not recall any more.

There is widespread speculation on the poem's meaning, some suggesting the author merely is portraying his vision while others insisting on a theme or purpose, believing it is a poem stressing the beauty of creation. The poem is also well known for its many visionary images.

In Xanadu[1] did Kubla Khan[2]
A stately pleasure-dome decree[3]:
Where Alph[4], the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man[5]
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled[6] round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills[7],
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

1 Xanadu: Shangdu, the place in Inner Mongolia where Kubla Khan ascended the throne.
2 Kubla Khan (1216-1294): the grandson of Genghis Khan and the founder of Yuan Dynasty.
3 decree: order to be built.
4 Alph: derived probably from the Greek river Alpheus, which flows into the Ionian Sea.
5 measureless to man: too deep to be measured by man.
6 girdled: surrounded.
7 sinuous rills: small streams with many curves.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm[1] which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover![2]
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover![3]

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething[4],
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced[5]:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion[6]
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

1 chasm: a deep opening in the earth's surface.
2 athwart a cedarn cover: across a place covered by cedars.
3 As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted/By woman wailing for her demon-lover: the place was frequented by a woman who used to cry under the waning moon for the return of her lover from the underground. waning moon: the moon pertaining to the period during which the visible surface decreases.
4 seething: boiling; the water was tumbling as if boiling.
5 forced: spurted out.
6 Five miles meandering with a mazy motion: the use of alliteration to emphasize the effect of the twisting movement of the lengthy river.

A damsel with a dulcimer[1]
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid[2],
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora[3].
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song, [4]
To such a deep delight 't would win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,[5]
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.[6]

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" was published in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1797). It is Coleridge's masterpiece and is among the greatest poems ever written in English. He finished the touching prose "commentary" printed in the margins of the poem in 1816, and it was published partly through Byron's influence.

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" relates the supernatural events experienced by a mariner on a long sea voyage. The mariner stops a man who is on the way

1 A damsel with a dulcimer: a girl with a stringed musical instrument.
2 Abyssinian maid: a girl from Abyssinia, now Ethiopia in the east of Africa.
3 Mount Abora: probably Mount Amara in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, into which Abyssinian kings once sent his children to avoid the outside disturbance.
4 Could I revive within me...song: if I could sing the song the girl sang.
5 Weave a circle round him thrice: it refers to a magic ritual, to protect the inspired poet from intrusion.
6 Lines 50ff. echo in part the description, in Plato's *Ion*, of inspired poets, who are "like Bacchic maidens who draw milk and honey from the rivers when they are in their right mind."

to a wedding ceremony, and begins to recite his story. The wedding-guest's reaction turns from bemusement and impatience to fascination as the mariner's story progresses.

The poem is written in ballad form, i.e., quatrains with the first and third lines containing four stresses and the second and fourth lines three stresses, and with rhymes in the even-numbered lines.

Coleridge describes the origin of this poem in the opening section of Chapter 14 of *Biographia Literaria*. It is based on a dream of his friend. In later editions Coleridge greatly improved the poem by pruning the archaisms and by other revisions, and he added the Latin epigraph and the marginal glosses.

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quae loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabula, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari : ne mens assuefacta hodiernae vitae minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus.

T. Burnet, Archaeol. Phil., p. 68[1]

ARGUMENT

How a ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical

1 This paragraph is an epigraph in Latin: "I can easily believe, that there are more invisible than visible Beings in the universe. But who shall describe for us their families? And their ranks and relationships and distinguishing features and functions? What they do? Where they live? The human mind has always circled around a knowledge of these things, never attaining it. I do not doubt, however, that it is sometimes beneficial to contemplate, in thought, as in a picture, the image of a greater and better world; lest the intellect, habituated to the trivia of daily life, may contract itself too much, and wholly sink into trifles. But at the same time we must be vigilant for truth, and maintain proportion, that we may distinguish certain from uncertain, day from night." Adapted and slightly edited by Coleridge from Thomas Burnet, *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* (1692).

Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Mariner came back to his own Country.

Part 1

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.
"By thy long beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore[1] 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[2] hear the merry din."

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 skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth[3] he.
"Hold off! unhand me,[4] grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons[5] his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye —
The wedding-guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.[6]

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

1 wherefore: why.
2 May'st: you may.
3 quoth: says.
4 Hold off: get away. unhand me: take your hands off me.
5 Eftsoons: at once.
6 The Mariner hath his will: the Mariner has gained control of the will of the wedding guest.

Below the kirk[1], below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.[2]

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,[3]
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[4] — "
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 drawn by a storm toward the South Pole.

"And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous[5] and strong:
He struck with his o'er taking 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,

1 kirk: (Scottish) church.
2 Notice the order of the different objects disappear from the sights of those on the ship. At the end of the story when the ship comes back, these objects reappear in reversed order.
3 This indicates the ship was sailing southward.
4 over the mast at noon: the position of the sun indicates that the ship has reached the equator.
5 tyrannous: cold and severe.

And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
The southward aye[1] we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous[2] 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[3] the snowy clifts[4]
Did send a dismal sheen[5]:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken[6] —
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:[7]
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound![8]

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[9],
Thorough[10] 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.

1 aye: ever, always.
2 wondrous: extremely.
3 drifts: currents of mist and snow.
4 snowy clifts: snow-covered icebergs.
5 dismal sheen: gloomy radiance; sorrowful brightness.
6 ken: saw; knew.
7 The repetition adds to the intensity of the ice scene.
8 The onomatopoeia helps to create a scene of heterogeneous echoing sounds around the ship at the South Pole and intensifies the dangerous situation.
swound: fainting fit, swoon.
9 an Albatross: a large, long-winged seabird of remarkable power of flight. The bird is believed to be a bird of good omen. 信天翁
10 Thorough: through.

The ice did split with a thunder-fit[1];
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 mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud[2],
It perched for vespers nine[3];
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moonshine."

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?"[4] — With my crossbow
I shot the Albatross.

Part 2

The Sun now rose upon the right:[5]
Out of the sea came he,
Still[6] 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!

1 a thunder-fit: a sudden burst of thunder.
2 shroud: rope supporting the mast.
3 vespers nine: nine evenings.
4 "God save thee...": lines by the wedding guest. The guest is now wholly attracted by the mariner and has totally forgotten the wedding ceremony, and noticed the look of horror that has gradually deepened on the mariner's face.
5 The Sun now rose upon the right: having rounded Cape Horn, the ship heads north into the Pacific.
6 Still: always.

And I had done an hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe[1]:
For all averred[2], I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.

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

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[3]:
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;[4]
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

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,[5]
No bigger than the Moon.

1 work 'em woe: bring them miseries. 'em: them, the fellow sailors of the mariner's.
2 averred: asserted, declared. The killing of the albatross is a crime against hospitality. The shipmates became accomplices to the crime since they agreed with the ancient mariner's killing.
3 uprist: uprose.
4 The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,/The furrow follow'd free: notice the use of alliteration to describe the swift movement of the ship. furrow: the ship's wake; the track left on the surface of water by the movement of the ship.
5 Right up above the mast did stand: the ship had returned to the Equator.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.[1]

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.[2]

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[3]
The death-fires[4] 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 assured 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[5],
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

1 As idle as a painted ship/Upon a painted ocean: a wonderful description.
2 Water, water, everywhere,/Nor any drop to drink: Notice the use of epizeuxis in rhetoric, the immediate repetition of a word for emphasis, to present a vivid picture of weariness, boredom, and extreme anxiety on the stagnant water.
3 in reel and rout: turning round and round in great disorder.
4 The death-fires: the corposant, or St. Elmo's fire, an atmospheric electricity on a ship's mast or rigging, believed by the superstitious sailors to portend disaster.
5 drought: great thirst.

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! *140*
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

Questions

1. Why does the mariner shoot the albatross? How do you interpret his motivation? How does the coming and being shot of the albatross apparently affect the ship's course?
2. What supernatural force can you find in the poem? What effects of the supernatural force upon the course of the ship and on the crew?
3. Now that he has dropped the guilt of shooting the albatross, is the mariner forgiven and released from the suffering? How does it happen?
4. Analyse the narrative structure of the long poem, and interpret the effects of the structure on the theme.

Class Activities

Discuss and read the poem. First, divide the class into small groups; discuss the story, the character, and the context of the poem. Second, form pairs and read the poem in turn (seven pairs of students are needed as minimum who are willing to read the poem). Each pair of students focus their attention on one part of the poem, and read aloud in turn.

QUOTATIONS

I wish our clever young poets would remember my homely definitions of prose and poetry; that is, prose—words in their best order; poetry—the best words in their best order.

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Works of imagination should be written in very plain language; the more purely imaginative they are, the more necessary it is to be plain.

—Samuel Taylor Coleridg

Unit 24

George Gordon Byron (1788-1824)

George Gordon Byron *was a major poet in the British Romantic Movement. He was regarded as one of the greatest European poets. Among Lord Byron's best-known works are the narrative poems* Childe Harold's Pilgrimage *and* Don Juan.

Life and Writing

Byron was descended from two aristocratic families. Byron's father died when he was three, his mother brought up him in near-poverty in Aberdeen. When Byron was 10, the death of his great-uncle made him the sixth Lord Byron. He was sent to Harrow School, then Trinity College, Cambridge.

George Gordon Byron

At the university he found time to try his hand at lyric verse, and published *Hours of Idleness* in 1807. It was treated with unmerited harshness by *Edinburgh Review*, and Byron was provoked to write in reply his first important poem, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, a vigorous satire in the couplet style, in which he incorporated skillful but tactless ridicule of all his major poetic contemporaries, including Scott, Wordsworth, and Coleridge.

After graduation, he set out in 1809 on a tour through Portugal and Spain to Malta, and then to Albania, Greece. In this adventurous two-year tour, he accumulated materials which he wove into most of his important poems, including his last work, *Don Juan*. In 1812 soon after his return to England, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage was* published, which made him famous overnight, as Byron said in a letter, "I awoke one morning to find myself famous."

In the following years, his fame as a poet rose steadily. Inheriting the seat in

the House of Lords, he also became briefly active on the extreme liberal side of the Whig party. In 1815 he married Annabella Milbanke, but shortly after the birth of their daughter, she left him and refused to come back. The Londoners, after hearing his stories, rejected him from their social circle. Slanderous tongues and rumors eventually drove Byron to leave England on April 25, 1816, and he never returned.

He first went to Switzerland, where he met Shelley and they became close friends until the latter's death in 1822. In January 1824, he formed the "Byron Brigade" to fight against the Turks in the Greek War of Independence, but he died of fever in April before he saw any serious military action. Before his death, he was shouting in a dream voice: "Forward! Forward! Follow me!" The Greeks considered him a national hero, but his body was refused by the deans of both Westminster and St. Paul's. He was interred in his family vault.

Byron had been born with a clubfoot, and this defect caused him physical suffering and agonised embarrassment all his life. His lameness made him avid for athletic prowess; he played cricket and made himself an expert boxer, fencer, and horseman, and a powerful swimmer.

Of his inner discordances, Byron himself was well aware: "I am so changeable, being every thing by turns and nothing long — I am such a strange mélange of good and evil, that it would be difficult to describe me." He went on to tell his friend, "There are but two sentiments to which I am constant — a strong love of liberty, and a detestation of cant."

Literary Influence

Byron had an overwhelming influence on European continent. The French critic Hippolyte Taine devoted a long enthusiastic chapter to Lord Byron in his *History of English Literature* in the 1850s, "the greatest and most English of these artists; he is so great and so English that from him alone we shall learn more truths of his country and of his age than from all the rest together."

Through much of the 19th century he continued to be rated as one of the greatest English poets and the very prototype of literary Romanticism. His influence was felt everywhere among poets and novelists.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage is a lengthy narrative poem. "Childe" is a medieval title for a young man who was a candidate for knighthood.

The poem describes the travels and reflections of a world-weary young man who, disillusioned with a life of pleasure and revelry, looks for distraction in foreign lands; in a wider sense, it is an expression of the melancholy and disillusionment felt by a generation weary of the wars of the post-Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras.

The poem is semi-autobiographical, and the first parts of the work are based upon Byron's travels through the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea between 1809 and 1811. Childe Harold became a vehicle for Byron's own beliefs and ideas, and introduced the first time the image of **the Byronic hero**.

In the following selection from Canto III, Stanzas 12 and 13 give the first sketch of the Byronic hero, proud and misanthropic; Stanzas 23 to 25 describe the famous ball on the eve of the Battle of Quatre Bras[1]; Stanzas 92 and 93 is a description of a stormy night on Lake Leman in the tempest and thunder.

The poem of four cantos is written in Spenserian stanza, which consists of eight iambic pentameter lines followed by one alexandrine (a twelve-syllable iambic line), with the rhyme pattern *ababbcbcc*.

ONCE MORE UPON THE WATERS

12

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd[2]
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd[3],
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

1 The Battle of Quatre Bras was fought between contingents of the Anglo-Dutch army and the left wing of the French Army in 1815, near the crossroads of Quatre Bras, in modern day Belgium.
2 quell'd: suppressed, reduced to submission.
3 uncompell'd: unyielding.

13

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime[1], extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome[2]
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.
...

21

There was a sound of revelry[3] by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell[4],
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

22

Did ye not hear it? — No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet —
But hark! — that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;

1 glowing clime: warm climate.
2 tome: a (usually) large and scholarly book.
3 sound of revelry: a famous ball, given by the duchess of Richmond on June 15, the eve of the battle of Quatre Bras.
4 voluptuous swell: the sound of music growing louder and louder and gratifying sensual pleasure.

And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is — it is — the cannon's opening roar!

23

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain[1]; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretched his father on a bloody bier[2],
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

24

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

25

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron[3], and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum

1 Brunswick's fated chieftain: Frederick William, Duke of Brunswick and nephew of George III, was killed at Quatre Bras. His father, commanding the Prussian army against Napoleon, had been killed at the battle of Jena in 1806.
2 bier: a stand to support a corpse or a coffin prior to burial.
3 mustering squadron: a gathering of military personnel for duty.

Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While throng'd[1] the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips — "The foe! they come! they come!"
...

92

The sky is changed! — and such a change! Oh night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

93

And this is in the night: — Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight, —
A portion of the tempest and of thee![2]
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black, — and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

Don Juan

Don Juan was written in Italy during 1818-1823 with 16,000 lines in 16 cantos. The story takes place in the late 18th century. Don Juan is a Spanish youth of noble birth. The vicissitudes of life and his adventures in many countries are described against varied social backgrounds, and he is seen to take part in different historical events, thus projecting a panoramic view of

1 throng'd: gathered.
2 These two lines expressed the narrator's eagerness to participate in the fight.

contemporary life. In *Don Juan* Byron displays his genius as a Romanticist and a Realist simultaneously.

"Almost all Don Juan is real life, either my own, or from people I know." Byron admitted. It is true that certain incidents and characters are drawn from Byron's life. He names his hero after the most notorious lover and seducer of women in European literature. Originally a villain in a Spanish story, Don Juan had become the archetype of the heartless, remorseless seducer.

Plot Summary

Canto I presents the birth, childhood, and education of Don Juan up through his first seduction and affair with a married woman at his 16. The affair ends in that the woman's husband sends her to a convent, and Juan's mother sends him abroad on a grand tour.

The next cantos describe young Juan's many and varied adventures. His ship becomes wrecked, and he is washed ashore on a Greek island, discovered and taken care of by the lovely and innocent Haidee, the daughter of a pirate who is away from the island and is thought to be dead. Dan Juan and Haidee get married and a wedding ceremony is held on the island. Haidee's father returns unexpectedly, and is enraged by the daughter's marriage with a stranger. Juan is put into chains. Haidee fades away and dies out of sadness.

Juan is sold as a slave to a sultana in Constantinople. He escapes and joins the Russian army, where he distinguishes himself in the fighting, and is sent to St. Petersburg, where he eventually finds himself at the court of Catherine the Great, the Russian Empress. She sends him on a diplomatic mission to England.

Don Juan and Haidee by Alexander Marie Colin, 1833

The final cantos show Juan moving about in English society, providing an opportunity for Byron to satirise the contemporary social behaviors of his compatriots. He attacks the hypocrisy of the English, their false morality and their bad tastes.

The Isles of Greece

The excerpt is an episode taken from Canto III of *Don Juan*, which is sung by a Greek singer at the wedding of Don Juan and Haidee. In the early 19th

century, Greece was under the rule of the Turks. By contrasting the freedom of ancient Greece and the present enslavement, the poet appealed people to struggle for liberty.

The stanza form is an eight-line iambic pentameter stanza with the rhyme scheme *abababcc*. The final two lines of each stanza form a couplet. The language is colloquial and conversational.

1

The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece
Where burning Sappho[1] loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung![2]
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,[3]
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,[4]
Have found the fame your shores refuse:[5]
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires'[6] 'Islands of the Blest'.[7]

1 Sappho: an ancient female Greek lyric poet, lived roughly between 630 BC and 570 BC. The bulk of her poetry has been lost, but her reputation is lasting for her passionate love poems.
2 Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung: Phoebus Apollo, god of the sun, was born on the island of Delos. Phoebus is the Latin form of Greek Phoibos, a byname used in classical mythology for the god Apollo.
3 Scian: of Scio, the birthplace of Homer. Teian: of Teos, the birthplace of Anacreon (born ca. 570 BC), who was a Greek lyric poet, notable for his drinking songs and hymns.
4 The hero's harp: Homer. the lover's lute: Anacreon.
5 the fame your shores refuse: Greece does not give honour to Homer and Anacreon who are worshipped in other countries.
6 sires: ancestors.
7 Islands of the Blest: islands where the blessed people live after death. The lines mean the fame of Homer and Anacreon goes far beyond the geological limit.

3

The mountains look on Marathon[1] —
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;[2]
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations; — all were his!
He counted them at break of day —
And when the sun set, where were they?

5

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay[3] is tuneless now —
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

6

'Tis something in the dearth of fame[4],
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;

1 Marathon: a plain to the northwest of Athens, where the Greeks defeated the invading Persians (490 BC).
2 A king sate on the rocky brow/Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis: a king here refers to the Persian king Xerxes (pronounced "Zerk-seas"), a Persian Emperor (reigned 485-465 BC) of the Achaemenid dynasty, who witnessed the defeat of his mighty navy force near the island of Salamis on Septmeber 29, 480 BC. sate: sat. rocky brow: the edge of a cliff.
3 The heroic lay: the heroic song or poem.
4 in the dearth of fame: in this age of dishonour. dearth: in lack of.

For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush — for Greece a tear.

7

Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
Must we but blush? — Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead![1]
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylae!

8

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no; — the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one, arise, — we come, we come!"
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

9

In vain — in vain: strike other chords[2];
Fill high the cup with Samian wine[3]!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine:[4]
Hark! rising to the ignoble call —
How answers each bold Bacchanal[5]!

1 our Spartan dead: referring to the three hundred Spartans killed in the Battle of Thermopylae (a mountain pass in Greece) fought between the Spartans and the Persian invaders in 480 BC.
2 strike other chords: play other tunes.
3 Samian wine: Samos is an island in the Aegean Sea, famous for its wine.
4 Scio's vine: Scio, the birthplace of Homer, also famous for its wine. Notice the singer's satirical tone in the line.
5 Bacchanal: worshipper of Bacchus, the Greek god of wine.

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance[1] as yet;
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx[2] gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus[3] gave —
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served — but served Polycrates[4] —
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese[5]
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
O that the present hour would lend

1 the Pyrrhic dance: the dance in armor was a male coming-of-age initiation ritual linked to a warrior victory celebration. Dance, according to Greek thought, was one of the civilizing activities, like wine-making or music. It was believed the dance was invented by Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, an ancient Greek city state in the northwestern part of Greece.

2 the Pyrrhic phalanx: a phalanx (plural phalanxes or phalanges) is a rectangular mass military formation, usually composed entirely of heavy infantry armed with spears, pikes, or similar weapons. The troops were disciplined to hold a line which created a nearly impenetrable forest of points to the front. The phalanx is a hallmark of Hellenistic or ancient Greek warfare.

3 Cadmus: in Greek mythology, he was the son of the king of Phoenicia (currently Lebanon) and brother of Europa. Cadmus founded the city of Thebes, and its acropolis was originally named Cadmeia in his honour. Cadmus was credited with the introduction of the Phoenician alphabet. Cadmus' descendants ruled at Thebes on-and-off for several generations, including the time of the Trojan War.

4 Polycrates: the tyrant of Samos from 535 BC to 515 BC. During the invasion of Teos by the Persian army, Anacreon went to Samos to serve Polycrates, who built a powerful navy to resist the Persian invasion.

5 Chersonese: a place in Greece, now Gallipoli.

Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,[1]
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers[2] bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan[3] blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks[4] —
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords and native ranks
The only hope of courage dwells:
But Turkish force and Latin fraud[5]
Would break your shield, however broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade —
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves[6],
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

1 On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore: both Suli and Parga were in west Epirus; the people there were fighting against the Turks.
2 the Doric mothers: brave Spartan mothers. Doric is one of the four divisions of ancient Greeks, and Spartan being the chief representative.
3 Heracleidan: of Heracles. In Greek mythology, he was a divine hero, the son of Zeus. He was the greatest of the Greek heroes, a paragon of masculinity, the ancestor of royal clans and a champion of the Olympian order against chthonic monsters. In Rome and the modern West, he is known as Hercules.
4 the Franks: western European countries in general.
5 Latin fraud: deception of western European countries.
6 laves: washed.

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,[1]
Where nothing, save[2] the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;[3]
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

She Walks in Beauty

At a party in June, 1814, Byron met his cousin, Mrs. Wilmot, who was wearing a black spangled mourning dress. Byron was struck by her dark hair and fair face, the mingling of various lights and shades. This became the essence of his poem about her.

The opening couplet to the poem is among the most memorable and most quoted lines in romantic poetry. The first line continues without pause onto the second line, bringing together the opposing qualities of darkness and light that are at play throughout the three verses. The two lines are effortless, graceful, and beautiful, a fitting match for the poem about a lady who possesses effortless grace and beauty.

The last verse is split between three lines of physical description and three lines that describe the lady's moral character. Here soft, calm glow reflects a life of peace and goodness. This is a repetition of the theme that the lady's physical beauty is a reflection of her inner beauty.

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes[4] and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect[5] and her eyes:

1 Place me on Sunium's marbled steep: Byron visited twice while in Greece the high rocky promontory (Cape Colonna today), which is crowned by the marble columns of an ancient temple to Poseidon. A number of the Cyclades islands are visible form this point, and it was probably here that Byron got his inspiration from this poem.
2 save: except.
3 our mutual murmurs sweep: the lament of the singer and the sound of the waves murmur in harmony. sweep: pass over.
4 climes: climates.
5 aspect: appearance.

Thus mellowed[1] to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.[2]

One shade[3] the more, one ray[4] the less,
Had half impaired[5] the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress[6],
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place[7].

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,[8]
But tell of days in goodness[9] spent,
A mind at peace with all below[10],
A heart whose love is innocent!

Critical Points

The Byronic hero

The Byronic hero is an idealised but flawed character exemplified in the life and writings of Lord Byron. The Byronic hero appears in various guises in Byron's writings, first in the opening canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), and in the verse romances and dramas that follow. His persistent character is that of a moody, passionate, and remorse-torn but unrepentant

1 mellowed: become rich and soft.
2 Heaven to gaudy day denies: heaven refuses to give (that tender light) to a brilliantly fine day.
3 shade: darkness.
4 ray: brightness.
5 impaired: damaged.
6 raven tress: dark-coloured lock of hair.
7 dwelling-place: the body.
8 the tints that glow: the radiant reddish colour that shines.
9 goodness: purity and moral excellence.
10 all below: everything under the heaven.

wanderer, contemptuous of and rebelling against conventional morality or defying fate, "a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection."(Thomas Macaulay, 1800-1859)

In his developed form, he is in his isolation absolutely self-reliant, inflexibly pursuing for his own ends according to his self-generated moral code against any opposition, human or supernatural. This figure embodied the implicit yearnings of Byron's time, was imitated in life as well as in art, and helped shape the intellectual as well as the cultural history of the later 19th century.

Questions

Don Juan

1. What glorious events in the history of Greece did the poet mention at the beginning of the selection?
2. What do the classic allusions used in this poem contribute to the theme of the excerpt?

She Walks in Beauty

1. What is the sequence of the poet's attention to the lady? How is the lady's mind and heart reflected in her appearance?
2. The fourth line begins with an irregularity in the metre, starting with an accented syllable followed by an unaccented one, and giving an emphasis that her unique feature is that opposites "meet" in her in a wonderful way. What is your interpretation of the word "meet"?

QUOTATIONS

I by no means rank poetry high in the scale of intelligence — this may look like affectation but it is my real opinion. It is the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake.

— George Gordon Byron

Unit 25

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Percy Bysshe Shelley *was one of the major English Romantic poets. He is widely considered to be among the finest lyric poets of the English language.*

Life and Writing

Shelley was the grandson of a baronet and the descendant of Sussex squires. He was conventionally educated at Eton and Oxford. He was deeply unhappy and rebellious as a child. At school he was mocked and bullied as "Mad Shelley" and the "Eton Atheist".

Percy Bysshe Shelley, by Amelia Curran, 1819

In 1811 he published a pamphlet *The Necessity of Atheism*. In the same year, Shelley married a pretty girl of 16, Harriet, daughter of a retired coffee house keeper. That was the beginning of a series of disasters. The unhappy union finished in 1814. Two years later, Shelley married Mary Godwin, William Godwin's daughter, who later became famous novelist Mary Shelley. When Harriet, his ex-wife, drowned herself in a fit of despair, Shelley' s political enemies made a great scandal of her sudden death. In great anger and despair, Shelley left England in 1818 and never returned.

"Queen Mab" (1813), Shelley's first long poem of importance, expresses almost all his major political ideas. It takes the form of a fairytale dream. The rebellious young Shelley was influenced by all the revolutionary and radical ideas of his time. "The Revolt of Islam" is another important long poem. His masterpiece is *Prometheus Unbound*, a lyrical drama in four acts. The theme is borrowed from *Prometheus Bound*, a play by the Greek tragedian Aeschylus.

To Shelley, the image of Prometheus embodies four noble qualities: man's intellect, his heroic endurance, his defiance of tyranny and his love of mankind. At the end of the drama, Prometheus is freed. It is a victory of mankind over tyranny and oppression.

Shelley has been called the most intensely lyrical of the English poets, mainly for his short poems on nature, love, and political freedom. His best love lyrics include "Love's Philosophy", "One Word Is Too Often Profaned", "With a Guitar", "To Jane", "The Indian Serenade". He is also good at expressing his emotion through the description of all kinds of natural phenomena.

On July 8, 1822, while he was sailing in a small boat along the coast of Italy, a sudden tempest struck his boat and he was drowned. His body was cremated by Byron and buried in Rome. The inscription on his tombstone reads: "Percy Bysshe Shelley, Cor Cordium = The Heart of Hearts." Mary Shelley did a good job in collecting and editing his poems, and her explanatory notes have been helpful to all editors and readers of the poet's works.

Shelley's unconventional life and uncompromising idealism, combined with his strong skeptical voice, made him a much denigrated figure during his life. After his death, he became the idol of the next two or three generations of poets, including the major Victorian poets Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson, and William Butler Yeats. He is also famous for his association with contemporaries John Keats and Lord Byron. Byron called Shelley "the best and least selfish man I ever knew".

A Defence of Poetry

Shelley was also remembered in the history of critical theory for his essay "A Defence of Poetry". In 1821, Thomas L. Peacock, one of Shelley's friends, published "The Four Ages of Poetry", in which he asserted that poetry, taking its origin in relatively primitive and simple modes of thought, must inevitably decline with the progress of civilisation, and in an age of rationality, such as the 19th century, it can only be an anachronism, i.e. something not in harmony with the present, which is both barbaric and absurd.

Shelley's essay was written as a refutation of Peacock's view. Shelley maintained that poetry, so far from being deteriorated and made powerless by the advance of civilisation, is actually the indispensable agent of civilisation. "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world", and poetry can play a very important part in the spiritual life of society. He wrote:

"The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and

an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers (contributes) to the effect by acting on the cause."

Ode[1] to the West Wind

"Ode to the West Wind" is one of Shelley's best-known lyrics. According to Shelley's note, "this poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains."

The poet describes vividly the power of the west wind on the earth, in the sky and on the sea, and then expresses his envy for the boundless freedom of the west wind, and his wish to be free like the wind and to scatter his words among mankind. The image of the west wind symbolises rebirth and creative power.

As for the contents, the poem can be divided in two parts: the first three stanzas are about the qualities of the "Wind". There is a turn at the beginning of the fourth stanza; and the focus is on the speaker "I", who wish to carry the spirit of the wind and be the "trumpet of a prophecy".

As for the structure, "Ode to the West Wind" consists of five stanzas, each a sonnet formed of four units of terza rima completed by a couplet. The metrical pattern of each line is basically iambic pentameter. The **"terza rima"** is an Italian measure first used by Dante in his well-known *The Divine Comedy*. The first and third lines rhyme, and the second line is in rhyme with the fourth and sixth lines, the rhyme scheme being *aba, bcb, cdc, ded, ee*. This linked chain gives a feeling of onward motion; the verse has a breathless quality which is in

1 Ode: In ancient literature, it is an elaborate lyrical poem composed for a chorus to chant and to dance to; in modern use, it is a rhymed lyric of some length, dealing with a lofty theme in a dignified manner, often addressed to a person or celebrating an event. The English odes are generally of three types: (1) the Pindaric ode, following the pattern originated by the ancient Greek poet Pindar; (2) the Cowley-style ode, named after Abraham Cowley, an English poet of the 17th century; and, (3) the Horatian ode, named after the ancient Roman poet Horace. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is of the Horatian type, i.e., with stanzas of uniform length and arrangement.

keeping with the onward motion of the wind's movement.

I

O WILD West Wind[1], thou breath of Autumn's being;
Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes! O thou
Who chariotest[2] to their dark wintry bed
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring[3] 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;[4]
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver[5]; hear, O hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,[6]
Shook[7] from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,[8]

1 The first stanza begins with the alliteration "Wild West Wind". This makes the "wind" "sound invigorating". It is a personification of the wind in the form of an apostrophe.
2 chariotest: the "est" is added to the verb stem "chariot" to indicate the second person singular, after the subject "thou".
3 Thine azure sister of the Spring: referring here to the east wind.
4 The "corpse within its grave" (Line 8) is in contrast to the "azure sister of the Spring" (Line 9) — a reference to the east wind — whose "living hues and odours plain" (Line12) evoke a strong contrast to the colours that evoke death (Line 4).
5 Destroyer and Preserver: the west wind is considered the "Destroyer," for driving the last sings of life from the trees; it is considered the "Preserver" for scattering the seeds which will come to life in the spring.
6 The sky's "clouds" (Line 16) are "like earth's decaying leaves" (Line 16). They are a reference to the second line of the first stanza ("leaves dead", Line 2).
7 shook: shaken (an archaism).
8 the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean: the line between the sky and the stormy sea is indistinguishable, the whole space from the horizon to the zenith being covered with trialing storm clouds.

Angels of rain and lightning![1] there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head
Of some fierce Maenad[2], even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm.[3] Thou dirge
Of the dying year,[4] to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might
Of vapours, from whose[5] solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst; O hear![6]

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he[7] lay,
Lulled by the coil[8] of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice isle[9] in Baiaelig's bay[10],
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day[11],
All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers

1 Angels of rain and lightening: the "angels" refers to the "clouds", the messengers of rain and lightning.
2 Maenad: a very frenzied woman in Greek mythology, a priestess of Bacchus, the God of Wine.
3 The locks of the approaching storm: the clouds.
4 Thou dirge/Of the dying year: the west wind.
5 whose: here refers to "vapours".
6 Shelley in this stanza expands his vision from the earthly scene with the leaves before him to the vaster commotion of the skies. The wind is now no longer at the horizon and therefore far away, but is exactly above us. The clouds reflect the image of the swirling leaves, and they can be seen as messengers of rain and lightning as mentioned above.
7 he: the Mediterranean.
8 coil: the noise of the tide.
9 pumice isle: the name of an isle near Naples, Italy, which is formed by deposits of lava from Vesuvius, a volcano nearby.
10 Baiaelig's bay: a favourite resort of the ancient Romans on the coast of Campania, at the western end of the Bay of Naples.
11 intenser day: the translucency of the water is more intense than the dazzling daylight above its surface. And "day" here refers to "daylight".

So sweet, the sense faints picturing them![1] Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers[2]
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselve;[3] O hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;[4]
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[5]
Scarce seemed a vision-I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.[6]
O! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!

1 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them: so sweet that one feels faint in describing them.
2 the Atlantic's level powers: the waves of the Atlantic Ocean moving on its flat surface.
3 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods.../And tremble and despoil themselves: the plants at the bottom of the ocean, the rivers and the lakes also fall under the influence of the west wind which announces the change of the season. It appears as if the third stanza shows a turning-point in comparison with the previous stanzas. Whereas Shelley had accepted death and changes in life in the first and second stanza, he now turns to "wistful reminiscence, [recalls] an alternative possibility of transcendence".
4 Stanzas 1-3 began with "O WILD West Wind" (Line 1) and "Thou..." (Lines 15, 29) and are clearly directed to the wind, but there is a change in the fourth stanza. The focus is no more on the "wind", but on the speaker who says "If I were..." (Lines 43ff.). It becomes more and more clear that what the poet talks about now is himself. Notice that the first-person pronouns appear nine times in the fourth stanza.
5 thy skiey speed: thy airy and ethereal speed. Skiey is the poetical variant of "skyey"—of the sky, ethereal.
6 as thus with thee in prayer in my sore need: praying to you, in my great need, in this way. The two lines below are the poet's prayer to the west wind.

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed![1]
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed[2]
One too like thee[3] — tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own?[4]
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,[5]
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,[6]
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

1 Shelley here identifies himself with the wind. He knows that this is something impossible to achieve, but he does not stop praying for it. The only chance Shelley sees to make his prayer and wish for a new identity with the Wind come true is by pain or death, as death leads to rebirth. So, he wants to "fall upon the thorns of life" and "bleed" (Line 54).

2 A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd: this may be a reference to the years that have passed and "chained and bowed" (Line 55) the hope of the people who fought for freedom and were literally imprisoned.

3 One too like thee: here refers to Shelley himself.

4 It is also necessary to mention that the first-person pronouns again appear in great frequency; but the possessive pronoun "my" predominates. The stanza is no more a request or a prayer as it had been in the fourth stanza – it is a demand. The poet becomes the wind's instrument – his "lyre" (Line 57). This is a symbol of the poet's own passivity towards the wind; he becomes his musician and the wind's breath becomes his breath.

5 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies/Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone: the tumult of thy might harmonies will take a deep autumnal tone from both my depressed feelings and the falling leaves. Again the wind is very important in this last stanza. The wind with his "mighty harmonies" (Line 59) becomes an artist or a Creator of sounds in this stanza. At the beginning of the poem the "wind" is only capable of blowing the leaves from the trees, then the poet identifies himself with the leaves. In this stanza the "wind" is now capable of using his "Lyre" and "mighty harmonies".

6 Notice that the poet's attitude towards the wind has changed: in the first stanza the wind has been an "enchanter" (Line 3), now the wind has become an "incantation" (Line 65).

Be through my lips[1] to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? [2] 70

To a Skylark

If the West Wind was Shelley's first convincing attempt to articulate an aesthetic philosophy through metaphors of nature, the Skylark is his greatest natural metaphor for pure poetic expression, the "harmonious madness" of pure inspiration. The speaker, addressing a skylark[3], says that it is a "blithe Spirit" rather than a bird, for its song comes from "Heaven", and from its full heart pours "profuse strains of unpremeditated art".

Structurally and linguistically, this poem is almost unique among Shelley's works. Structurally, each stanza tends to make a single, quick point about the skylark, or to look at it in a sudden, brief new light; still, the poem does flow, and gradually advances the mini-narrative of the speaker watching the skylark flying higher and higher into the sky, and envying its untrammeled inspiration.

The strange form of stanza, with four compact lines and one very long line, and its lilting, songlike diction ("profuse strains of unpremeditated art") work to create the effect of spontaneous poetic expression flowing musically and naturally from the poet's mind. The rhyme scheme of each stanza is *ababb*.

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,

1 The poet in this stanza uses plural forms, for example, "my leaves" (Lines 58, 64), "thy harmonies" (Line 59), "my thoughts" (Line 63), "ashes and sparks" (Line 67) and "my lips" (Line 68). By the use of the plural, the poet is able to show that there is some kind of peace and pride in his words. It even seems as if he has redefined himself because the uncertainty of the previous stanza has been blown away.

2 This is of course a rhetorical question because spring does come after winter. The question has a deeper meaning and does not only mean the change of seasons, but is a reference to death and rebirth as well. Like the leaves of the trees in a forest, his leaves will fall and decay and will perhaps soon flourish again when the spring comes.

3 The skylark is a small bird that sings only in flight, often when it is too high to be visible. This bird, freed from the bonds of earth and soaring beyond the reach of all the physical senses except hearing, is made the emblem of a nonmaterial spirit of pure joy, beyond the possibility of human experience. See Lines 15, 31.

Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere[1]
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see — we *feel* that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflow'd.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?

1 silver sphere: the morning star.

From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflower'd,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves:[1]

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

1 heavy-winged thieves: the "warm winds", in Line 53.

Teach us, sprite[1] or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal[2]
Or triumphal chaunt
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt —
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety[3].

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

1 sprite: spirit.
2 hymeneal: marital (from Hymen, Greek god of marriage).
3 satiety: the state of being satisfactorily full and unable to take on more.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then — as I am listening now.

Critical Points

"Ode to the West Wind" and the Romantic spirit

Shelley is often thought of as the quintessential Romantic poet. The "Ode to the West Wind" expresses perfectly the Romantic spirit.

This poem expresses the yearning for genius. In the Romantic era, it is common to associate genius with an attendant spirit or force of nature from which the genius came. In "A Defence of Poetry", Shelley says that poets are "the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration, the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present..."

"Ode to the West Wind" also expresses the hunger for imagination. In the poem, Shelley not only wants the force to make him the "trumpet of a prophecy", he is also trying to forge a oneness with the West Wind in the middle of the fifth section ("Be thou, Spirit fierce,/My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!").

Another of the central ideas of the Romantic literary figures is the inherent value of the "primitive and untrammeled". Shelley fills the third section with images of innocence and serenity. Descriptions of "azure moss and flowers", "sea-blooms", and "oozy woods" dominate this part of the poem. The lyre in

the fifth section is a symbol of art and beauty; it is also a frequent symbol for the artist being played by inspiration.

What is perhaps most important is that "Ode to the West Wind" expresses the aspect of the Romantic Movement which emphasises the search for individual definitions of morality. In the fourth and fifth stanzas, Shelley begins to identify himself with the Wind and beseeches the Wind to work through him for the good of humanity; he wants the Wind to "Drive my dead thoughts over the universe/ Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!" Here, a "new birth" of imagination, genius, and creativity can come from death, darkness, and hardship.

Questions

Ode to the West Wind

1. What does wind signify in the poem? How is it used symbolically?
2. How do you interpret the West Wind as "Destroyer and Preserver"?
3. How do you connect the role of a poet illustrated by Shelley in his "A Defence of Poetry" with the role of the West Wind in this poem?

To a Skylark

1. Why does the poet say that the skylark is a "blithe Spirit"?
2. What is the climactic moment of the poem? How does it relate to the poem as a whole?

QUOTATIONS

Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

In a drama of the highest order there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect.

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

Unit 26

John Keats (1795-1821)

John Keats *was one of the principal poets of the English Romantic Movement.*

Life and Writing

John Keats

Keats was born in London of a hostler's family. When Keats was eight, his father died, and his mother moved with her four children to live with Keats's grandmother. There, Keats received a good education at a private school, where he was encouraged by his teacher, Charles Cowden Clarke, to read Homer, Spenser and other poets. In 1810, his mother died, and his guardians removed Keats from school to become a surgeon's apprentice at the age of 16. In 1816 he was licensed to practise as an apothecary, but he abandoned the profession for poetry almost immediately over his guardian's protests.

His decision was influenced by Leigh Hunt, who was then the editor of *The Examiner*. Hunt introduced Keats to Hazlitt, Lamb and Shelley, and also published Keats's sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" in his magazine. Finishing his long allegorical poem "Endymion", Keats left to stay and walk in Scotland and Ireland with a friend Charles Brown. However, he too began to show signs of tuberculosis infection on that trip, and returned prematurely. "Endymion" (1818) depicts the love between a Greek shepherd and the moon goddess, expressing the poet's quest for an ideal feminine counterpart and a flawless happiness beyond earthly possibility. The poem was followed with bitter attacks. He concealed his pain and wrote to his brother that

"I think I shall be among the English poets after my death", but he was deeply hurt.

From September 1818, he began his most fruitful poetic creation. He finished "Ode to a Nightingale", "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode on Melancholy" and "To Autumn". During this year, he was beset with financial problems, and intensely preoccupied with his love for Fanny Browne, his neighbour in Hampstead. This relationship was cut short when, by 1820, Keats began showing worse signs of the disease that had plagued his family. In the diary of Fanny Brawne was found only one sentence regarding the separation: "Mr. Keats has left Hampstead."

Keats died on February 23, 1821 and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery, Rome. He was buried under a tomb stone reading, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

During his short life, his work received constant critical attacks from the periodicals of the day. By the mid-19th century, however, his fame began to increase steadily. Tennyson considered him the greatest poet of the 19th century. Mathew Arnold commended his "intellectual and spiritual passion" for beauty.

His letters are also regarded as a valuable commentary to his poetry. He wrote fully and revealingly to Fanny Brawne, to his brothers and sister, to Shelley, Leigh Hunt, and many others. His letters mixed the everyday events of his own life with a lively and delicate interest in that of his correspondents, and displaying wit and high spirits as well as his profoundest thoughts on love, poetry, and the nature of man. The letters were described by T. S. Eliot as "certainly the most notable and most important ever written by any English poets" (*The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, 1933).

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

The poem was written in October 1816. Keats expresses his ecstasy at reading the works of the ancient Greek poet Homer freely translated by the Elizabethan playwright George Chapman. The poem has become an often-quoted classic, cited to demonstrate the emotional power of a great work of art.

Chapman's translation of Homer was introduced to Keats by his former school teacher and friend, Charles Cowden Clarke. They sat up together till daylight to read it: "Keats shouting with delight as some passage of especial energy struck his imagination. At ten o'clock the next morning, Mr. Clarke found the sonnet on his breakfast-table."

This sonnet is a Petrarchan sonnet, divided into an octave and a sestet, and the rhyme scheme is *abba abba cdcdcd*.

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold[1],
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.[2]
Oft of one wide expanse[3] had I been told
That deep-brow'd[4] Homer ruled as his demesne[5];
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene[6]
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken[7];
Or like stout Cortez[8] when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise[9] —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Ode to a Nightingale

"Ode to a Nightingale" was written in May, 1819, after the death of his brother, Tom, in 1818. The Ode expresses a mixed feeling of joy and pain, delight and hurt, revealing Keats's desire to join the nightingale so that he can escape from the harsh reality and problems he has to face everyday, and his awareness of his incapability to run away from it. Keats's confusion is clearly

1 the realms of gold: world of great literary works.
2 bards in fealty to Apollo hold: the ancient poets (bards) of the isles of Greece vowed loyalty to the god of poetry.
3 wide expanse: vast territory.
4 deep-brow'd: here refers to Homer's profound thinking and knowledge.
5 demesne: realm; domain.
6 pure serene: calm, clear air.
7 ken: the range of sight or knowledge.
8 Cortez: Hernán(do) Cortés (1485-1547) was the conquistador who became famous for leading the military expedition that initiated the Spanish Conquest of Mexico. In fact, it was Vasco de Balboa (1475-1519), a Spanish explorer, governor, and conquistador, who first saw the Pacific Ocean at the top of a mountain in Dairen, a place now called Panama.
9 surmise: guess.

demonstrated in the closing lines of the poem: "Was it a vision, or a waking dream? Fled is that music: — Do I wake or sleep?"

Keats's opinion of the bird clearly changes as the text progresses. In the first stanza, Keats refers to it with awe, using phrases like "Light-winged Dryad of the trees", but by the seventh stanza refers to it simply as "bird". Indeed, in the final stanza Keats addresses it as "deceiving elf", implying irritation at the nightingale's hypnotic song for the effect it had on him. Similarly his views about the Nightingale's song change as the poem progresses, descriptions of it being a "high requiem" giving way to "plaintive anthem" in the final stanza.

The ode consists of eight stanzas, each containing ten lines. The rhyme scheme is *ababcdecde*. The poet makes use of enjambement between stanzas two and three.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock[1] I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate[2] to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards[3] had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thy happiness, —
That thou, light-winged Dryad[4] of the trees,
In some melodious plot[5]
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,[6]
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

1 hemlock: a poisonous drink made from a poisonous plant of the same name.
2 dull opiate: a sedative drug containing opium.
3 Lethe-wards: towards the Lethe, one of the several rivers of Hades. In Greek mythology, drinking from the river Lethe ("forgetfulness" or "oblivion") caused complete forgetfulness. Some ancient Greeks believed that souls were made to drink from the river before being reincarnated, so they would not remember their past lives. In classical Greek, Lethe literally means "forgetfulness" or "concealment".
4 light-winged Dryad: the nightingale. Dryad: a female tree spirit in Greek mythology.
5 melodious plot: the place where the nightingale is singing.
6 shadows numberless: here refers to the thick leaves which cast numberless shadow.

O for a draught of vintage![1] that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora[2] and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song[3], and sun-burnt mirth[4]!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene[5],
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:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret[6]
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,[7]
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;[8]
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs[9],
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

1 for a draught of vintage: longing for a drink of wine.
2 Flora: the goddess of flowers in Roman mythology.
3 Provencal song: song in Provence, a former Roman province and is now a region of southeastern France. The place was famous for its singer of love songs in the Middle Ages.
4 sun-burnt mirth: the joyous life of the warm climate area.
5 Hippocrene: in Greek mythology, Hippocrene was the name of a fountain on Mountain Helicon. It was sacred to the Muses and was formed by the hooves of Pegasus. Its name literally translates to "Horse's Fountain" and the water was supposed to bring forth poetic inspiration when imbibed.
6 fret: worry.
7 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs: the line describes the miserable old people who are paralysed.
8 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies: perhaps refers to Keats's brother, Tom Keats, who died of tuberculosis in the previous winter. specture-thin: as thin as a ghost.
9 leaden-eyed despairs: the dull eyes of the people who are in despair.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,[1]
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,[2]
And haply[3] the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry fays[4];
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.[5]

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed[6] darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine[7];
Fast-fading violets covered 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.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;

1 Bacchus and his pards: The Greek god of wine, Dionysus, represents not only the intoxicating power of wine, but also its social and beneficial influences. He is viewed as the promoter of civilization, a lawgiver, and lover of peace—as well as the patron deity of agriculture and the theatre. He was also known as the Liberator, freeing one from one's normal self, by madness, ecstasy, or wine.
2 tender is the night: a beautiful line. American novelist Francis Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) applied it as the title of one of his novels.
3 haply: perhaps; by chance.
4 fays: fairies.
5 verdurous: green. glooms: deeply shaded places.
6 embalmed: perfumed.
7 eglantine: Eurasian rose with prickly stems and fragrant leaves and bright pink flowers. 野蔷薇

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad[1]
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem[2] become a sod[3]

Thou wast 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[4], when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft — times hath
Charm'd magic casements[5], opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn[6]! 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[7] to do, deceiving elf[8].
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem[9] fades

1 abroad: in the open air.
2 requiem: song or hymn of mourning composed or performed as a memorial to a dead person.
3 sod: surface layer of ground containing grass and grass roots.
4 Ruth: a woman whose story is told in the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament. Ruth was not an Israelite, but she married an Israelite and stayed with her mother-in-law Naomi after her husband died. When Boaz saw her working in the fields, he fell in love with her and married her. Through the marriage she became the great-grandmother of King David. Keats describes her sadness in living as a stranger in a strange land.
5 casements: windows.
6 Forlorn: left alone and unhappy.
7 fam'd: reported.
8 elf: a supernatural creature of folk tales, represented as a small, delicate human figure with pointed ears and a capricious nature.
9 anthem: a musical setting of a religious text to be sung by a choir during a church service.

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?

Questions

1. The poet employs many different images of sound, sight, smell, taste, and touch in the poem. What influences you the most to lead you to a journey of imagination?
2. Connected with the biography of the poet, what are the differences between his poetic world and his real world? Can this enlighten your understanding of Keats as a poet?

Class Activities

1. Class Presentation
   Choose in this unit your favourite poem, give an analysis of the contents, structure, artistic features, and themes of the poem, and explain the reasons why you like it.
2. Writing Practice
   Choose your favourite poems, follow the example, and write your own poems.

QUOTATIONS

Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject.

— John Keats

Poetry should surprise by a fine excess and not by singularity — it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.

— John Keats

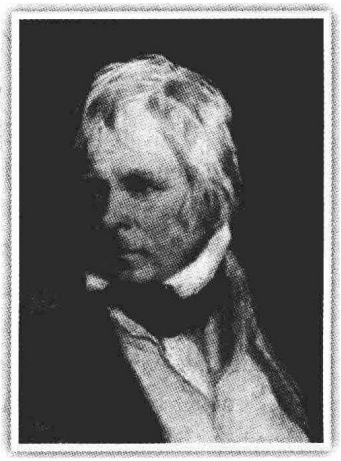
Unit 27

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)

Sir Walter Scott *was a prolific Scottish historical novelist and poet, enjoying popularity throughout Europe during his time. He is now known as "the father of the historical novel", and many of his works remain classics, including* Ivanhoe, Rob Roy, The Lady of the Lake, *and* Waverley.

Life and Writing

Scott was born in Edinburgh, the son of a solicitor. Scott took sick at the age of two, which left him lame in his right leg for the rest of his life. To help cure what was thought to have been infantile paralysis, he was sent to live for some years in the rural border region at his grandparents' farm, where he learned the speech patterns and many of the tales and legends which characterised much of his work. Scott also read eagerly the works of Pope, Dryden, Swift, Johnson, Spenser, and Cervantes. He was infected by stories of knights and castles, even venturing to explore the ruins of ancient castles himself.



Sir Walter Scott, by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer, 1824

After studying law at University of Edinburgh, he became a lawyer in Edinburgh. At the age of 25 he began to write. He then published a three-volume set of collected Scottish ballads, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. This was the first sign of his interest in Scottish history from a literary standpoint.

His first original book of poems was *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, published in 1805, the year when he became a secret partner in the Border Press, which

would allow him to keep more of the profit from his books. He published a number of other poems over the next 10 years, including *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). Huge profits piled in with the anonymous publication of *Waverly* in 1814, and Scott decided to keep his identity as author secret, both to secure his reputation as a poet, and to delight his mysterious side. His following novels were credited to "the author of Waverly" and became known as "the Waverly novels", including *Ivanhoe* (1820). As his fame grew during this phase of his career, he was granted the title of baronet, becoming Sir Walter Scott.

Scott's good fortune ended in 1825, with the bankruptcy of the Border Press. Rather than declare bankruptcy he placed his home, Abbotsford House, and income into a trust belonging to his creditors, and decided to write to pay off the debt. He wrote 30 pages a day and spent nearly all the rest of his life in labour. By 1831, the debt was nearly all paid. Scott died on September 21, 1832. Popular and well-loved, Scott's death was widely mourned.

In addition to Scott's distinction and innovation in the novel form, he also experimented and excelled in other genres. A true "man of letters", Scott was a poet, critic, historian, biographer, and editor.

Ivanhoe

Ivanhoe is a historical fiction by Sir Walter Scott, written in 1819 and set in 12th century England. It is the story of one of the remaining Saxon noble families at a time when the nobility was overwhelmed by Normans. The Saxon protagonist, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, is out of favour with his father owing to his courting of the Lady Rowena, and he joins the Norman King Richard I of England on crusade. Prince John, taking advantage of the King's absence, endeavour to seize the throne himself. At the tournament at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Ivanhoe returns in disguise. Supported by an equally disguised Richard, he defeats all his challengers, but is seriously wounded. He is taken into the care of Isaac the Jew and his daughter Rebecca, a skilled healer, beautiful and heroic.

A series of events follow that result in the capture of Rowena, her guardian Cedric, her betrothed Lord Athelstane, Rebecca and the wounded Ivanhoe by agents of Prince John. King Richard, with the help of the legendary Robin Hood, sieges Front-de-Boeuf's castle of Torquilstone, and succeeds at rescuing Ivanhoe and Rowena, but Rebecca is carried away by Ivanhoe's old nemesis, the Templar Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who finds Rebecca so irresistible that he is prepared to sacrifice everything for her. Rebecca resists his dishonourable

advances. Bois-Guilbert dies in combat with Ivanhoe. Rebecca, suppressing her love for Ivanhoe, leaves England with her father. The novel ends with Ivanhoe's reconciliation to his father and his union with Rowena, and the compromise between the Saxons and the ruling Normans under King Richard I.

Introduction to Chapter 20 and 28

In Chapter 20, Locksley (the disguised Robin Hood) and his men are planning to attack Front-de-Boeuf's castle of Torquilstone so as to rescue the imprisoned Rowena, Cedric, Lord Athelstane, Rebecca and the wounded Ivanhoe. Locksley also asks the Black Knight for aid from the tournament in the rescue. The Knight agrees, but is shocked to hear that Front-de-Boeuf is implicated in the treachery. The character that Scott gave to Robin Hood in *Ivanhoe* helped shape the modern notion of this figure as a cheery noble outlaw.

In Chapter 28, the narrator breaks from the story to tell us that when Ivanhoe fell at the tournament, it was Rebecca who insisted she and her father take him and care for him, despite the taboo of Christian and Gentile mixing. Isaac and Rebecca took Ivanhoe to their dwelling, and Rebecca began her healing of him.

Chapter 20

When autumn nights were long and drear,
And forest walks were dark and dim,
How sweetly on the pilgrim's ear
Was wont[1] to steal the hermit's hymn!

Devotion borrows Music's tone,
And Music took Devotion's wing;
And, like the bird that hails the sun,
They soar to heaven, and soaring sing.

— The Hermit of St. Clement's Well.

It was after three hours' good walking that the servants of Cedric, with their mysterious guide, arrived at a small opening in the forest, in the centre of

1 wont: accustomed.

which grew an oak-tree of enormous magnitude, throwing its twisted branches in every direction. Beneath this tree four or five yeomen[1] lay stretched on the ground, while another, as sentinel, walked to and fro in the moonlight shade.

Upon hearing the sound of feet approaching, the watch instantly gave the alarm, and the sleepers suddenly started up and bent their bows. Six arrows placed on the string were pointed towards the quarter from which the travellers approached, when their guide, being recognised, was welcomed with every token of respect and attachment, and all signs and fears of a rough reception at once subsided.

"Where is the Miller?" was his first question.

"On the road towards Rotherham."

"With how many?" demanded the leader, for such he seemed to be.

"With six men, and good hope of booty, if it please St. Nicholas."

"Devoutly spoken," said Locksley[2]; "and where is Allan-a-Dale?"

"Walked up towards the Watling Street, to watch for the Prior of Jorvaulx."

"That is well thought on also," replied the Captain; "and where is the Friar[3]?"

"In his cell."

"Thither will I go," said Locksley. "Disperse and seek your companions. Collect what force you can, for there's game afoot that must be hunted hard, and will turn to bay[4]. Meet me here by daybreak. And stay," he added, "I have forgotten what is most necessary of the whole. Two of you take the road quickly towards Torquilstone, the castle of Front-de-Boeuf[5]. A set of gallants,[6] who have been masquerading in such guise as our own, are carrying a band of prisoners[7] thither. Watch them closely, for, even if they reach the castle

1 yeomen: a man who owns and cultivates an area of land.
2 Locksley: the leader of a gang of forest outlaws who rob from the rich and help the poor and who is soon revealed to be Robin Hood.
3 the Friar: a merry monk who befriends King Richard in Robin Hood's forest, and he is soon revealed to be the legendary Friar Tuck, a member of Robin Hood's band of merry men.
4 bay: a position of a person forced to turn and face an enemy when no escape is possible.
5 Front-de-Boeuf: a Norman aristocrat with whom Ivanhoe fights at the tournament and in whose castle Cerdic and his followers are imprisoned.
6 A set of gallants: here refers to the Norman nobles in disguise. gallants: men of fashion and pleasure.
7 a band of prisoners: referring to Cerdic and his followers, who were captured by the disguised Norman nobles in the previous chapter.

before we collect our force, our honour is concerned to punish them, and we will find means to do so. Keep a close watch on them, therefore; and despatch one of your comrades, the lightest of foot, to bring the news of the yeomen thereabout."

They promised implicit obedience, and departed with alacrity on their different errands. In the meanwhile, their leader and his two companions, who now looked upon him with great respect, as well as some fear, pursued their way to the Chapel of Copmanhurst.

When they had reached the little moonlight glade, having in front the reverend, though ruinous chapel, and the rude hermitage, so well suited to ascetic devotion, Wamba whispered to Gurth[1], "If this be the habitation of a thief, it makes good the old proverb, The nearer the church the farther from God. And by my cockscomb,[2]" he added, "I think it be even so. Hearken but to the black sanctus[3] which they are singing in the hermitage!"

In fact the anchorite and his guest were performing, at the full extent of their very powerful lungs, an old drinking song, of which this was the burden[4]: —

"Come, trowl[5] the brown bowl to me,
Bully boy, bully boy,
Come, trowl the brown bowl to me:
Ho! jolly Jenkin, I spy a knave in drinking,
Come, trowl the brown bowl to me."

"Now, that is not ill sung," said Wamba, who had thrown in a few of his own flourishes to help out the chorus. "But who, in the saint's name, ever expected to have heard such a jolly chant come from out a hermit's cell at midnight?"

"Marry, that should I," said Gurth, "for the jolly Clerk[6] of Copmanhurst is a known man, and kills half the deer that are stolen in this walk. Men say that the keeper has compiained to his official, and that he will be stripped of his cowl

1 Wamba and Gurth are two of Cerdic's servants who, fortunately, were not captured by the Normans.
2 by my cockscomb: an oath. cockscomb: a cap worn by court jesters; adorned with a strip of red.
3 black sanctus: a composition that imitates sanctus style in a humorous way burlesque. sanctus: (Latin origin) a hymn beginning *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus* (Holy, holy, holy) forming a set part of the Mass.
4 burden: refrain.
5 trowl: (archaic) troll, circulate.
6 Clerk: clergyman.

and cope[1] altogether, if he keeps not better order."

While they were thus speaking, Locksley's loud and repeated knocks had at length disturbed the anchorite and his guest. "By my beads," said the hermit, stopping short in a grand flourish, "here come more benighted guests. I would not for my cowl that they found us in this goodly exercise. All men have their enemies, good Sir Sluggard[2]; and there be those malignant enough to construe[3] the hospitable refreshment which I have been offering to you, a weary traveller, for the matter of three short hours, into sheer drunkenness and debauchery, vices alike alien to my profession and my disposition."

"Base calumniators!" replied the knight; "I would I had the chastising of them. Nevertheless, Holy Clerk, it is true that all have their enemies; and there be those in this very land whom I would rather speak to through the bars of my helmet than barefaced."

"Get thine iron pot on thy head then, friend Sluggard, as quickly as thy nature will permit," said the hermit, "while I remove these pewter flagons, whose late contents run strangely in mine own pate; and to drown the clatter — for, in faith, I feel somewhat unsteady — strike into the tune which thou hearest me sing; it is no matter for the words — I scarce know them myself."

So saying, he struck up a thundering *De profundis clamavi*[4], under cover of which he removed the apparatus of their banquet; while the knight, laughing heartily, and arming himself all the while, assisted his host with his voice from time to time as his mirth permitted.

"What devil's matins are you after at this hour?" said a voice from without.

"Heaven forgive you, Sir Traveller!" said the hermit, whose own noise, and perhaps his nocturnal potations[5], prevented from recognising accents which were tolerably familiar to him. "Wend[6] on your way, in the name of God and St. Dunstan, and disturb not the devotions of me and my holy brother."

"Mad priest," answered the voice from without, "open to Locksley!"

"All's safe — all's right," said the hermit to his companion.

"But who is he?" said the Black Knight; "it imports me much to know."

"Who is he?" answered the hermit; "I tell thee he is a friend."

1 cowl and cope: hood and cloak.
2 Sir Sluggard: or called Black Knight, i.e., King Richard I in disguise.
3 construe: interpret, explain.
4 *De profundis clamavi*: the name of a song.
5 nocturnal potations: drinks during the night.
6 Wend: (archaic) go.

"But what friend?" answered the knight; "for he may be friend to thee and none of mine."

"What friend?" replied the hermit; "that, now, is one of the questions that is more easily asked than answered. What friend? why, he is, now I bethink me a little, the very same honest keeper I told thee of a while since."

"Ay, as honest a keeper as thou art a pious hermit," replied the knight, "I doubt it not. But undo the door to him before he beat it from its hinges."

The dogs, in the meantime, which had made a dreadful baying at the commencement of the disturbance, seemed now to recognise the voice of him who stood without; for, totally changing their manner, they scratched and whined at the door, as if interceding for his admission. The hermit speedily unbolted his portal, and admitted Locksley, with his two companions.

"Why, hermit," was the yeoman's first question as soon as he beheld the knight, "what boon companion[1] hast thou here?"

"A brother of our order," replied the friar, shaking his head; "we have been at our orisons[2] all night."

"He is a monk of the church militant, I think," answered Locksley; "and there be more of them abroad. I tell thee, friar, thou must lay down the rosary and take up the quarter-staff; we shall need every one of our merry-men, whether clerk or layman. But," he added, taking him a step aside, "art thou mad, to give admittance to a knight thou dost not know? Hast thou forgot our articles[3]?"

"Not know him!" replied the friar boldly; "I know him as well as the beggar knows his dish."

"And what is his name, then?" demanded Locksley.

"His name," said the hermit — "his name is Sir Anthony of Scrabelstone— as if I would drink with a man, and did not know his name!"

"Thou hast been drinking more than enough, friar," said the woodsman, "and, I fear, prating more than enough too."

"Good yeoman," said the knight, coming forward, "be not wroth with my merry host. He did but afford me the hospitality which I would have compelled from him if he had refused it."

"Thou compel!" said the friar; "wait but till I have changed this gray gown

1 boon companion: pleasant, sociable companion.
2 orisons: prayers; reverent petition to a deity.
3 articles: rules or conditions generally.

for a green cassock[1], and if I make not a quarter-staff ring twelve upon thy pate, I am neither true clerk nor good woodsman."

While he spoke thus, he stripped off his gown, and appeared in a close black buckram[2] doublet and drawers, over which he speedily did on a cassock of green, and hose of the same colour. "I pray thee truss[3] my points," said he to Wamba, "and thou shalt have a cup of sack for thy labour."

"Gramercy for thy sack," said Wamba; "but think'st thou it is lawful for me to aid you to transmew[4] thyself from a holy hermit into a sinful forester?"

"Never fear," said the hermit; "I will but confess the sins of my green cloak to my gray friar's frock, and all shall be well again."

"Amen!" answered the Jester; "a broadcloth penitent should have a sackcloth confessor, and your frock may absolve[5] my motley doublet into the bargain."

So saying, he accommodated the friar with his assistance in tying the endless number of points, as the laces which attached the hose to the doublet were then termed.

While they were thus employed, Locksley led the knight a little apart, and addressed him thus: "Deny it not, Sir Knight -- you are he who decided the victory to the advantage of the English against the strangers on the second day of the tournament at Ashby."

"And what follows, if you guess truly, good yeoman?" replied the knight.

"I should in that case hold you," replied the yeoman, "a friend to the weaker party."

"Such is the duty of a true knight at least," replied the Black Champion; "and I would not willingly that there were reason to think otherwise of me."

"But for my purpose," said the yeoman, "thou shouldst be as well a good Englishman as a good knight; for that which I have to speak of concerns, indeed, the duty of every honest man, but is more especially that of a true-born native of England."

"You can speak to no one," replied the knight, "to whom England, and the life of every Englishman, can be dearer than to me."

1 cassock: a black garment reaching down to the ankles worn by priests or choristers.
2 buckram: a coarse cotton fabric stiffened with glue used to stiffen clothing.
3 truss: tie; secure with or as if with ropes.
4 transmew: transmute, transform.
5 absolve: grant remission of a sin to.

"I would willingly believe so," said the woodsman, "for never had this country such need to be supported by those who love her. Hear me, and I will tell thee of an enterprise, in which, if thou be'st really that which thou seemest, thou mayst take an honourable part. A band of villains, in the disguise of better men than themselves, have made themselves master of the person of a noble Englishman, called Cedric the Saxon, together with his ward, and his friend, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and have transported them to a castle in this forest, called Torquilstone. I ask of thee, as a good knight and a good Englishman, wilt thou aid in their rescue?"

"I am bound by my vow to do so," replied the knight; "but I would willingly know who you are, who request my assistance in their behalf?"

"I am," said the forester, "a nameless man; but I am the friend of my country, and of my country's friends. With this account of me you must for the present remain satisfied, the more especially since you yourself desire to continue unknown. Believe, however, that my word, when pledged, is as inviolate as if I wore golden spurs."

"I willingly believe it," said the knight; "I have been accustomed to study men's countenances, and I can read in thine honesty and resolution. I will, therefore, ask thee no further questions, but aid thee in setting at freedom these oppressed captives; which done, I trust we shall part better acquainted, and well satisfied with each other."

"So," said Wamba to Gurth-for the friar being now fully equipped, the Jester, having approached to the other side of the hut, had heard the conclusion of the conversation — "so we have got a new ally? I trust the valour of the knight will be truer metal than the religion of the hermit, or the honesty of the yeoman; for this Locksley looks like a born deer-stealer, and the priest like a lusty hypocrite."

"Hold thy peace, Wamba," said Gurth; "it may all be as thou dost guess; but were the horned devil to rise and proffer me his assistance to set at liberty Cedric and the Lady Rowena, I fear I should hardly have religion enough to refuse the foul fiend's offer, and bid him get behind me."

The friar was now completely accoutred as a yeoman, with sword and buckler, bow and quiver, and a strong partisan over his shoulder. He left his cell at the head of the party, and, having carefully locked the door, deposited the key under the threshold.

"Art thou in condition to do good service, friar?" said Locksley; "or does the brown bowl still run in thy head?"

"Not more than a draught of St. Dunstan's fountain will allay[1]," answered the priest; "something there is of a whizzing in my brain, and of instability in my legs, but you shall presently see both pass away."

So saying, he stepped to the stone basin, in which the waters of the fountain as they fell formed bubbles which danced in the white moonlight, and took so long a draught as if he had meant to exhaust the spring.

"When didst thou drink as deep a draught of water before, Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst?" said the Black Knight.

"Never since my wine-butt leaked, and let out its liquor by an illegal vent," replied the friar, "and so left me nothing to drink but my patron's bounty here."

Then, plunging his hands and head into the fountain, he washed from them all marks of the midnight revel.

Thus refreshed and sobered, the jolly priest twirled his heavy partisan round his head with three fingers, as if he had been balancing a reed, exclaiming at the same time, "Where be those false ravishers, who carry off wenches against their will? May the foul fiend fly off with me, if I am not man enough for a dozen of them."

"Swearest thou, Holy Clerk?" said the Black Knight.

"Clerk me no Clerks,"replied the transformed priest; "by St. George and the Dragon, I am no longer a shaveling[2] than while my frock is on my back. When I am cased in my green cassock, I will drink, swear, and woo a lass, with any blithe forester in the West Riding."

"Come on, Jack Priest," said Locksley, "and be silent; thou art as noisy as a whole convent on a holy eve, when the Father Abbot has gone to bed. Come on you, too, my masters, tarry not to talk of it. I say, come on, we must collect all our forces, and few enough we shall have, if we are to storm the castle of Reginald Front-de-Boeuf."

"What! is it Front-de-Boeuf," said the Black Knight, "who has stopped on the king's highway the king's liege subjects? Is he turned thief and oppressor?"

"Oppressor he ever was," said Locksley.

"And for thief," said the priest, "I doubt if ever he were even half so honest a man as many a thief of my acquaintance."

"Move on, priest, and be silent," said the yeoman; "it were better you led the way to the place of rendezvous, than say what should be left unsaid, both in decency and prudence.

1 allay: lessen the intensity of or calm.
2 shaveling: a man shaved; hence, a monk, or other religious practitioners.

Chapter 28

This wandering race, sever'd from other men,
Boast yet their intercourse with human arts;
The seas, the woods, the deserts which they haunt,
Find them acquainted with their secret treasures:
And unregarded herbs, and flowers, and blossoms,
Display undreamt-of powers when gather'd by them.

— The Jew

Our history must needs retrograde for the space of a few pages, to inform the reader of certain passages material to his understanding the rest of this important narrative. His own intelligence may indeed have easily anticipated that, when Ivanhoe sunk down, and seemed abandoned by all the world, it was the importunity of Rebecca which prevailed on her father to have the gallant young warrior transported from the lists to the house which for the time the Jews inhabited in the suburbs of Ashby.

It would not have been difficult to have persuaded Isaac to this step in any other circumstances, for his disposition was kind and grateful. But he had also the prejudices and scrupulous timidity of his persecuted people, and those were to be conquered.

"Holy Abraham!" he exclaimed, "he is a good youth, and my heart bleeds to see the gore trickle down his rich embroidered hacqueton, and his corslet[1] of goodly price — but to carry him to our house! — damsel, hast thou well considered? — he is a Christian, and by our law we may not deal with the stranger and Gentile[2], save for the advantage of our commerce."

"Speak not so, my dear father," replied Rebecca; "we may not indeed mix with them in banquet and in jollity; but in wounds and in misery, the Gentile becometh the Jew's brother."

"I would I knew what the Rabbi Jacob Ben Tudela would opine on it," replied Isaac; "nevertheless, the good youth must not bleed to death. Let Seth and Reuben bear him to Ashby."

"Nay, let them place him in my litter," said Rebecca; "I will mount one of

1 corslet: a piece of body armor for the trunk; usually consisting of a breastplate and back piece.
2 Gentile: belonging to or characteristic of non-Jewish peoples.

the palfreys."

"That were to expose thee to the gaze of those dogs of Ishmael and of Edom," whispered Isaac, with a suspicious glance towards the crowd of knights and squires. But Rebecca was already busied in carrying her charitable purpose into effect, and listed not what he said, until Isaac, seizing the sleeve of her mantle, again exclaimed, in a hurried voice — "Beard of Aaron! — what if the youth perish! if he die in our custody, shall we not be held guilty of his blood, and be torn to pieces by the multitude?"

"He will not die, my father," said Rebecca, gently extricating herself from the grasp of Isaac — "he will not die unless we abandon him; and if so, we are indeed answerable for his blood to God and to man."

"Nay," said Isaac, releasing his hold, "it grieveth me as much to see the drops of his blood, as if they were so many gold byzants[1] from mine own purse; and I well know, that the lessons of Miriam, daughter of the Rabbi Manasses of Byzantium, whose soul is in Paradise, have made thee skilful in the art of healing, and that thou knowest the craft of herbs, and the force of elixirs. Therefore, do as thy mind giveth thee — thou art a good damsel, a blessing, and a crown, and a song of rejoicing unto me and unto my house, and unto the people of my fathers."

The apprehensions of Isaac, however, were not ill founded; and the generous and grateful benevolence of his daughter exposed her, on her return to Ashby, to the unhallowed gaze of Brain de Bois-Guilbert. The Templar twice passed and repassed them on the road, fixing his bold and ardent look on the beautiful Jewess; and we have already seen the consequences of the admiration which her charms excited, when accident threw her into the power of that unprincipled voluptuary.

Rebecca lost no time in causing the patient to be transported to their temporary dwelling, and proceeded with her own hands to examine and to bind up his wounds. The youngest reader of romances and romantic ballads must recollect how often the females, during the dark ages, as they are called, were initiated into the mysteries of surgery, and how frequently the gallant knight submitted the wounds of his person to her cure, whose eyes had yet more deeply penetrated his heart.

But the Jew, both male and female, possessed and practised the medical

1 Byzant: a gold coin of the Byzantine Empire; widely circulated in Europe in the Middle Ages.

science in all its branches, and the monarchs and powerful barons of the time frequently committed themselves to the charge of some experienced sage among this despised people, when wounded or in sickness. The aid of the Jewish physicians was not the less eagerly sought after, though a general belief prevailed among the Christians, that the Jewish Rabbins were deeply acquainted with the occult sciences, and particularly with the cabalistical art, which had its name and origin in the studies of the sages of Israel. Neither did the Rabbins disown such acquaintance with supernatural arts, which added nothing (for what could add aught?) to the hatred with which their nation was regarded, while it diminished the contempt with which that malevolence was mingled. A Jewish magician might be the subject of equal abhorrence with a Jewish usurer, but he could not be equally despised. It is besides probable, considering the wonderful cures they are said to have performed, that the Jews possessed some secrets of the healing art peculiar to themselves, and which, with the exclusive spirit arising out of their condition, they took great care to conceal from the Christians amongst whom they dwelt.

The beautiful Rebecca had been heedfully brought up in all the knowledge proper to her nation, which her apt and powerful mind had retained, arranged, and enlarged, in the course of a progress beyond her years, her sex, and even the age in which she lived. Her knowledge of medicine and of the healing art had been acquired under an aged Jewess, the daughter of one of their most celebrated doctors, who loved Rebecca as her own child, and was believed to have communicated to her secrets, which had been left to herself by her sage father at the same time, and under the same circumstances. The fate of Miriam had indeed been to fall a sacrifice to the fanaticism of the times;[1] but her secrets had survived in her apt pupil.

Rebecca, thus endowed with knowledge as with beauty, was universally revered and admired by her own tribe, who almost regarded her as one of those gifted women mentioned in the sacred history. Her father himself, out of reverence for her talents, which involuntarily mingled itself with his unbounded affection, permitted the maiden a greater liberty than was usually indulged to those of her sex by the habits of her people, and was, as we have just seen, frequently guided by her opinion, even in preference to his own.

1 The fate of Miriam had indeed been to fall a sacrifice to the fanaticism of the times: Miriam, the aged Jewess who had imparted her knowledge to Rebecca, was persecuted to death as a witch.

When Ivanhoe reached the habitation of Isaac[1], he was still in a state of unconsciousness, owing to the profuse loss of blood which had taken place during his exertions in the lists[2]. Rebecca examined the wound, and having applied to it such vulnerary[3] remedies as her art prescribed, informed her father that if fever could be averted, of which the great bleeding rendered her little apprehensive, and if the healing balsam of Miriam retained its virtue, there was nothing to fear for his guest's life, and that he might with safety travel to York with them on the ensuing day. Isaac looked a little blank at this annunciation. His charity would willingly have stopped short at Ashby, or at most would have left the wounded Christian to be tended in the house where he was residing at present, with an assurance to the Hebrew to whom it belonged, that all expenses should be duly discharged. To this, however, Rebecca opposed many reasons, of which we shall only mention two that had peculiar weight with Isaac. The one was, that she would on no account put the phial of precious balsam[4] into the hands of another physician even of her own tribe, lest that valuable mystery should be discovered; the other, that wounded Knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, was an intimate favourite of Richard Coeur-de-Lion[5], and that, in case the monarch should return, Isaac, who had supplied his brother John with treasure to prosecute his rebellious purposes, would stand in no small need of a powerful protector who enjoyed Richard's favour.

"Thou art speaking but sooth, Rebecca," said Isaac, giving way to these weighty arguments — it were an offending of Heaven to betray secrets of the blessed Miriam; for the good which Heaven giveth is not rashly to be squandered upon others, whether it be the talents of gold and shekels of silver,[6] or whether it be the secret mysteries of a wise physician — assuredly they should be preserved to those to whom Providence hath vouchsafed them. And him whom the Nazarenes[7] of England call the Lion's Heart, assuredly it were

1 Isaac: Rebecca's father.
2 in the lists: in the tournament.
3 vulnerary: useful in healing wounds; adapted to the cure of external injuries; as, vulnerary plants or potions.
4 balsam: a fragrant ointment, soothing oil.
5 Richard Coeur-de-Lion: Richard the Lion Heart, an epithet to King Richard I.
6 the talents of gold and shekels of silver: talent: an ancient unit of weight of gold. shekel: a Jewish weight (about 14 grams).
7 the Nazarenes: a member of a group of Jews who (during the early history of the Christian Church) accepted Jesus as the Messiah; they accepted the Gospel according to Matthew but rejected St. Paul and continued to follow Jewish law and celebrate Jewish holidays; they were later declared heretic by the Church of Rome.

better for me to fall into the hands of a strong lion of Idumea[1] than into his, if he shall have got assurance of my dealing with his brother. Wherefore, I will lend ear to thy counsel, and this youth shall journey with us unto York, and our house shall be as a home to him until his wounds shall be healed.

And if he of the Lion Heart shall return to the land, as is now noised abroad, then shall this Wilfred of Ivanhoe be unto me as a wall of defence, when the king's displeasure shall burn high against thy father. And if he doth not return, this Wilfred may natheless[2] repay us our charges when he shall gain treasure by the strength of his spear and of his sword, even as he did yesterday and this day also. For the youth is a good youth, and keepeth the day which he appointeth, and restoreth that which he borroweth, and succoureth the Israelite, even the child of my father's house, when he is encompassed by strong thieves and sons of Belial[3]."

It was not until evening was nearly closed that Ivanhoe was restored to consciousness of his situation. He awoke from a broken slumber, under the confused impressions which are naturally attendant on the recovery from a state of insensibility. He was unable for some time to recall exactly to memory the circumstances which had preceded his fall in the lists, or to make out any connected chain of the events in which he had been engaged upon the yesterday. A sense of wounds and injury, joined to great weakness and exhaustion, was mingled with the recollection of blows dealt and received, of steeds rushing upon each other, overthrowing and overthrown — of shouts and clashing of arms, and all the heady tumult of a confused fight. An effort to draw aside the curtain of his couch was in some degree successful, although rendered difficult by the pain of his wound.

To his great surprise he found himself in a room magnificently furnished, but having cushions instead of chairs to rest upon, and in other respects partaking so much of Oriental costume, that he began to doubt whether he had not, during his sleep, been transported back again to the land of Palestine. The impression was increased, when, the tapestry being drawn aside, a female

1 Idumea: Edom, a name given to Esau in the Hebrew Bible, as well as to the nation purportedly descended from him. The nation's name in Assyrian was Udumi; in Latin, Idumæa or Idumea. The Edomite people were a Semitic-speaking tribal group inhabiting the Negev Desert and the Aravah valley of what is now southern Israel and adjacent Jordan. The nation ceased to exist with the Jewish-Roman Wars.
2 natheless: nevertheless.
3 Belial: an evil spirit; a wicked and unprincipled person; the personification of evil.

form, dressed in a rich habit, which partook more of the Eastern taste than that of Europe, glided through the door which it concealed, and was followed by a swarthy domestic.

As the wounded Knight was about to address this fair apparition, she imposed silence by placing her slender finger upon her ruby lips, while the attendant, approaching him, proceeded to uncover Ivanhoe's side, and the lovely Jewess satisfied herself that the bandage was in its place, and the wound doing well. She performed her task with a graceful and dignified simplicity and modesty, which might, even in more civilised days, have served to redeem it from whatever might seem repugnant to female delicacy. The idea of so young and beautiful a person engaged in attendance on a sick-bed, or in dressing the wound of one of a different sex, was melted away and lost in that of a beneficent being contributing her effectual aid to relieve pain, and to avert the stroke of death. Rebecca's few and brief directions were given in the Hebrew language to the old domestic; and he, who had been frequently her assistant in similar cases, obeyed them without reply.

The accents of an unknown tongue, however harsh they might have sounded when uttered by another, had, coming from the beautiful Rebecca, the romantic and pleasing effect which fancy ascribes to the charms pronounced by some beneficent fairy, unintelligible, indeed, to the ear, but, from the sweetness of utterance and benignity of aspect which accompanied them, touching and affecting to the heart. Without making an attempt at further question, Ivanhoe suffered them in silence to take the measures they thought most proper for his recovery; and it was not until those were completed, and this kind physician about to retire, that his curiosity could no longer be suppressed. "Gentle maiden," he began, in the Arabian tongue, with which his Eastern travels had rendered him familiar, and which he thought most likely to be understood by the turbaned and caftaned damsel who stood before him — "I pray you, gentle maiden, of your courtesy — "

But here he was interrupted by his fair physician, a smile, which she could scarce suppress, dimpling for an instant a face whose general expression was that of contemplative melancholy. "I am of England, Sir Knight, and speak the English tongue, although my dress and my lineage belong to another climate."

"Noble damsel — " again the Knight of Ivanhoe began; and again Rebecca hastened to interrupt him.

"Bestow not on me, Sir Knight," she said, "the epithet of noble. It is well you should speedily know that your handmaiden is a poor Jewess, the daughter of that Isaac of York, to whom you were so lately a good and kind lord. It

well becomes him, and those of his household, to render to you such careful tendance as your present state necessarily demands."

I know not whether the fair Rowena would have been altogether satisfied with the species of emotion with which her devoted knight had hitherto gazed on the beautiful features, and fair form, and lustrous eyes of the lovely Rebecca; eyes whose brilliancy was shaded, and, as it were, mellowed by the fringe of her long silken eye-lashes, and which a minstrel would have compared to the evening star darting its rays through a bower of jessamine. But Ivanhoe was too good a Catholic to retain the same class of feelings towards a Jewess. This Rebecca had foreseen, and for this very purpose she had hastened to mention her father's name and lineage; yet -- for the fair and wise daughter of Isaac was not without a touch of female weakness-she could not but sigh internally when the glance of respectful admiration, not altogether unmixed with tenderness, with which Ivanhoe had hitherto regarded his unknown benefactress, was exchanged at once for a manner cold, composed, and collected, and fraught with no deeper feeling than that which expressed a grateful sense of courtesy received from an un-expected quarter, and from one of an inferior race. It was not that Ivanhoe's former carriage expressed more than that general devotional homage which youth always pays to beauty; yet it was mortifying that one word should operate as a spell to remove poor Rebecca, who could not be supposed altogether ignorant of her title to such homage, into a degraded class, to whom it could not be honourably rendered.

But the gentleness and candour of Rebecca's nature imputed no fault to Ivanhoe for sharing in the universal prejudices of his age and religion. On the contrary, the fair Jewess, though sensible her patient now regarded her as one of a race of reprobation, with whom it was disgraceful to hold any beyond the most necessary intercourse, ceased not to pay the same patient and devoted attention to his safety and convalescence. She informed him of the necessity they were under of removing to York, and of her father's resolution to transport him thither, and tend him in his own house until his health should be restored. Ivanhoe expressed great repugnance to this plan, which he grounded on unwillingness to give further trouble to his benefactors.

"Was there not," he said, "in Ashby, or near it, some Saxon franklin[1], or even some wealthy peasant, who would endure the burden of a wounded

1 franklin: a landowner (14th and 15th centuries) who was free but not of noble birth.

countryman's residence with him until he should be again able to bear his armour? — Was there no convent of Saxon endowment, where he could be received? — Or could he not be transported as far as Burton, where he was sure to find hospitality with Waltheoff, the Abbot of St. Withold's, to whom he was related?"

"Any, the worst of these harbourages[1]," said Rebecca, with a melancholy smile, "would unquestionably be more fitting for your residence than the abode of a despised Jew; yet, Sir Knight, unless you would dismiss your physician, you cannot change your lodging. Our nation, as you well know, can cure wounds, though we deal not in inflicting them; and in our own family, in particular, are secrets which have been handed down since the days of Solomon[2], and of which you have already experienced the advantages. No Nazarene — I crave your forgiveness, Sir Knight — no Christian leech[3], within the four seas of Britain, could enable you to bear your corslet within a month."

"And how soon wilt thou enable me to brook[4] it?" said Ivanhoe impatiently.

"Within eight days, if thou wilt be patient and conformable to my directions," replied Rebecca.

"By Our Blessed Lady," said Wilfred, "if it be not a sin to name her here, it is no time for me or any true knight to be bedridden; and if thou accomplish thy promise, maiden, I will pay thee with my casque[5] full of crowns, come by them as I may."

"I will accomplish my promise," said Rebecca, "and thou shalt bear thine armour on the eighth day from hence, if thou wilt grant me but one boon in the stead of the silver thou dost promise me."

"If it be within my power, and such as a true Christian knight may yield to one of thy people," replied Ivanhoe, "I will grant thy boon blithely and thankfully."

"Nay," answered Rebecca, "I will but pray of thee to believe henceforward that a Jew may do good service to a Christian, without desiring other guerdon than the blessing of the Great Father who made both Jew and Gentile."

1 harbourages: places of refuge.
2 Solomon: (Old Testament) son of David and king of Israel noted for his wisdom (10th century BC).
3 leech: (archaic) physician.
4 brook: bear; enjoy.
5 casque: (15-16th century) any armor for the head; usually ornate without a visor.

"It were sin to doubt it, maiden," replied Ivanhoe; "and I repose myself on thy skill without further scruple or question, well trusting you will enable me to bear my corslet on the eighth day. And now, my kind leech, let me inquire of the news abroad. What of the noble Saxon Cedric and his household? — what of the lovely Lady — " He stopped, as if unwilling to speak Rowena's name in the house of a Jew — "Of her, I mean, who was named Queen of the tournament?"

"And who was selected by you, Sir Knight, to hold that dignity, with judgment which was admired as much as your valour[1]," replied Rebecca.

The blood which Ivanhoe had lost did not prevent a flush from crossing his cheek, feeling that he had incautiously betrayed a deep interest in Rowena by the awkward attempt he had made to conceal it.

"It was less of her I would speak," said he, "than of Prince John; and I would fain know somewhat of a faithful squire, and why he now attends me not?"

"Let me use my authority as a leech," answered Rebecca, "and enjoin you to keep silence, and avoid agitating reflections, whilst I apprise you of what you desire to know. Prince John hath broken off the tournament, and set forward in all haste towards York, with the nobles, knights, and churchmen of his party, after collecting such sums as they could wring, by fair means or foul, from those who are esteemed the wealthy of the land. It is said he designs to assume his brother's crown."

"Not without a blow struck in its defence," said Ivanhoe, raising himself upon the couch, "if there were but one true subject in England. I will fight for Richard's title with the best of them-ay, one or two, in his just quarrel!"

"But that you may be able to do so," said Rebecca, touching his shoulder with her hand, "you must now observe my directions, and remain quiet."

1 valour: the qualities of a hero or heroine; exceptional or heroic courage when facing danger.

Critical Points

Sir Walter Scott: literary achievements and assessment

As a very prolific and popular novelist, Scott excels in recreating the spirit of great historical events and in painting realistic pictures of Scottish life.

Scott was responsible for two major trends that carry on to this day. First, he essentially invented the modern historical novel; an enormous number of imitators appeared later. Second, his Scottish novels helped rehabilitate the public perception of Highland culture.

From being one of the most popular novelists of the 19th century, Scott suffered from a decline in popularity after the First World War. Modern readers tend to lose their patience in ponderousness, prolixity, lack of humor in Scott's novels, and his fictional heroes now seem stereotyped and his plots mechanical, which were fundamentally out of step with Modernist sensibilities.

Sir Scott is now seen as an important innovator of history novel, and a key figure in the development of Scottish and world literature.

Questions

1. Who is Locksley? Who were taken prisoners? Who is the Sir Sluggard or Black Knight?
   Many characters in *Ivanhoe* spend time in various disguises, including Ivanhoe, King Richard, Robin Hood, Wamba, and Cedric. Why are they not willing to reveal their identities?
2. The novel was written and published during the period when the struggle for Emancipation of the Jews in England was starting to gather momentum. What is the author's attitude toward the Jewish girl Rebecca? How do you interpret the character?

Class Activities

The story of *Ivanhoe* revolves around the Norman Conquest of England. Discuss and exchange your knowledge of the Normans and Saxons.

QUOTATIONS

Teach your children poetry; it opens the mind, lends grace to wisdom and makes the heroic virtues hereditary.

—Sir Walter Scott

The race of mankind would perish did they cease to aid each other. We cannot exist without mutual help. All therefore that need aid have a right to ask it from their fellow-men; and no one who has the power of granting can refuse it without guilt.

—Sir Walter Scott

Unit 28

Jane Austen (1775-1817)

Jane Austen *was one of the most influential novelists of the early 19th century, famous for her biting social commentary and masterful use of both free indirect discourse and irony. Jane Austen was also among the first English women to break the male monopoly of novel writing.*

Life and Writing

Austen was the daughter of a clergyman, the sixth of seven children. Her father was rector of the parish at the area, who taught Jane at home and whose well-stocked library gave his children great joy. Austen read widely. The Austen family often enacted plays, which gave Jane an opportunity to present her stories. Her love of writing was first of all due to her family life.

Jane Austen

In 1783, she was educated briefly by a relative in Oxford, then in Southampton, and finally attended the Reading Ladies boarding school for a year. This uncommonly advanced level of education may have contributed to her early proclivity toward writing. She continued her education through interesting discussions with her brothers and her father's students.

She did not marry, and never lived apart from her family. Her life was quiet and uneventful. Her closest friend was her only sister, Cassandra, who also remained unmarried. The abundant correspondence between the sisters provides historians with the greatest insight into Austen's life. In 1801 the family moved to the socially esteemed spa city of Bath, which provides the setting for many of her novels. She died in 1817, at the age of 41, and was

buried in Winchester Cathedral.

Austen began her first novel in 1789. As a common contemporary practice for female authors, Austen published her novels anonymously. During her lifetime, she published four novels, *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811, *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, *Mansfield Park* in 1814, *Emma* in 1816. *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were published posthumously in 1818. Only her immediate family knew of her authorship of these novels.

Austen's novels were all about family life. In letters to her friends, she confided her views on the novel, "three or four families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on"; She did her work with extreme care, as if she was "working on a fine engraving made upon a little piece of ivory", "the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush, as produces little effect after much labour".

Austen deliberately selected to work within the circumference of her own experience — the life of provincial English gentlefolk, and to maintain the decorum of the novel of manners. Austen achieved a fully particularised setting within which to examine and criticise the values men and women live by in their everyday social lives.

Her best novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, deal with the subject of marriage. This was in fact a central preoccupation and problem for the young leisure-class ladies of that age. The subject provided Austen with the best realistic opportunities for testing her heroines' practical sense and moral integrity, their degree of knowledge of the world and of themselves, and their capacity to demonstrate grace under social and financial pressure.

The works of Jane Austen are very different in style from the Romanticism favoured by her contemporaries. With trenchant observation and in meticulous detail, she presented the quiet, day-to-day country life of the upper-middle-class English. Vivid character drawing has become her distinctive style. Her characters, even the most minor ones, are lively portrayed in lucid language.

Pride and Prejudice

Pride and Prejudice is the most popular of Jane Austen's novels. Austen originally sent it to a London publisher entitled *First Impressions*, but it was refused. Austen recreated and renamed it as the present title, and published it in 1813. It is one of the first Romantic comedies in the history of the novel and its opening is one of the most famous lines in English literature — "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune,

Chawton, Friday Sept^r 29.
1815

My dear Anna

We told M^r. B. Lefroy that if the weather did not prevent us, we should certainly come & see you tomorrow, & bring Cassy, trusting to your being so good as to give her a Dinner about one o'clock, that we might be able to be with you the earlier & stay the longer — but enquiring Cassy her choice of the Fair or Wyards, it must be supposed that she has preferred the former, which we trust will not greatly offend you; — if it does, you may hope that our little Anna hereafter may revenge the insult by a similar preference of an Alton Fair to her Cousin Cassy. — In the mean-while, we had determined to put off our visit to you till Monday, which we hope will be not less convenient to you, & will be the earlier may not be resolve upon other put-offs. I must come to you before Wednesday if it be possible, for on that day I am going to London for a week or two with your Uncle Henry, who is expected here on Sunday. If Monday therefore should appear too dirty for walking, & M^r. B. L. would be so kind as to come & fetch one to spend some part of the morn^g with you, I should be much obliged to him. Cassy might be of the Party & your Aunt Cassandra will take another opportunity. —

Yours affec^y Anna sends her Love & thanks for your note. She was very happy to hear the contents of your Packing Case. She will send the Strawberry Roots by Sally Benhams, as early next week as the weather may allow her to take them up. —

Yours very affec^y
Ever dear Anna
J. Austen

Jane Austen's letter

must be in want of a wife."

The story addresses courtship and marriage among the landed gentry in the early 19th century. The main character is Elizabeth Bennet. The main plot is the process of the courtship between Elizabeth and Darcy, and the conflict of his pride and her prejudice.

Plot Summary

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet live with their five daughters. In the absence of a male heir, the property is due to pass by entail to a cousin, William Collins. Therefore, the chief business of Mrs. Bennet is to find suitable husbands for her daughters. Charles Bingley, a rich young bachelor, takes a house as a neighbour, bringing with him his two sisters and his friend Darcy. Bingley and Jane, the eldest of the Bennet girls, fall in love very soon. Darcy is attracted to the second daughter, Elizabeth, but he greatly offends her by his supercilious behaviour at a ball. This dislike is increased when Goerge Wickham told her of the unjust treatment he has met with at Darcy's hands.

Collins proposes to Elizabeth, but he is firmly rejected. He promptly transfers his affections to a friend of Elizabeth's, and is accepted. Elizabeth meets Darcy again when she stays with the newly married couple in their parsonage. Darcy is visiting Lady Catherine. He proposes to her, and is indignantly rejected by Elizabeth for his pride, the part he played in separating Jane from Bingley, and his alleged treatment of Wickham. Darcy justifies all the misunderstandings in a letter.

With her uncle and aunt, Elizabeth visits Pemberley, Darcy's seat in Derbyshire. Darcy introduces them to his sister. He is now gentle and attentive. Elizabeth learns that her younger sister Lydia has eloped with Wickham. With the help from Darcy, they are traced, and arranged to marry. Bingley and Jane are reunited and become engaged. In spite of the insolent intervention of Lady Catherine, Darcy and Elizabeth become engaged. The story ends with both their marriages.

The characters are remarkably portrayed and they come alive between lines: the long-winded and match-making mother; the sycophantic clergyman; the clever and quick-minded Elizabeth; the empty-headed and flirtatious Kitty and Lydia; the modest, earnest and selfless Jane; and the good-natured Mr. Bennet, whose dry humour adds poignancy to the novel.

Introduction to Chapter 1 and 2 of Volume I

The opening statement of the novel is ironic. It has a subtle, and unstated meaning, that is, a single woman must be in need of a wealthy husband.

The first chapter consists almost entirely of dialogue, a typical instance of Austen's technique of using the manner in which characters express themselves to reveal their traits and attitudes. There is little description of the characters in the novel, so the reader's perception of them is shaped largely by their conversation.

Chapter 1

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady[1] to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long[2] has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do not you want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"*You* want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.[3]

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five

1 Here refers to Mrs. Bennet.
2 Mrs. Long: one of the Bennets' neighbours.
3 Notice the dialogue between the husband and the wife. It's lively and dramatic, perfectly revealing the characters' personality.

thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? how can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design! nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he *may* fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better; for, as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly *have* had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be any thing extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas[1] are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know they visit no new comers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him, if you do not."

"You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying which ever he chuses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference."

"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."

"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves."

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are

1 Sir William and Lady Lucas: names of their neighbours.

my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least."

"Ah! you do not know what I suffer."

"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood."

"It will be no use to us if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them."

"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty I will visit them all."

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice[1], that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace[2] was visiting and news.[3]

Chapter II

Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on[4] Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid, she had no knowledge of it. It was then disclosed in the following manner. Observing his second daughter employed in trimming a hat, he suddenly addressed her with,

"I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy."

"We are not in a way to know what Mr. Bingley likes," said her mother resentfully, "since we are not to visit."

"But you forget, mama," said Elizabeth, "that we shall meet him at the assemblies, and that Mrs. Long has promised to introduce him."

"I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her."

1 caprice: a sudden and unaccountable change of mood or behaviour.
2 solace: comfort in disappointment or misery.
3 This is an amusing description of the relation between the husband and the wife, and also a keen observation and distinct illustration of Mrs. Bennet's life and character.
4 waited on: to make a formal call on.

"No more have I," said Mr. Bennet; "and I am glad to find that you do not depend on her serving you."

Mrs. Bennet deigned not to make any reply; but unable to contain herself, began scolding one of her daughters.

"Don't keep coughing so, Kitty, for heaven's sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces."

"Kitty has no discretion in her coughs," said her father; "she times them ill."

"I do not cough for my own amusement," replied Kitty fretfully.

"When is your next ball to be, Lizzy?"

"To-morrow fortnight."

"Aye, so it is," cried her mother, "and Mrs. Long does not come back till the day before; so it will be impossible for her to introduce him, for she will not know him herself."

"Then, my dear, you may have the advantage of your friend, and introduce Mr. Bingley to her."

"Impossible, Mr. Bennet, impossible, when I am not acquainted with him myself; how can you be so teazing?"

"I honour your circumspection. A fortnight's acquaintance is certainly very little. One cannot know what a man really is by the end of a fortnight. But if we do not venture, somebody else will; and after all, Mrs. Long and her nieces must stand their chance; and therefore, as she will think it an act of kindness, if you decline the office, I will take it on myself."

The girls stared at their father. Mrs. Bennet said only, "Nonsense, nonsense!"

"What can be the meaning of that emphatic exclamation?" cried he. "Do you consider the forms of introduction, and the stress that is laid on them, as nonsense? I cannot quite agree with you there. What say you, Mary? for you are a young lady of deep reflection I know, and read great books, and make extracts."

Mary wished to say something very sensible, but knew not how.

"While Mary is adjusting her ideas," he continued, "let us return to Mr. Bingley."

"I am sick of Mr. Bingley," cried his wife.

"I am sorry to hear that; but why did not you tell me so before? If I had known as much this morning, I certainly would not have called on him. It is very unlucky; but as I have actually paid the visit, we cannot escape the acquaintance now."

The astonishment of the ladies was just what he wished; that of Mrs. Bennet perhaps surpassing the rest; though when the first tumult of joy was over, she began to declare that it was what she had expected all the while.

"How good it was in you, my dear Mr. Bennet! But I knew I should persuade you at last. I was sure you loved our girls too well to neglect such an acquaintance. Well, how pleased I am! and it is such a good joke, too, that you should have gone this morning, and never said a word about it till now."

"Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you chuse[1]," said Mr. Bennet; and, as he spoke, he left the room, fatigued[2] with the raptures of his wife.

"What an excellent father you have, girls," said she, when the door was shut. "I do not know how you will ever make him amends for his kindness; or me either, for that matter. At our time of life, it is not so pleasant I can tell you, to be making new acquaintance every day; but for your sakes, we would do any thing. Lydia, my love, though you are the youngest, I dare say Mr. Bingley will dance with you at the next ball."

"Oh!" said Lydia stoutly, "I am not afraid; for though I am the youngest, I'm the tallest."

The rest of the evening was spent in conjecturing how soon he would return Mr. Bennet's visit, and determining when they should ask him to dinner.

Critical Points

Jane Austen the novelist: commentary from critics

Generally speaking, Austen was considered an entertaining "woman's novelist" in the 19th century. Sir Walter Scott was among the few to recognise Austen's genius: "That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements of feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with."

Charlotte Brontë criticised the narrow scope of Austen's fiction: "Anything like warmth or enthusiasm, anything energetic, poignant, heartfelt, is utterly out of place in commending these works: all such demonstrations the authoress

1 chuse: (archaic) choose.
2 fatigued: drained of energy or effectiveness; extremely tired; completely exhausted.

would have met with a well-bred sneer, would have calmly scorned as 'outré' or extravagant. She does her business of delineating the surface of the lives of genteel English people curiously well. There is a Chinese fidelity, a miniature delicacy, in the painting. She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him with nothing profound. The passions are perfectly unknown to her... What sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study."

In the 20th century, Austen began to be seen as the major English novelist. Some even ranked her among the greatest literary geniuses of the English language. Lionel Trilling, a critic, wrote in an essay on *Mansfield Park*: "It was Jane Austen who first represented the specifically modern personality and the culture in which it had its being. Never before had the moral life been shown as she shows it to be, never before had it been conceived to be so complex and difficult and exhausting..."

Jane Austen's novels: class and gender perspectives

Almost all of the characters in Jane Austen's novels are members of England's middle to upper-middle class. Although they share a similar lifestyle, there are significant differences in income and social prestige between them. These differences play a critical role in the relationship between Darcy and Elizabeth. Darcy's inordinate pride is based on his extreme class-consciousness. Austen is often critical of the assumptions and prejudices of upper-class England. She distinguishes between internal merit, goodness of individual, and external merit, rank and possessions, and criticised an overemphasis on class.

Austen also describes different socially regimented ideas of appropriate behaviour for each gender. While social advancement for young men lay in the military, church, or law, the chief method of self-improvement for women was the acquisition of wealth. Women could only accomplish this goal through successful marriage, which explains the ubiquity of matrimony as a goal and topic of conversation in the works.

Class division and gender differences make up of much of the tension in her novels, arising from balancing financial necessity against other concerns: love, friendship, honour and self-respect. Austen sets brilliant example to integrate observations on the human condition within a convincing love story.

Questions

1. How do you interpret the ironic tone in the opening sentence of the novel? How closely is it related with the theme of the novel?
2. Austen's novels are mostly concerned with young men and women's social growth and self-discovery. Nearly all of them explore a consistent theme that maturity is achieved through the loss of illusions. Faults of character displayed by the people of her novels are corrected when, through various trials and misunderstandings, lessons are learned.
   Is the statement right when we understand the theme of *Pride and Prejudice*? How do you interpret the conflict between Elizabeth and Darcy? What do you learn from the process of their courtship?

Class Activities

Divide the class into small groups, dissuss "how the first impression has been changed" and tell stories of your experience within the group members in turn. Draw lessons from the process you change your impression of someone.

QUOTATIONS

The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid.

—Jane Austen

An artist cannot do anything slovenly.

—Jane Austen

Unit 29

Charles Lamb (1775-1834)

Charles Lamb *was the leading English essayist in the age of Romanticism, best known for his* Essays of Elia *and for the children's book* Tales from Shakespeare.

Life and Writing

Charles Lamb

Lamb was born in London and the youngest child of John Lamb, a lawyer's clerk. At seven, Lamb went to a charity school, where his lifelong friendship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge began. But because of his family's worsening financial circumstances, Charles was forced to quit school and go to work at 14. He worked as a clerk first in the South Sea House, then he was transferred to the East India House (headquarters for the East India Company) and worked in the accountant's office as a bookkeeper till his retirement. From 15 to 55, his daily task was to fill numerals into the large ledgers of the counting-house. He laboured at his desk eight, sometimes nine or ten, hours a day for 33 years. Literature was his side-occupation.

At the age of 20, Lamb witnessed a horrific family tragedy: his beloved sister Mary, under a great nervous strain, stabbed their mother to death and wounded their father at the table. Charles described the tragedy in a September 27, 1796 letter to Coleridge: "I will only give you the outlines — My poor dear, dearest sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present

in a madhouse, from whence I fear she must be moved to a hospital." Mary was spared prison by the courts and remanded to the custody of Charles Lamb. They lived together for the rest of their lives.

Periodically Mary would suffer relapses and have to be readmitted to the madhouse. A friend reported how he "met the brother on one such occasion, walking hand in hand across the fields to the old asylum, both bathed in tears." Owing to the frequent attacks of the sister's malady, they moved about from one lodging to another. They adopted an orphan girl, whose presence brightened their life until her marriage to a publisher. Once, he fell in love with an actress and sent her the only proposal of his life, but he made it clear that he had no thought of any possible separation from his sister. So his proposal was rejected. Charles Lamb remained a bachelor; his emotional life remained centred on his sister Mary and his appetite for books, plays, friendships, and the spectacle of London.

Tales from Shakespeare

In general, Mary was an intelligent and affectionate companion. They collaborated on several books for children, publishing in 1807 their famous *Tales from Shakespeare*. Charles reproduced the tragedies and Mary the comedies. Shakespear's language was sprinkled over the narrative and a selection of phrases and expressions was made from the original plays to arrest a young reader's attention without overtaxing his understanding. Their collaboration was so successful that both the young and old were delighted with this version of stories.

Lamb had a great zest for theatre and wrote impressive drama criticism. He also wrote four plays, none of which were successful. From 1800 on he wrote intermittently for periodicals. From 1820, at his 45, Lamb wrote mainly for *London Magazine*, which also published such eminent writers as William Hazlitt, John Keats, and Thomas DeQuincey, the major contribution being the famous *Essays of Elia* (1823). *Essays of Elia* was immediately appreciated when it appeared, and brought Lamb in middle age a modest amount of gratifying celebrity. The second series, *Last Essays of Elia*, was published in 1833.

The pen name "Elia" was borrowed from an old clerk with whom Lamb had worked in the South Sea House. There are over 50 of these essays, in which the author chats with the reader on various topics and reveals his charming personality. Some of the best-known essays are: "Dream Children", "Christ's Hospital", "The South Sea House", "A Dissertation on Roast Pig", "That Home Is Home Though It Is Never So Homely", "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People", "The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers", "The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple", "Imperfect Sympathies", "The Convalescent", "Old China", "The Superannuated Man", "Poor Relations", "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading".

Lamb's style is peculiarly his own. His close-knit, subtle organisation, his self-revealing observations on life, and his humour, fantasy, and pathos combined make him one of the great masters of the English essay.

Lamb's open-mindedness, honesty and self-sacrifice have been praised by his friends. Lamb was a gifted conversationalist and was friendly with most of the major literary figures of his time. In 1834 he died. Mary, ten years his senior, survived until 1847.

Dream-Children; A Reverie[1]

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame[2], whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones[3] crept about[4] me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk[5] (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene — so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country — of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the

1 Reverie: absent-minded dreaming while awake. "Dream-Children; a Reverie" was written shortly after the death of his brother John. Lamb creates an imaginary scene in which he, now a widower, is with his two children, who nestle close to him as he tells them about dead relatives, including their supposed great-grandmother Field and his long courtship of their mother, "the fair Alice".
2 grandame: grandmother.
3 my little ones: fictional children. Lamb remains a bachelor all his life, therefore, he has no child.
4 crept about: sat closely with the body near the ground.
5 Norfolk: a county in eastern England, bordering on the Wash and the North Sea.

Wood[1]. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice[2] put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterward came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey[3], and stick them up in Lady C's tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John[4] smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse[5] of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery[6] by heart, aye, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer — here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till upon my looking grave, it desisted — the best dancer, I was saying, in the

1 the ballad of the Children in the Wood: an English ballad of a tragic story. After the death of the father, the young brother and sister fled to the wood to escape from the cruel uncle, who seized the property and sent two killers to seek for them. One killer, out of sympathy, after sending to death of the other, committed suicide himself. Eventually the young brother and sister starved to death in the wood.
2 Alice: the narrator's fictional daughter.
3 the Abbey: Westminster Abbey.
4 John: the narrator's fictional son.
5 concourse: crowd.
6 the Psaltery: Glossary of Biblical English of the Authorised Version of the Holy Bible.

county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition[1] of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents[2] would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she — and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Caesars[3], that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out — sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me — and how the nectarines[4] and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then, — and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at-or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me — or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening, too, along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth-or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings, — I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had mediated dividing with her, and both

1 apparition: ghostly appearance.
2 innocents: innocent, harmless children.
3 the Twelve Caesars: the marble statues of the twelve Roman emperors.
4 nectarine: a fruit, smooth-skinned variety or mutation of the peach. 油桃

seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L—,[1] because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about[2] in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome[3] horse he could get, when but an imp[4] no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out — and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up[5] within their boundaries — and how their uncle grew up to man's estate[6] as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy — for he was a good bit older than me — many a mile when I could not walk for pain; — and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances[7] enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterward it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty, dead mother. Then I told them how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet

1 John L—: Lamb's brother John Lamb, died in 1821 before the writing of the essay.
2 moping about: going about aimlessly and listlessly.
3 mettlesome: fiery.
4 an imp: a very small child, little fellow at younger age.
5 pent up: confined, shut up.
6 grew up to man's estate: grew up as a man. estate: state, condition.
7 make allowances: forgive, pardon.

persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n[1]; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens — when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and mustwait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name" — and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side — but John L— (or James Elia) was gone forever.

Old China

I have an almost feminine partiality[2] for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend[3] the order of preference, but by saying, that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one[4]. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then — why should I now have? — to those little, lawless[5], azure-tinctured grotesques[6], that under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed[7] by any element, in that world before

1 Alice W—n: Alice Winterton, a fictional name for a girl with her real name as Ann Simmons, whom Lamb once fell in love with.
2 feminine partiality: a delicate preference.
3 defend: offer a justified reason for.
4 acquired one: a liking gained through experience.
5 lawless: here refers to disregarding the law of perspective.
6 grotesques: comically distorted figures.
7 uncircumscribed: unrestricted.

perspectives[1] — a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends — whom distance cannot diminish — figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics[2]) yet on *terra firma*[3] still — so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous[4] artist, to prevent absurdity, has made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin[5], handing tea to a lady from a salver[6] — two miles off. See how distance seems to set off[7] respect! And here the same lady, or another — for likeness is identity[8] on teacups — is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side[9] of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence[10] (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead[11] — a furlong[12] off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on — if far or near can he predicated of their world — see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays[13].

Here — a cow and rabbit couchant[14], and co-extensive — so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay[15].

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson[16] (which we are old fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon) some of

1 perspective: technique of representing objects on a flat surface to show depth and relative distance.
2 optics: eyes.
3 *terra firma*: (Latin) solid ground.
4 decorous: characterized by propriety and dignity and good taste in manners and conduct.
5 Mandarin: a high public official of old China.
6 salver: a tray (or large plate) for serving food or drinks.
7 set off: direct attention to, as if by means of contrast.
8 likeness is identity: similar appearance may mean the same person on a tea cup.
9 hither side: to this place (especially toward the speaker).
10 incidence: the striking of a light beam on a surface.
11 mead: an alcoholic drink of fermented honey and water.
12 furlong: a unit of length equal to 220 yards.
13 dancing the hays: an English country dance with a serpentine movements. This is the way Lamb describes the dances on the china tea cup.
14 couchant: lying down with the head raised.
15 Cathay: an archaic or literary name for China.
16 Hyson: a Chinese green tea with twisted leaves.

these *speciosa miracula*[1] upon a set of extra-ordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to over-shade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget[2].

"I wish the good old times would come again," she said, "when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state" — so she was pleased to ramble on, — "in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury[3] (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the for and against, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid or it.

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare-and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher[4], which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent-garden[5]? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington[6], fearing you should be too late-and when the old bookseller

1 speciosa miracula: (*Latin*) shining wonders.
2 Bridget: a name used to refer to Mary Lamb.
3 a cheap luxury: use of an oxymoron, a figure of speech conjoining contradictory terms, as in "deafening silence", "cruel kindness".
4 Beaumont and Fletcher: here refer to Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625). John Fletcher was a Jacobean playwright. Following William Shakespeare as house playwright for the King's Men, he was among the most prolific and influential dramatists of his day; both during his lifetime and in the early Restoration, his fame rivaled Shakespeare's. Though his reputation has been eclipsed since, Fletcher remains an important transitional figure between the Elizabethan popular tradition and the popular drama of the Restoration. Francis Beaumont was a dramatist in the English Renaissance theatre, most famous for his collaborations with John Fletcher. The two wrote together for close to a decade, first for the children and then for the King's Men.
5 Covent-garden: a market place in London.
6 Islington: a place in the north of London where the Lambs lived.

with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasuries and when you lugged[1] it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome — and when you presented it to me — and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (collating you called it — and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break — was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical[2], give you half the honest vanity[3] with which you flaunted[4] it about in that over-worn suit — your old corbeau[5] — for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen — or sixteen shillings was it? — a great affair we thought it then — which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

"When you come home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo[6], which we christened the "Lady Blanch"; when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money — and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture — was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holyday — holydays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich — and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad — and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store-only paying for the ale[7] that you must call for — and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth — and

1 lugged: carried with difficulty.
2 finical: exacting especially about details.
3 the honest vanity: Lamb refers to the vanity to show himself in the outworn suit, a vanity which he honestly acknowledged.
4 flaunted: displayed proudly.
5 corbeau: a dark green cloth, almost black. "Corbeau" is the French word for "raven", the common name given to several large black birds of the genus "Corvus". Other birds in the same genus are the smaller crows, jackdaws, and rooks.
6 Lionardo: Lionardo Da Vinci (1452-1519), Italian painter and sculptor and engineer and scientist and architect; the most versatile genius of the Italian Renaissance.
7 ale: a general name for beer made with a top fermenting yeast.

wish for such another honest hostess, as Izaak Walton[1] has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing — and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly[2] upon us — but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator[3] his Trout Hall? Now, when we go out a days pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we ride part of the way — and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense — which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit[4]. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the *Battle of Hexham, and the Surrender of Calais*,[5] and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the *Children in the Wood* [6] — when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery[7] — where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me-and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me — and the pleasure was the better for a little shame — and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria.[8] You used to say, that the gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially — that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going — that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage — because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then — and I appeal to you, whether, as

1 Izaak Walton (1593-1683): an English writer remembered for his treatise on fishing.
2 grudgingly: reluctantly to give or share.
3 Piscator: a fisherman; an angler.
4 pit: lowered area in front of a stage where an orchestra accompanies the performers.
5 Battle of Hexham, and the Surrender of Calais: comedies by George Colman (1762-1836), known as "the Younger", the son of dramatist George Colman "the Elder", English dramatist and miscellaneous writer.
6 *Children in the Wood*: a play by Thomas Morton (1764-1838), an English playwright.
7 gallery: the highest balcony in a theatre, having the cheapest seats.
8 Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria: Rosalind is the heroine in Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It*; Viola is the heroine in Shakespeare's comedy *Twelfth Night*.

a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation[1], than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough, — but there was still a law of civility to women recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passage — and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money, and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then — but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

"There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common — in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear — to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now — that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat — when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now — what I mean by the word — we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet — and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings — many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much — or that we had not spent so much — or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year — and still we found our slender capital decreasing — but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing[2] this charge, and doing without that for the future — and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now,) we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with "lusty brimmers" (as you used to quote it out of hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton, as you called him), we used to welcome in the "coming guest." Now we have no

1 accommodation: convenience.
2 curtail: place restrictions on.

reckoning at all at the end of the old year — no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom[1] of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor — hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux[2] into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened, and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power — those natural dilations[3] of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten — with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth; a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride where we formerly walked: live better, and lie softer — and shall be wise to do so — than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return — could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day — could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I young to see them-could the good old one shilling gallery days return — they are dreams, my cousin, now — but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fire-side, sitting on this luxurious sofa — be once more struggling up those inconvenient stair-cases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers — could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours-and the delicious Thank God, we are safe, which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us — I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Croesus[4] had or the great Jew R[5] — is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big

1 phantom: something existing in perception only.
2 superflux: superabundance; superfluity; an overflowing.
3 natural dilations: the natural ability to cope with any circumstances.
4 Croesus: last king of Lydia (died in 546 BC), a man of great wealth.
5 Jew R: Nathan Meyer Rothschild (1777-1836), a London financier and one of the founders of the international Rothschild banking dynasty.

enough for a bed-tester[1], over the head of that pretty insipid half Madonnaish chit[2] of a lady in that very blue summer-house."

Critical Points

Charles Lamb's humour and comic style

Lamb is famous for his humour, the most striking feature of his essays. He could tell a ridiculous story in the most solemn tone. He was a master of puns and jokes. But at the core of his humour lies an honest, good soul, pressed by domestic tragedy and wearied by daily drudgery "at the desk's dull wood", who struggle first to prevent himself from being crushed by mental illness and then to fulfill his responsibility for his unhappy family. So in his essays laughter is often mingled with tears and there is sadness underneath his humour. His Elia, in reality, spoke for the lower middle class — the clerks, book-keepers, hack writers and all the white collar workers who lead lives of quiet desperation. Diverse as the subjects may seem, they all lead to the author's interpretation of English society in the general and the life of London in particular.

Besides his humour, Lamb is praised for his comic writing. He can bring a smile to your lips by the spin he puts on a single word. He loves to parody the stiffness of scholarly writing, by using a ridiculously Latinate term for a simple object, as when he describes the substance near the crackling in "A Dissertation on Roast Pig" as "the adhesive oleaginous — O call it not fat!" There is that same euphemistic, mock-fastidious concern for naming things in "The South Sea House", when he stops short of calling a clerk cowardly: "With all this there was about him a sort of timidity (his few enemies used to give it a worse name) — a something which, in reverence to the dead, we will place, if you please, a little on this side of the heroic."

The unique humour and comic style makes Lamb the voice of compassionate wisdom. He offers sympathy to those left out of the Imperial feast: the beggars, the old women, and the child chimney sweeps. He is critical to the comfortable, solid, bourgeois family man, because he cannot tolerate hypocrisy or smugness.

1 bed-tester: a canopy over the bed.
2 Madonnaish chit: a small young woman like the Virgin Mary.

Questions

Dream Children

1. Who is the narrator? Who are dream children? What do you learn about the narrator from his dream?
2. Based on what you have learned about English essays, think about the following questions:
   What is a personal essay? What makes a good personal essay? Use your conclusion of the above questions or your standard to analyse one of your favourite essays.

Old China

1. Who is the narrator? Who is the narrator's companion? Do you think the narrator and his companion are in good relationship with each other?
2. Why does he have a feminine partiality for old china? How do you like his partiality?
3. List the stylistic features of this essay.

Class activities

Writing Practice

1. Imitate the style of "Old China", and write one piece of essay about one of your special hobbies.
2. Imitate the style of "Dream Children", and write about one of your daydreams.

QUOTATIONS

What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though all the souls of all the writers that have bequeathed their labours to these Bodleians were reposing here as in some dormitory, or middle state. I do not want to handle, to profane the leaves, their winding-sheets. I could as soon dislodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid their foliage; and the odor of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of the sciential apples which grew amid the happy orchard.

—Charles Lamb

The essence of poetry is will and passion.

—William Hazlitt

Part VI

The Victorian Age (1837-1901)

Key Words

the Victorian Age
the Victorian novels
Wessex novels
dramatic monologue
Aestheticism
problem play
the rise of female writers
the characteristics of Realistic novels

The Victorian Age refers to the reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901. It is considered as the height of the Industrial Revolution in Britain and the apex of the British Empire.

This is an age of literary achievements only parallelled by that of the Elizabethan Age. While poetry and prose was still demonstrating its charm, the novel became the most popular literary genre and there appeared a galaxy of brilliant novelists. And a number of female writers, for the first time, came to the central stage of literary scene. In spite of a great variety of themes and styles, novels in Victorian Age carry the label of Realism, for the convenience of literary criticism.

The Victorian Age may be subdivided into three periods: the early Victorian period (1832-1848), a time of social unrest; the mid-Victorian period (1848-1870), a period of economic prosperity and religious controversy; the late Victorian period (1870-1901), a period of decay of Victorian values.

Three periods of the Victorian Age

The early period has been characterised as a time of social unrest. The Reform Bill of 1832 extended the right to vote to all males owning property worth 10 pounds or more in annual rent, satisfying many of the demands of the middle classes. The Whig party, representing the interests of the industrial capitalists and businessmen, came to power and passed many policies to accelerate the rapid development of capitalism.

One direct result of the early process in which England was developing into a modern democratic and industrialised state at the early state is the great disparity and the sharp contrast between the rich and the poor.

The conflict between the capitalists and proletariat in the stage dominated the social and political life. One of the most striking working class movements rose in 1836. In 1838, the Chartists, a large organisation of workingmen, drew up a "People's Charter", advocating the extension of the right to vote and other legislative reforms. For 10 years, the Chartist leaders engaged in agitation to have their program adopted by Parliament. This time of social unrest left its mark on some early Victorian literature. The novelists of the 1840s and early 1850s show the most marked response to the industrial and political scene.

The mid-Victorian period (1848-1870) witnessed economic prosperity and religious controversy. Free trade was enriching the aristocratic estates; agriculture flourished together with trade and industry. Through a succession of Factory Acts in Parliament, which restricted child labour and limited hours

of employment, the condition of the working classes was also being gradually improved. Generally, mid-Victorian poetry and critical prose was less preoccupied with technology, economics, and politics than with the conflict between religion and science. The publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) left a tremendous influence on the audience of the age. It is not only because his theory of natural selection conflicted with the concept of creation derived from the Bible, but also because it was applied in social science with some thinkers defending capitalism by stating that life in society was also dominated by the principle of survival of the fittest.

The late Victorian period (1870-1901) was a time of serenity and security. The period saw the continuous growth of the country in strength. By 1890 the British Empire had comprised more than a quarter of all the territory on the surface of the earth and was called "the empire on which the sun never sets".

This was also a time of the decline of British Empire and the decay of Victorian values. At home, the Irish problem became especially divisive in the 1880s. When a second Reform Bill had been passed in 1867, extending the right to vote to sections of the working classes, the labour grew into a political force to be reckoned with, and thus disturbed the domestic balance of power. Outside the country, the recovery of the United States after the Civil War provided new and serious competition. Germany grew rapidly as a new rival after it defeated France in 1871. In literature of the late Victorian period, melancholy was characteristic of its spirit, which was best expressed by Oscar Wilde, representative of the Aesthetic Movement.

The Victorian novels

Whenever Victorian literature is mentioned, the brilliant achievements of the novelists come to be the first concern. A long line of novelists turned out monumental masterpieces that have never been out of popularity.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870), the most important novelist of the age, brought into being his first novel, *Pickwick Papers*, in the same year as Victoria took throne. In the 1840s there emerged the Brontë sisters. William Thackeray (1811-1863) became a prominent novelist in the 1850s. He was famous for his satirical works, particularly *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero*, which is a novel that satirises society in early 19th century England. The title "Vanity Fair" originates from John Bunyan's allegorical story *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), in which there is a town fair held in a village called Vanity. George Eliot enjoyed her highest popularity in the 1870s. Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

was the last outstanding novelist in the final decade of the Victorian Age.

Although the Victorian novel was extraordinarily various, and it encompassed a wealth of styles and genres, one distinct innovation of the Victorian novel was Realism. **The characteristics of Realistic novels** are that the external, objective, material world is the creative source; plot, character, setting and chronological narration are its essential elements. The novelists are primarily concerned with people in society. The function of the Victorian novels was extended from mere description and moralisation to social criticism. All the evils of the existing institutions, with their injustice and corruption, were exposed and criticised in the novels. The Victorian novel, therefore, was distinguished for the vivid description of characters and a detailed portrait of life in 19th century England.

The reasons for **the popularity of novels in the Victorian Age** are closely related with the literacy, printing and reading of the time.

First, literacy increased significantly during the Victorian period. In 1837 about half of the adult male population could read and write to some extent; by the end of the century, basic literacy was almost universal.

There was also an explosion of things to read. Because of technological changes in printing — presses powered by steam, paper made from wood pulp, publishers could bring out more printed material more cheaply than ever before. The number of newspapers, periodicals, and books increased exponentially during the Victorian period. Most readers could borrow books from commercial lending libraries or public libraries for free.

The most significant development in publishing was the growth of the periodicals. There were magazines for every taste. The chief reviews and monthly magazines had a great deal of influence; they defined issues in public affairs, and they made and broke literary reputations. The novels and long works of nonfiction prose were first published in serial form in monthly magazines.

The reading middle class enjoyed a common reading culture. Poets as Tennyson and Elizabeth Barrett Browning appealed to a large body of readers; prose writers like Carlyle, Arnold, and Ruskin achieved a status as sages; and the major novelists were popular writers. This was an age when literature was a major form of popular entertainment, both readers and writers shared the expectation that literature would not only delight but instruct.

Female writing

One distinct phenomenon of the Victorian literature is that female writers, for the first time in the history of English literature, became major authors.

Before and at the time, gender inequality in politics, economy, education and social positions still prevailed; women were regarded as second-class citizens. The basis for change in woman's position was not only provided by the political revolutions of the times, but also by the Industrial Revolution. The explosive growth of the textile industries brought hundreds of thousands of lower-class women into factory jobs. Women's factory work presented an increasing challenge to traditional ideas of woman's sphere.

In the late period of Victorian Age, a feminist movement started, fighting for women's equality and freedom, and for their educational and employment opportunities. In 1837 none of England's three universities was open to women. In 1848 the first women's college in London was established. By the end of Victoria's reign women could take degrees at 12 universities or colleges and could study at Oxford and Cambridge, although their employment opportunities were very much limited. For an unmarried middle-class woman, the only occupation at which she could earn a living and maintain some claim to gentility was that of a governess. The governess novel became a popular genre to explore woman's role in society, of which the most famous is *Jane Eyre*.

With the progress of the society and the improvement of women' s position, and with better education and more spare time enjoyed by women themselves, there emerged a number of brilliant woman writers whose works gave voice to the feelings and aspirations of the educated women of their age. The Brontë

Gaskell

George Eliot

sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865)[1], George Eliot (1819-1880) as well as the earlier Jane Austen, were among the best.

George Eliot is the pen name of Mary Anne Evans. She was one of the leading writers of the Victorian Age. Her novels, largely set in provincial England, are well known for their realism and psychological perspicacity. Her best works include *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), and her masterpiece *Middlemarch* (1872). *Middlemarch* is set in the 1830s in Middlemarch, a fictional provincial town in England, based on Coventry. Widely seen as Eliot's greatest work, it is almost unanimously acclaimed as one of the great Victorian novels.

The Victorian poetry

Despite the growing prestige and proliferation of fiction, the Victorian Age is in fact an Age of great poetry. Victorian poetry is obsessed by the great ideas of a fictionalised past, and it functions as a popular encyclopaedia or commentary to myth or folklore. Its most representative poets include Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Browning, Matthew Arnold, and Thomas Hardy.

Matthew Arnold

Aestheticism

Aestheticism was a loosely defined movement in literature and art, characterised by the attitude of making "art for art's sake". It took place in the late Victorian period from around 1868 to 1901, and is generally considered to have ended with the trial of Oscar Wilde.

Aestheticism flourished partly as a reaction against the materialism of the

1 Elizabeth Gaskell: Victorian novelist. Her first novel, *Mary Barton*, published anonymously in 1848, was an immediate success, winning the praise of Charles Dickens and Thomas Carlyle. Her other works include *Cranford* (1853), *North and South* (1854). She was also notable for her biography of her friend Charlotte Brontë, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), written with admiration and covered a huge quantity of firsthand material with great narrative skill.

burgeoning middle class who responded to art in a generally unrefined manner. In this climate, the artist could assert as a remarkable and rarefied being, one leading the search for beauty in an age marked by class inequality, social hypocrisy, and bourgeois complacency.

It had its forerunners in John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley, and among the Pre-Raphaelites[1], and developed under the influence of French Symbolism, and may be considered the British branch of the same movement. The slogan "art for art's sake" was coined by the French philosopher Victor Cousin[2] (1792-1867), and promoted by poet and literary critics Théophile Gautier[3] (1811-1872) and Charles Baudelaire[4] (1821-1867).

The British aesthetic writers were deeply influenced by Walter Pater[5], who suggested that life itself should be lived in the spirit of art. His views had a profound impact on the English poets of the 1890s, most notably Oscar Wilde. The latter's determination to live a life of beauty and to mold his life into a work of art is reflected in the beliefs and actions of several characters in his only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

1 The Pre-Raphaelites was a group of English painters, poets and critics. Their intention was to reform art by rejecting what they considered to be the mechanistic approach adopted by the Mannerist artists who followed Raphael and Michelangelo. They believed that the classical poses and elegant compositions of Raphael in particular had been a corrupting influence on academic teaching of art. They wanted to return to the abundant detail, intense colours, and complex compositions of Quattrocento Italian and Flemish art, the cultural and artistic events of 15th century Italy, which encompasses the artistic styles of the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance.

2 Victor Cousin: philosopher, educational reformer, and historian, the best known French thinker in his time.

3 Théophile Gautier: French poet, novelist, critic, and journalist whose influence was strongly felt in the period of changing sensibilities in French literature—from the early Romantic period to the aestheticism and naturalism of the end of the 19th century.

4 Charles Baudelaire: French poet, translator, and literary and art critic whose reputation rests primarily on *Les Fleurs du mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*, 1857), one of the most important and influential poetry collection in the 19th century. Similarly, his "Petits poèmes en prose" ("Little Prose Poems", 1868) was the most successful and innovative early experiment in prose poetry of the time.

5 Walter Pater (1839-1894), English essayist and critic. In his conclusion to *The Renaissance* (1873), a collection of essays, Pater spoke of "the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake".

Unit 30

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Charles Dickens *was the foremost English novelist of the Victorian Age. Considered one of the greatest writers of the English language, he was acclaimed for his rich storytelling and memorable characters, and achieved massive worldwide popularity both in his lifetime and afterwards.*

Life and Writing

Charles Dickens

Born in Portsmouth, Dickens was the son of a clerk in the navy pay office. He started school at the age of nine, but his education was interrupted when his father was imprisoned for debt in 1824. Dickens, at the age of 12, had to work in a warehouse to support himself. He worked six shillings a week, lonely and hungry. The memory of this painful period inspired much of his fiction, notably described in the early chapters of his novel *David Copperfield.*

When his father was released, Dickens was sent to school again. At the age of 15, he left school and worked as a clerk in a lawyer's office in London, where he met all kinds of people, and his experience there provided him with an inexhaustible source for his creative work. He learnt shorthand and read books in his spare time. Later he became an expert parliamentary reporter for the *Morning Chronicle.*

At the same time, he contributed articles to periodicals, illustrating everyday life of ordinary people. The articles attracted much attention and resulted in the creation of Mr. Pickwick, and the publication of *The Posthumous Papers of the*

Pickwick Papers (1836-1837), which achieved immense popularity. Dickens was very productive in the following years. *Oliver Twist* began to appear monthly in 1837, followed by *Nicholas Nickleby*, also in monthly numbers. *The Old Curiosity Shop* appeared during the years 1840-1841.

In 1842 Dickens and his wife visited the United States. During the trip he gave lectures advocating international copyright and strongly opposing slavery. His visit resulted in two books of satire: *American Notes* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-1844). In 1843 he published *A Christmas Carol*, the first of a series of Christmas books. In these books Dickens showed his profound sympathy for the poor and described how the rich were converted after undergoing severe tests. These stories are permeated with the spirit of brotherhood and are regarded as representatives of the spirit of Christmas.

After 1844 Dickens spent much time on the European continent, especially in France and Italy. During a visit to Switzerland he began *Dombey and Son* (1846-1848). He also started to edit the weekly periodicals *Household Words* (1850-1859), and later *All the Year Round* (1859-1870), which includes much of his later writings such as the Christmas stories. Dickens's later famous novels appeared year after year: *David Copperfield* (1849-1950), *Bleak House* (1852-1853), *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorritt* (1855-1857), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1860-1861), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-1865). Besides editing periodicals himself, he also pressed for many social reforms, and administered philanthropic enterprises, at times combined his passion for amateur theatricals of a fund-raising performance.

All these successes, however, were shadowed by personal unhappiness, first by the death of his beloved sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth, and then by the tension between him and his wife and their separation in 1858. Dickens distracted himself from domestic sorrow by public readings of his own works in England and America. The readings were immensely popular, but physically and emotionally exhausting as well. He died suddenly on June 9, 1870, leaving unfinished his last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Dickens was buried in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, near Geoffrey Chaucer and other fellow writers.

Major Works

Dickens' literary career is usually divided into three periods with the first period from 1836 to 1841. The main works of this period include *The Pickwick*

Papers, Oliver Twist, The Old Curiosity Shop. The second period covers the years from 1842 to 1850 with the publications of *American Notes, A Christmas Carol, The Cricket on the Hearth, Dombey and Son,* and *David Copperfield.* The last period extends from 1852 to 1870 with such novels as *Bleak House, Hard Times, Little Dorrit, A Tale of Two Cities, Great Expectations,* and *Our Mutual Friend.*

The first period is characteristic of youthful optimism, the second period of excitement and irritation, and the third period of steadily intensifying pessimism. This sequence of Dickens' works shows his ideological development parallel to the historical process of his time, reflecting exactly the moods of the English petty bourgeois progressives in those years. This also reveals the social significance of Dickens' novels.

Pickwick Papers began as an illustrated story of the experiences of the members of the Pickwick Club, and gradually evolved into a loosely-structured picaresque novel about the London petty bourgeois. The novel presents a panorama of life in London during the early years of the 19th century.

Oliver Twist tells a story about the underworld of London, presenting a realistic description of the grim and dark side of the life in early 19th century London. Oliver Twist is an orphan boy who is led into crime when he becomes a member of a gang of young thieves. With the help of kind people, Oliver is saved, and eventually justice is done. The novel is one of Dickens' strong attacks on social injustices and a plea for a new order of society.

Of *David Copperfield* Dickens said, "Of all my books, I like this best." It is written in the first person and is the most autobiographical of all his books. In writing the novel, Dickens threw into it deep feelings and much of his own experience in his younger days. It is a novel about social conflict, the good-hearted common people, and personal love adventures.

Great Expectations

Great Expectations is autobiographical. Dickens in real life and Pip in the novel experienced similar joys, sorrows, and frustrations in rising from humble beginnings to success and wealth.

Plot Summary

Philip Pirrip, commonly known as "Pip", a village boy, is brought up by his termagant sister, and brother-in-low, Joe Gargery, a gentle, humourous, kindly blacksmith. He is introduced to the house of Miss Havisham, a lady half-crazed

by the desertion of her lover on her bridal night. She brought up the girl Estella to use her beauty as a means to torture men. Pip falls in love with Estella and aspires to become a gentleman.

Money and expectations of more wealth come to him unexpectedly from a mysterious source. He gets the chance to go to London. In his new mode of life, he meanly abandons the devoted Joe Gargery, of whom he is now ashamed. Misfortunes come upon him, when his benefactor proves to be an escaped convict, Abel Magwitch, to whom he had brought food to the graveyard where Magwitch hid himself. The exposure of the fact that Magwitch is his benefactor and later is the father of Estella indicates the unreliability of great expectations, and serves a turning point in Pip's fate.

Pip is penniless again. Estella gets married, but she is cruelly treated by her husband, who died later. Pip returns to Joe Gargery. There indicates a possible reunion between Pip and Estella, both having learnt their lessons after adversity.

The novel is carefully structured and its fine portrayal of Pip shows Dickens' extraordinary narrative talent.

Introduction to Chapter 58 and 59

On his return home, Pip meets Pumblechook who "forgives" Pip for his ingratitude, and Joe, for his stupidity. He then finds out Joe and Biddy have just been married. Pip apologises to them and tells them he is going to join Herbert in Egypt. In Egypt, Pip lives with Herbert and Clara, pays off his debts, and leads a frugal life. He honours his promise to pay Joe back and writes frequent letters to Joe and Biddy. Pip eventually becomes a third partner in the firm.

Eleven years later, Pip returns to the forge to visit Joe's family. He then meets Estella. She tells Pip that she has learnt the feeling of heartbreak and now seeks his forgiveness for what she did to him. For the first time in the book she has become herself. The two walk out of the garden hand in hand, and Pip "saw no shadow of another parting from her."

Chapter 58

The tidings[1] of my high fortunes having had a heavy fall had got down to my native place and its neighborhood before I got there. I found the

1 tidings: news.

Blue Boar[1] in possession of the intelligence, and I found that it made a great change in the Boar's demeanour[2]. Whereas the Boar had cultivated my good opinion with warm assiduity[3] when I was coming into property, the Boar was exceedingly cool on the subject now that I was going out of property.

It was evening when I arrived, much fatigued by the journey I had so often made so easily. The Boar could not put me into my usual bedroom, which was engaged (probably by someone who had expectations), and could only assign me a very indifferent chamber among the pigeons and post chaises up the yard. But I had as sound a sleep in that lodging as in the most superior accommodation the Boar could have given me, and the quality of my dreams was about the same as in the best bedroom.

Early in the morning, while my breakfast was getting ready, I strolled round by Satis House[4]. There were printed bills on the gate and on bits of carpet hanging out of the windows, announcing a sale by auction of the Household Furniture and Effects, next week. The House itself was to be sold as old building materials, and pulled down. LOT[5] 1 was marked in whitewashed knock-knee letters on the brew house; LOT 2 on that part of the main building which had been so long shut up. Other lots were marked off on other parts of the structure, and the ivy had been torn down to make room for the inscriptions, and much of it trailed low in the dust and was withered already. Stepping in for a moment at the open gate, and looking around me with the uncomfortable air of a stranger who had no business there, I saw the auctioneer's clerk walking on the casks and telling them off for the information of a catalogue-compiler, pen in hand, who made a temporary desk of the wheeled chair I had so often pushed along to the tune of Old Clem.

When I got back to my breakfast in the Boar's coffee-room, I found Mr. Pumblechook[6] conversing with the landlord. Mr. Pumblechook (not improved in appearance by his late nocturnal adventure) was waiting for me, and addressed me in the following terms: —

"Young man, I am sorry to see you brought low. But what else could be

1 the Blue Boar: a hotel at Pip's hometown.
2 demeanour: outward behaviour or bearing.
3 assiduity: great and constant diligence and attention.
4 Satis House: Miss Havisham's manor where Pip once worked as a boy.
5 LOT: things on sale at auction marked with numbers.
6 Mr. Pumblechook: Pip's pompous, arrogant uncle.

expected! what else could be expected!"

As he extended his hand with a magnificently forgiving air, and as I was broken by illness and unfit to quarrel, I took it.

"William," said Mr. Pumblechook to the waiter, "put a muffin[1] on table. And has it come to this! Has it come to this!"

I frowningly sat down to my breakfast. Mr. Pumblechook stood over me and poured out my tea — before I could touch the teapot — with the air of a benefactor who was resolved to be true to the last.

"William," said Mr. Pumblechook, mournfully, "put the salt on. In happier times," addressing me, "I think you took sugar? And did you take milk? You did. Sugar and milk. William, bring a watercress[2]."

"Thank you," said I, shortly, "but I don't eat watercresses."

"You don't eat 'em," returned Mr. Pumblechook, sighing and nodding his head several times, as if he might have expected that, and as if abstinence[3] from watercresses were consistent with my downfall. "True. The simple fruits of the earth. No. You needn't bring any, William."

I went on with my breakfast, and Mr. Pumblechook continued to stand over me, staring fishily and breathing noisily, as he always did.

"Little more than skin and bone!" mused Mr. Pumblechook, aloud. "And yet when he went from here (I may say with my blessing), and I spread afore him my humble store, like the Bee, he was as plump as a Peach!"

This reminded me of the wonderful difference between the servile manner in which he had offered his hand in my new prosperity, saying, "May I?" and the ostentatious clemency[4] with which he had just now exhibited the same fat five fingers.

"Hah!" he went on, handing me the bread and butter. "And air you a going to Joseph?"[5]

"In heaven's name," said I, firing in spite of myself, "what does it matter to you where I am going? Leave that teapot alone."

1 muffin: a thick, flattened bread roll made from yeast dough.
2 watercress: a small plant with strong tasting green leaves that grow in clear ponds and streams. 水芥
3 abstinence: act or practice of refraining from indulging an appetite.
4 clemency: disposition to be merciful and especially to moderate the severity of punishment due.
5 "And air you a going to Joseph?": And are you going to Joseph? (Mr. Pumblechook used local dialect here, which he would use more in the following part.)

It was the worst course I could have taken,[1] because it gave Pumblechook the opportunity he wanted.

"Yes, young man," said he, releasing the handle of the article in question, retiring a step or two from my table, and speaking for the behoof[2] of the landlord and waiter at the door, "I will leave that teapot alone. You are right, young man. For once you are right. I forgit myself when I take such an interest in your breakfast, as to wish your frame, exhausted by the debilitating effects of prodigygality, to be stimilated by the 'olesome nourishment of your forefathers. And yet," said Pumblechook, turning to the landlord and waiter, and pointing me out at arm's length, "this is him as I ever sported with in his days of happy infancy! Tell me not it cannot be; I tell you this is him!"

A low murmur from the two replied. The waiter appeared to be particularly affected.

"This is him," said Pumblechook, "as I have rode in my shaycart[3]. This is him as I have seen brought up by hand. This is him untoe the sister of which I was uncle by marriage, as her name was Georgiana M'ria[4] from her own mother, let him deny it if he can!"

The waiter seemed convinced that I could not deny it, and that it gave the case a black look.

"Young man," said Pumblechook, screwing his head at me in the old fashion, "you air a going to Joseph. What does it matter to me, you ask me, where you air a going? I say to you, Sir, you air a going to Joseph."

The waiter coughed, as if he modestly invited me to get over that.

"Now," said Pumblechook, and all this with a most exasperating[5] air of saying in the cause of virtue what was perfectly convincing and conclusive, "I will tell you what to say to Joseph. Here is Squires of the Boar present, known and respected in this town, and here is William, which his father's name was Potkins if I do not deceive myself."

"You do not, sir," said William.

"In their presence," pursued Pumblechook, "I will tell you, young man, what to say to Joseph. Says you, 'Joseph, I have this day seen my earliest

1 It was the worst course I could have taken: it was the worst thing I could have said.
2 behoof: advantage; profit; benefit; interest; use.
3 shaycart: four-wheel horse carriage.
4 Georgiana M'ria: Pip's mother who died when Pip was young.
5 exasperating: extremely annoying or displeasing.

benefactor and the founder of my fortun's. I will name no names, Joseph, but so they are pleased to call him up town, and I have seen that man.'"

"I swear I don't see him here," said I.

"Say that likewise," retorted Pumblechook. "Say you said that, and even Joseph will probably betray surprise."

"There you quite mistake him," said I. "I know better."

"Says you," Pumblechook went on, " 'Joseph, I have seen that man, and that man bears you no malice and bears me no malice[1]. He knows your character, Joseph, and is well acquainted with your pig-headedness and ignorance; and he knows my character, Joseph, and he knows my want of gratitoode. Yes, Joseph,' says you," here Pumblechook shook his head and hand at me, " 'he knows my total deficiency of common human gratitoode. He knows it, Joseph, as none can. You do not know it, Joseph, having no call to know it, but that man do.'"

Windy donkey[2] as he was, it really amazed me that he could have the face to talk thus to mine.

"Says you, 'Joseph, he gave me a little message, which I will now repeat. It was that, in my being brought low, he saw the finger of Providence. He knowed that finger when he saw Joseph, and he saw it plain. It pinted out this writing, Joseph. Reward of ingratitoode to his earliest benefactor, and founder of fortun's. But that man said he did not repent of what he had done, Joseph. Not at all. It was right to do it, it was kind to do it, it was benevolent to do it, and he would do it again.'"

"It's pity," said I, scornfully, as I finished my interrupted breakfast, "that the man did not say what he had done and would do again."

"Squires of the Boar!" Pumblechook was now addressing the landlord, "and William! I have no objections to your mentioning, either up town or down town, if such should be your wishes, that it was right to do it, kind to do it, benevolent to do it, and that I would do it again."

With those words the Impostor[3] shook them both by the hand, with an air, and left the house; leaving me much more astonished than delighted by the virtues of that same indefinite "it".

· I was not long after him in leaving the house too, and when I went down the High Street I saw him holding forth (no doubt to the same effect) at his

1 malice: the desire to do harm to someone, ill will.
2 Windy donkey: a bombastic fool.
3 the Impostor: a person who makes deceitful pretenses.

shop door to a select group, who honored me with very unfavorable glances as I passed on the opposite side of the way.

But, it was only the pleasanter to turn to Biddy[1] and to Joe, whose great forbearance shone more brightly than before, if that could be, contrasted with this brazen pretender. I went towards them slowly, for my limbs were weak, but with a sense of increasing relief as I drew nearer to them, and a sense of leaving arrogance and untruthfulness further and further behind.

The June weather was delicious. The sky was blue, the larks were soaring high over the green corn, I thought all that countryside more beautiful and peaceful by far than I had ever known it to be yet. Many pleasant pictures of the life that I would lead there, and of the change for the better that would come over my character when I had a guiding spirit at my side whose simple faith and clear home-wisdom I had proved, beguiled my way. They awakened a tender emotion in me; for my heart was softened by my return, and such a change had come to pass, that I felt like one who was toiling home barefoot from distant travel, and whose wanderings had lasted many years.

The schoolhouse where Biddy was mistress I had never seen; but, the little roundabout lane by which I entered the village, for quietness' sake, took me past it. I was disappointed to find that the day was a holiday; no children were there, and Biddy's house was closed. Some hopeful notion of seeing her, busily engaged in her daily duties, before she saw me, had been in my mind and was defeated.

But the forge was a very short distance off, and I went towards it under the sweet green limes, listening for the clink of Joe's hammer. Long after I ought to have heard it, and long after I had fancied I heard it and found it but a fancy, all was still. The limes were there, and the white thorns were there, and the chestnut-trees were there, and their leaves rustled harmoniously when I stopped to listen; but, the clink of Joe's hammer was not in the midsummer wind.

Almost fearing, without knowing why, to come in view of the forge, I saw it at last, and saw that it was closed. No gleam of fire, no glittering shower of sparks, no roar of bellows; all shut up, and still.

But the house was not deserted, and the best parlor seemed to be in use, for there were white curtains fluttering in its window, and the window was

1 Biddy: a simple, kind-hearted country girl. Biddy first befriends Pip when they attend school together. After Mrs. Joe is attacked and becomes an invalid, Biddy moves into Pip's home to care for her. Throughout most of the novel, Biddy represents the opposite of Estella; she is plain, kind, moral and of Pip's own social class.

open and gay with flowers. I went softly towards it, meaning to peep over the flowers, when Joe and Biddy stood before me, arm in arm.

At first Biddy gave a cry, as if she thought it was my apparition[1], but in another moment she was in my embrace. I wept to see her, and she wept to see me; I, because she looked so fresh and pleasant; she, because I looked so worn and white.

"But dear Biddy, how smart you are!"

"Yes, dear Pip."

"And Joe, how smart you are!"

"Yes, dear old Pip, old chap."

I looked at both of them, from one to the other, and then —

"It's my wedding-day!" cried Biddy, in a burst of happiness, "and I am married to Joe!"

They had taken me into the kitchen, and I had laid my head down on the old deal table. Biddy held one of my hands to her lips, and Joe's restoring touch was on my shoulder. "Which he warn't strong enough, my dear, fur to be surprised," said Joe. And Biddy said, "I ought to have thought of it, dear Joe, but I was too happy." They were both so overjoyed to see me, so proud to see me, so touched by my coming to them, so delighted that I should have come by accident to make their day complete!

My first thought was one of great thankfulness that I had never breathed this last baffled hope to Joe. How often, while he was with me in my illness, had it risen to my lips! How irrevocable would have been his knowledge of it, if he had remained with me but another hour!

"Dear Biddy," said I, "you have the best husband in the whole world, and if you could have seen him by my bed you would have — But no, you couldn't love him better than you do."

"No, I couldn't indeed," said Biddy.

"And, dear Joe, you have the best wife in the whole world, and she will make you as happy as even you deserve to be, you dear, good, noble Joe!"

Joe looked at me with a quivering lip, and fairly put his sleeve before his eyes.

"And Joe and Biddy both, as you have been to church today, and are in charity and love with all mankind, receive my humble thanks for all you have done for me, and all I have so ill repaid! And when I say that I am going away within the hour, for I am soon going abroad, and that I shall never rest until I

1 apparition: something existing in perception only.

have worked for the money with which you have kept me out of prison, and have sent it to you, don't think, dear Joe and Biddy, that if I could repay it a thousand times over, I suppose I could cancel a farthing of the debt I owe you, or that I would do so if I could!"

They were both melted by these words, and both entreated me to say no more.

"But I must say more. Dear Joe, I hope you will have children to love, and that some little fellow will sit in this chimney corner of a winter night, who may remind you of another little fellow gone out of it for ever. Don't tell him, Joe, that I was thankless; don't tell him, Biddy, that I was ungenerous and unjust; only tell him that I honored you both, because you were both so good and true, and that, as your child, I said it would be natural to him to grow up a much better man than I did."

"I ain't a-going," said Joe, from behind his sleeve, "to tell him nothink o'that natur, Pip. Nor Biddy ain't. Nor yet no one ain't."

"And now, though I know you have already done it in your own kind hearts, pray tell me, both, that you forgive me! Pray let me hear you say the words, that I may carry the sound of them away with me, and then I shall be able to believe that you can trust me, and think better of me, in the time to come!"

"O dear old Pip, old chap," said Joe. "God knows as I forgive you, if I have anythink to forgive!"

"Amen! And God knows I do!" echoed Biddy.

Now let me go up and look at my old little room, and rest there a few minutes by myself. And then, when I have eaten and drunk with you, go with me as far as the finger — post, dear Joe and Biddy, before we say good by!"

I sold all I had, and put aside as much as I could, for a composition with my creditors, — who gave me ample time to pay them in full, — and I went out and joined Herbert[1]. Within a month, I had quitted England, and within two months I was clerk to Clarriker and Co., and within four months I assumed my first undivided responsibility. For the beam across the parlor ceiling at Mill Pond Bank had then ceased to tremble under old Bill Barley's growls and was at peace, and Herbert had gone away to marry Clara, and I was left in sole charge

1 Herbert: Herbert Pocket, whom Pip first meets in the garden of Satis House. Years later, they meet again in London, and Herbert becomes Pip's best friend and key companion after Pip's elevation to the status of gentleman. Herbert is the son of Matthew Pocket, Miss Havisham's cousin, and hopes to become a merchant so that he can afford to marry Clara Barley.

of the Eastern Branch until he brought her back.

Many a year went round before I was a partner in the House; but I lived happily with Herbert and his wife, and lived frugally, and paid my debts, and maintained a constant correspondence with Biddy and Joe. It was not until I became third in the Firm, that Clarriker betrayed me to Herbert; but he then declared that the secret of Herbert's partnership had been long enough upon his conscience, and he must tell it. So he told it, and Herbert was as much moved as amazed, and the dear fellow and I were not the worse friends for the long concealment. I must not leave it to be supposed that we were ever a great House, or that we made mints of money. We were not in a grand way of business, but we had a good name, and worked for our profits, and did very well. We owed so much to Herbert's ever cheerful industry and readiness, that I often wondered how I had conceived that old idea of his inaptitude, until I was one day enlightened by the reflection, that perhaps the inaptitude had never been in him at all, but had been in me.

Chapter 59

For eleven years, I had not seen Joe nor Biddy with my bodily eyes — though they had both been often before my fancy in the East — when, upon an evening in December, an hour or two after dark, I laid my hand softly on the latch of the old kitchen door. I touched it so softly that I was not heard, and looked in unseen. There, smoking his pipe in the old place by the kitchen firelight, as hale and as strong as ever though a little grey, sat Joe; and there, fenced into the corner with Joe's leg, and sitting on my own little stool looking at the fire, was — I again!

"We giv' him the name of Pip for your sake, dear old chap," said Joe, delighted when I took another stool by the child's side (but I did not rumple his hair), "and we hoped he might grow a little bit like you, and we think he do."

I thought so too, and I took him out for a walk next morning, and we talked immensely, understanding one another to perfection. And I took him down to the churchyard, and set him on a certain tombstone there, and he showed me from that elevation which stone was sacred to the memory of Philip Pirrip[1], late of this Parish, and Also Georgiana, Wife of the Above.

"Biddy," said I, when I talked with her after dinner, as her little girl lay

1 Philip Pirrip: here referring to Pip's father.

sleeping in her lap, "you must give Pip to me, one of these days; or lend him, at all events."

"No, no," said Biddy, gently. "You must marry."

"So Herbert and Clara say, but I don't think I shall, Biddy. I have so settled down in their home, that it's not at all likely. I am already quite an old bachelor."

Biddy looked down at her child, and put its little hand to her lips, and then put the good matronly[1] hand with which she had touched it, into mine. There was something in the action and in the light pressure of Biddy's wedding-ring, that had a very pretty eloquence in it.

"Dear Pip," said Biddy, "you are sure you don't fret for her[2]?"

"O no — I think not, Biddy."

"Tell me as an old, old friend. Have you quite forgotten her?

"My dear Biddy, I have forgotten nothing in my life that ever had a foremost place there, and little that ever had any place there. But that poor dream, as I once used to call it, has all gone by, Biddy, all gone by!"

Nevertheless, I knew while I said those words, that I secretly intended to revisit the site of the old house that evening, alone, for her sake. Yes even so. For Estella's sake.

I had heard of her as leading a most unhappy life, and as being separated from her husband, who had used her with great cruelty, and who had become quite renowned as a compound of pride, avarice, brutality, and meanness. And I had heard of the death of her husband, from an accident consequent on his ill — treatment of a horse. This release had befallen her some two years before; for anything I knew, she was married again.

The early dinner — hour at Joe's, left me abundance of time, without hurrying my talk with Biddy, to walk over to the old spot before dark. But, what with loitering on the way, to look at old objects and to think of old times, the day had quite declined when I came to the place.

There was no house now, no brewery, no building whatever left, but the wall of the old garden. The cleared space had been enclosed with a rough fence, and, looking over it, I saw that some of the old ivy had struck root anew, and was growing green on low quiet mounds[3] of ruin. A gate in the fence standing ajar, I pushed it open, and went in.

1 matronly: befitting or characteristic of a fully mature woman.
2 fret for her: worry unnecessarily or excessively. her: here referring to Estella.
3 mounds: a large pile of earth, stones etc. like a small hill.

A cold silvery mist had veiled the afternoon, and the moon was not yet up to scatter it. But, the stars were shining beyond the mist, and the moon was coming, and the evening was not dark. I could trace out where every part of the old house had been, and where the brewery had been, and where the gate, and where the casks. I had done so, and was looking along the desolate garden walk, when I beheld a solitary figure in it.

The figure showed itself aware of me, as I advanced. It had been moving towards me, but it stood still. As I drew nearer, I saw it to be the figure of a woman. As I drew nearer yet, it was about to turn away, when it stopped, and let me come up with it. Then, it faltered as if much surprised, and uttered my name, and I cried out:

"Estella!"

"I am greatly changed. I wonder you know me."

The freshness of her beauty was indeed gone, but its indescribable majesty and its indescribable charm remained. Those attractions in it, I had seen before; what I had never seen before, was the saddened softened light of the once proud eyes; what I had never felt before, was the friendly touch of the once insensible hand.

We sat down on a bench that was near, and I said, "After so many years, it is strange that we should thus meet again, Estella, here where our first meeting was! Do you often come back?"

"I have never been here since."

"Nor I."

The moon began to rise, and I thought of the placid look at the white ceiling, which had passed away. The moon began to rise, and I thought of the pressure on my hand when I had spoken the last words he had heard on earth.

Estella was the next to break the silence that ensued[1] between us.

"I have very often hoped and intended to come back, but have been prevented by many circumstances. Poor, poor old place!"

The silvery mist was touched with the first rays of the moonlight, and the same rays touched the tears that dropped from her eyes. Not knowing that I saw them, and setting herself to get the better of them, she said quietly:

"Were you wondering, as you walked along, how it came to be left in this condition?"

"Yes, Estella."

1 ensued: happen or occur afterwards or as a result.

"The ground belongs to me. It is the only possession I have not relinquished[1]. Everything else has gone from me, little by little, but I have kept this. It was the subject of the only determined resistance I made in all the wretched years."

"Is it to be built on?"

"At last it is. I came here to take leave of it before its change. And you," she said, in a voice of touching interest to a wanderer, "you live abroad still?"

"Still."

"And do well, I am sure?"

"I work pretty hard for a sufficient living, and therefore — Yes, I do well."

"I have often thought of you," said Estella.

"Have you?"

"Of late, very often. There was a long hard time when I kept far from me, the remembrance, of what I had thrown away when I was quite ignorant of its worth. But, since my duty has not been incompatible with the admission of that remembrance, I have given it a place in my heart."

"You have always held your place in my heart," I answered.

And we were silent again, until she spoke.

"I little thought," said Estella, "that I should take leave of you in taking leave of this spot. I am very glad to do so."

"Glad to part again, Estella? To me, parting is a painful thing. To me, the remembrance of our last parting has been ever mournful and painful."

"But you said to me," returned Estella, very earnestly, 'God bless you, God forgive you!' And if you could say that to me then, you will not hesitate to say that to me now — now, when suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but — I hope — into a better shape. Be as considerate and good to me as you were, and tell me we are friends."

"We are friends," said I, rising and bending over her, as she rose from the bench.

"And will continue friends apart," said Estella.

I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place; and, as the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge, so, the evening mists were rising now, and in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed to me, I saw no shadow of another parting from her.

1 relinquished: given up often unwillingly.

A Tale of Two Cities

The novel was originally published in weekly installments in *All the Year Round* from April 30 to November 29, 1859. Dickens's primary source was Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution*. Dickens saw similarities between the forces that led to the Revolution and the oppression and unrest occurring in England in his own time.

The novel covers a period between 1775 and 1793, up to the middle period of the French Revolution. The novel consists of three books — Book the First: Recalled to Life; Book the Second: The Golden Thread; and Book the Third: The Track of a Storm. The two cities referred to in the title are London and Paris. Throughout the novel, pairs of people, places, etc. are compared and contrasted.

The opening sentence, beginning with the line, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," and the ending lines, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." are among the most famous lines in English literature.

Introduction to Chapter 1

This first chapter presents the sweeping backdrop of forces and events that will shape the lives of the novel's characters. Dickens' pairings of contrasting concepts such as the "best" and "worst" of times, "light" and "darkness", and "hope" and "despair" reflect the mirror images of good and evil that will recur in characters and situations throughout the novel.

Chapter 1 The Period

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way — in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

There were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face, on the

A TALE
OF
TWO CITIES

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

The title page of *A Tale of Two Cities* with illustrations by Hablot Browne

throne of England;[1] there were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a fair face, on the throne of France.[2] In both countries it was clearer than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of loaves and fishes, that things in general were settled for ever.

It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Spiritual revelations were conceded to England at that favoured period, as at this. Mrs. Southcott[3] had recently attained her five-and-twentieth blessed birthday, of whom a prophetic private in the Life Guards had heralded the sublime appearance by announcing that arrangements were made for the swallowing up of London and Westminster. Even the Cock-lane ghost[4] had been laid only a round dozen of years, after rapping out its messages, as the spirits of this very year last past (supernaturally deficient in originality) rapped out theirs. Mere messages in the earthly order of events had lately come to the English Crown and People, from a congress of British subjects in America:[5] which, strange to relate, have proved more important to the human race than any communications yet received through any of the chickens of the Cock-lane brood.

1 a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face on the throne of England: King George III and Queen Charlotte Sophia. George III (George William Frederick, 1738-1820) was King of Great Britain and King of Ireland from 1760 until 1801, and thereafter United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland until his death. During George III's reign, Britain lost many of its colonies in North America, which became the United States. Also during his reign, the realms of Great Britain and Ireland were joined together to form the United Kingdom.

2 a king with a large jaw and a queen with a fair face on the throne of France: King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette. King Louis XVI (1754-1793) was King of France and Navarre from 1774 until 1791, and then King of France from 1791 to 1792. Suspended and arrested during the Insurrection of the 10th of August 1792, he was tried by the National Convention, found guilty of treason, and executed on 21 January 1793. His execution signaled the end of the absolutist monarchy in France and would eventually bring about the rise of Napoleon I.

3 Mrs. Southcott: Joanna Southcott (1750-1814), an English religious visionary.

4 Cock-lane ghost: a poltergeist phenomenon. Adjacent to London's Smithfield market and only a few minutes' walk from St. Paul's Cathedral, is a short alleyway known as Cock Lane. The tall buildings and narrowness of this road give it a dark, foreboding presence and help to retain a sense of its origins as a medieval red-light district. In the 18th century this district housed London's working poor. It was this environment that, in January 1762, gave rise to an extraordinary scandal that engulfed all London. People greatly debated its authenticity.

5 a congress of British subjects in America: In January 1775, the American Continental Congress presented a petition of its grievances to the British Parliament.

France, less favoured on the whole as to matters spiritual than her sister of the shield and trident, rolled with exceeding smoothness down hill, making paper money and spending it. Under the guidance of her Christian pastors, she entertained herself, besides, with such humane achievements as sentencing a youth to have his hands cut off, his tongue torn out with pincers, and his body burned alive, because he had not kneeled down in the rain to do honour to a dirty procession of monks which passed within his view, at a distance of some fifty or sixty yards. It is likely enough that, rooted in the woods of France and Norway, there were growing trees, when that sufferer was put to death, already marked by the Woodman, Fate, to come down and be sawn into boards, to make a certain movable framework[1] with a sack and a knife in it, terrible in history. It is likely enough that in the rough outhouses of some tillers of the heavy lands adjacent to Paris, there were sheltered from the weather that very day, rude carts, bespattered with rustic mire, snuffed about by pigs, and roosted in by poultry, which the Farmer, Death, had already set apart to be his tumbrils of the Revolution. But that Woodman and that Farmer, though they work unceasingly, work silently, and no one heard them as they went about with muffled tread: the rather, forasmuch as to entertain any suspicion that they were awake, was to be atheistical and traitorous.

In England, there was scarcely an amount of order and protection to justify much national boasting. Daring burglaries by armed men, and highway robberies, took place in the capital itself every night; families were publicly cautioned not to go out of town without removing their furniture to upholsterers' warehouses for security; the highwayman[2] in the dark was a City tradesman in the light, and, being recognised and challenged by his fellow-tradesman whom he stopped in his character of "the Captain", gallantly shot him through the head and rode away; the mall was waylaid by seven robbers, and the guard shot three dead, and then got shot dead himself by the other four, "in consequence of the failure of his ammunition": after which the mall was robbed in Peace; that magnificent potentate, the Lord Mayor of London, was made to stand and deliver[3] on Turnham Green, by one highwayman, who despoiled the illustrious creature insight of all his retinue; prisoners in London

1 a certain movable framework: the guillotine.
2 highwayman: a man, especially one on horseback, who robbed travellers on a highway.
3 stand and deliver: a highwayman's order to his victims to stand still and deliver their money and valuables.

gaols[1] fought battles with their turnkeys[2], and the majesty of the law fired blunderbusses[3] in among them, loaded with rounds of shot and ball; thieves snipped off diamond crosses from the necks of noble lords at Court drawing-rooms; musketeers went into St. Giles's, to search for contraband goods, and the mob fired on the musketeers, and the musketeers fired on the mob, and nobody thought any of these occurrences much out of the common way. In the midst of them, the hangman, ever busy and ever worse than useless, was in constant requisition; now, stringing up long rows of miscellaneous criminals; now, hanging a house-breaker on Saturday who had been taken on Tuesday; now, burning people in the hand at Newgate[4] by the dozen, and now burning pamphlets at the door of Westminster Hall[5]; to-day, taking the life of an atrocious murderer, and to-morrow of a wretched pilferer who had robbed a farmer's boy of sixpence.

All these things, and a thousand like them, came to pass in and close upon the dear old year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Environed by them, while the Woodman and the Farmer worked unheeded, those two of the large jaws, and those other two of the plain and the fair laces, trod with stir enough, and carried their divine rights with a high hand. Thus did the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five conduct their Greatnesses, and myriads of small creatures — the creatures of this chronicle among the rest — along the roads that lay before them.

Critical Points

Pip: self-losing and self-regaining

Great Expectations recounts the development of the character of the narrator, showing how money corrupts people's minds, causing people lost in integrity, and how people learn their lessons and regain themselves after adversity.

1 gaols: jails.
2 turnkey: a person in charge of the keys of a prison, warder, jailer.
3 blunderbusses: muskets with a large bore and a broad, flaring muzzle, accurate only at close range.
4 Newgate: a London prison notorious for its inhumane conditions.
5 Westminster Hall: located in London, was the chief law court of England until 1870.

When Pip falls in love with Estella, he begins to feel ashamed of his life and his position in the society because he believes that it will ruin his hopes of Estella loving him. When he is informed of the "great expectations", his ego grows tremendously, and he looks down upon his friends. When he finally learns that Abel Magwitch is his benefactor, his expectations start to fade, and his good nature begins to overcome the negative traits that he had developed. Pip has finally accepted responsibility for his life. He also looks at others in a new light.

Great Expectations: two different endings

Dickens originally devised that the Pip's love affair with Estella came to a sad ending. It had Estella remarried to a doctor, meeting Pip once on a London street but she has not changed at all and he, in turn, feels none of the old feelings for her. Later, Dickens took the advice of a novelist friend, Bulwer Lytton, and changed the ending to give Pip, Estella, and the readers a chance for a happy conclusion.

The first ending, though much more depressing, seems more true to the theme of the story. The second ending, however, is ambiguous and no one is certain if the "shadow of no parting" means they stay together or not.

The argument is that Pip must come to realise happiness through his own internal process and not through some external situation as position or wealth, or persons like Estella. According to this, there is some justice in Estella and Pip finally finding love in each other, since both of them seem to have realised what it means to be happy and therefore are ready for a healthy relationship with each other. Although Estella's transformation from ice queen to sensitive lady is not directly presented, she is a true victim of society's values, therefore, her suffering is worthy of sympathy.

Dickens as a great novelist: features and comments

Dickens' novels offer a most complete and realistic picture of the English society of his age. His sharp criticism of social evils and his genius for creating excellent stories have ranked him as one of the greatest writers in English literature.

Among many merits praised and admired, he created unforgettable characters. All types representing the whole strata of the British society are found in his novels. Some of these characters possess great vitality. Thackeray

drew a comparison between himself and Dickens: "I am played out. All I can do now is to bring out my old puppets... But, if he lives to be ninety, Dickens will still be creating new characters. In his art that man is marvelous."

Later critics tend to champion his mastery of prose, his endless invention of memorable characters and his powerful social sensibilities. Yet, he has also received criticism from writers such as George Henry Lewes, Henry James, and Virginia Woolf, who list sentimentality, implausible occurrence and grotesque characters, and his inability to portray women other than as innocents or grotesques as faults in his novels.

Questions

Great Expectations

1. What does the title, *Great Expectations*, mean? Has Pip ever had the great expectations?
2. *Great Expectations* is the story of Pip, his initial dreams and resulting disappointments that eventually lead to him becoming a genuinely good man. In this sense, it is said that the self-losing and self-regaining makes the process of Pip's character development, and helps to establish the central theme of the novel. What is your interpretation?
3. Does Estella's change at the end of the novel seem real? Is it true to the character and thematic development of the novel?

A Tale of Two Cities

1. Explain the first paragraph of the novel. What does Dickens mean by "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times"?
2. Discuss the resurrection theme in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Which characters are "recalled to life"? How?
3. *A Tale of Two Cities* can be regarded as a historical novel, a moral novel and a novel strongly concerned with themes of resurrection, redemption and patriotism, as well as of guilt, shame and love. What is your understanding of the themes of the novel?

Class Activities

Discuss the two endings of Great Expectations. One is that Pip and Estella are reunited in the garden, as we read now; the other is that they go on their separate ways after briefly speaking on the street, according to the original

design by the author. Which of the two endings do you prefer? Give your reasons. If neither, how would you end the novel?

QUOTATIONS

I never could have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence, without the determination to concentrate myself on one subject at a time... Concentration.

—Charles Dickens

The whole difference between construction and creation is this; that a thing constructed can only be loved after it is constructed; but a thing created is loved before it exists.

—Charles Dickens

Unit 31

The Brontë Sisters

The Brontë sisters *refer to the three daughters of the Brontë family: Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855), the authoress of* Jane Eyre *(1848), Emily Brontë (1818-1848), the authoress of* Wuthering Heights *(1847), and Anne Brontë (1820-1849), the authoress of* Agnes Grey *(1847). It is rare to find in world history three sisters in one family equally talented in writing, yet all suffering untimely death. The circumstances of the Brontës' lives, and their astonishing achievements are fascinating to readers.*

Life and Writing

The Brontë sisters were born to a clergyman's family at Haworth, a village on the Yorkshire moors. Their mother died of cancer, leaving five daughters and a son to the care of their aunt. In 1824 Charlotte and Emily were sent to join their elder sisters Maria and Elizabeth at the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge. The school made a horrifying impression which Charlotte believed to have hasted the death of her two elder sisters in 1825 and to have permanently impaired her own health. Based on this unhappy experience, Charlotte later gave the description of the infamous Lowood School in *Jane Eyre*.

Brontë sisters, by Patrick Branwell Brontë, 1834

The surviving children pursued their education at home, and began to write stories as a means to communicate their feelings and emotions. Charlotte and her only brother Branwell collaborated in the invention of the imaginery kingdom of Angria, Emily and Anne in the invention of Gondal. The practice eventually led Charlotte Emily, and Anne to their careers as novelists.

In 1845 Charlotte discovered the poems of Emily, and suggested that she, Anne, and Emily collaborate on a book of poems. The three sisters published under male pseudonyms: Charlotte wrote as Currer Bell, while Emily and Anne wrote as Ellis and Acton Bell, respectively. When the poetry volume received little public notice, the sisters decided to work on separate novels but retained the same pseudonyms. Charlotte's first novel, *The Professor*, never found a publisher in her lifetime, but Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Grey* were published in 1848.

Charlotte immediately began *Jane Eyre*, and it was published in 1847. The success of the novel aroused much speculation about its authorship. In 1848 Charlotte and Anne visited the publisher in London to establish their identities. On their return home they found their brother dying. He died in September 1848 at the age of 31. Emily caught cold at his funeral, and died in December the same year. Anne died of consumption on May 28, the next year.

In the years that followed, Charlotte became a respected member of London's literary set. But the deaths of siblings left her feeling dejected and emotionally isolated.

Through this tragic period Charlotte persevered with the composition of *Shirley*, which appeared in 1849. In 1850, she prepared and published a memorial edition of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, with a preface to the former a "Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell". Although her identity was well known in the literary world, she continued to publish as Currer Bell.

Charlotte Brontë, chalk drawing by George Richmond, 1850

In 1854 Charlotte married her father's curate. The marriage was sweet but short. During her pregnancy in 1855, she became ill and died on March 31 of the year.

Charlotte was generally praised for her depth of feeling and her courageous realism, and her works continue to hold high popularity and critical esteem.

After Charlotte's death, her friend Mrs. Gaskell wrote a classic biography of Charlotte, through which many English people learned of the ingenious female novelist and her sisters.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

Charlotte Brontë *was a British novelist and the eldest of the three Brontë sisters. She was best known for* Jane Eyre.

Jane Eyre

Plot Summary

Jane Eyre, a penniless orphan, has been left to the care of her aunt Mrs. Reed, whose harsh and unsympathetic treatment rouses her defiant spirit, and after a passionate outbreak, she was sent to Lowood Institution. There, she spent some miserable years, only with consolation from the kind superintendent Miss Tempel and a fellow orphan, Helen Burns, who dies of consumption in Jane's arms.

On Miss Temple's marriage she obtains a post as governess at Thornfield Hall. Mr. Rochester is fascinated by her sharp wit and independence, and they fall in love. The marriage ceremony is interrupted by Mrs. Rochester's brother from the West Indies. It is revealed that Rochester has had a mad wife Bertha Mason, who is confined to the upper regions of the Hall for years. Jane flees, despite Rochester's full confession and pleadings.

After a wandering on the moors, she is taken in and cared for by the Reverend St. John Rivers and his sisters Mary and Diana. It emerges that they are her cousins, and that Jane has inherited money from an uncle; the legacy is equally divided between the four. Under pressure from the earnest appeals and strong personality of the dedicated Rivers, she nearly consents to marry him and share his missionary vocation in India. At this moment, she hears a telepathic appeal from Rochester, and she wastes no time to return to Thornfield Hall, only to find the building burned, and Rochester blind and maimed from his attempt to save his wife from the flames. She marries him, and they live happily together at the Ferndean in the wood.

Introduction to Chapter 23

In Chapter 23, Jane encounters Rochester in the gardens. He invites her to walk with him. The two seat themselves on a bench at the foot of the chestnut tree. Jane confesses her love for Rochester, and he asks her to be his wife. Jane accepts his proposal. A storm breaks, and the newly engaged couple hurries indoors through the rain. Rochester helps Jane out of her wet coat, and he

seizes the opportunity to kiss her. Jane looks up to see Mrs. Fairfax watching, astonished. That night, a bolt of lightning splits the chestnut tree under which Rochester and Jane had been sitting that evening.

Chapter 23

A splendid Midsummer shone over England: skies so pure, suns so radiant as were then seen in long succession, seldom favour even singly, our wave-girt land[1]. It was as if a band of Italian days had come from the South, like a flock of glorious passenger birds, and lighted to rest them on the cliffs of Albion[2]. The hay was all got in; the fields round Thornfield were green and shorn; the roads white and baked; the trees were in their dark prime; hedge and wood, full — leaved and deeply tinted, contrasted well with the sunny hue of the cleared meadows between.

On Midsummer-eve[3], Adèle[4], weary with gathering wild strawberries in Hay Lane half the day, had gone to bed with the sun. I watched her drop asleep, and when I left her, I sought the garden.

It was now the sweetest hour of the twenty-four: — "Day its fervid fires had wasted,"[5] and dew fell cool on panting plain and scorched[6] summit. Where the sun had gone down in simple state — pure of the pomp of clouds — spread a solemn purple, burning with the light of red jewel and furnace flame at one point, on one hill-peak, and extending high and wide, soft and still softer, over half heaven. The east had its own charm or fine deep blue, and its own modest gem, a casino and solitary star: soon it would boast the moon; but she was yet beneath the horizon.

I walked a while on the pavement; but a subtle, well-known scent — that of a cigar — stole from some window; I saw the library casement open

1 our wave-girt land: land surrounded by the waves; here referring to England.
2 Albion: the ancient name of Great Britain.
3 Midsummer-eve: June 24 is celebrated as the feast of the nativity of John the Baptist.
4 Adèle: Adèle Varens, Jane's pupil at Thornfield and Rochester's adopted daughter.
5 "Day its fervid fires had wasted": the line comes from a poem "The Turkish Lady" by Thomas Campbell, in which the fifth and sixth lines go like this: "Day her sultry fires had wasted,/Calm and sweet the moonlight rose." Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), a Scottish poet, who is chiefly remembered for his sentimental poetry dealing specially with human affairs, and also as one of the initiators of a plan to found what became the University of London.
6 scorched: burnt.

a handbreadth; I knew I might be watched thence; so I went apart into the orchard. No nook in the grounds more sheltered and more Eden-like; it was full of trees, it bloomed with flowers: a very high wall shut it out from the court, on one side; on the other, a beech avenue screened it from the lawn. At the bottom was a sunk fence; its sole separation from lonely fields: a winding walk, bordered with laurels and terminating in a giant horse — chestnut, circled at the base by a seat, led down to the fence. Here one could wander unseen. While such honey-dew fell, such silence reigned, such gloaming gathered, I felt as if I could haunt such shade for ever; but in threading the flower and fruit parterres at the upper part of the enclosure, enticed there by the light the now rising moon cast on this more open quarter, my step is stayed — not by sound, not by sight, but once more by a warning fragrance.

Sweet — briar and southernwood, jasmine, pink, and rose have long been yielding their evening sacrifice of incense: this new scent is neither of shrub nor flower; it is — I know it well — it is Mr. Rochester' s cigar. I look round and I listen. I see trees laden with ripening fruit. I hear a nightingale warbling[1] in a wood half a mile off; no moving form is visible, no coming step audible; but that perfume increases: I must flee. I make for the wicket leading to the shrubbery, and I see Mr. Rochester entering. I step aside into the ivy recess; he will not stay long: he will soon return whence he came, and if I sit still he will never see me.

But no — eventide is as pleasant to him as to me, and this antique garden as attractive; and he strolls on, now lifting the gooseberry-tree branches to look at the fruit, large as plums, with which they are laden; now taking a ripe cherry from the wall; now stooping towards a knot of flowers, either to inhale their fragrance or to admire the dew-beads on their petals. A great moth goes humming by me; it alights on a plant at Mr. Rochester's foot: he sees it, and bends to examine it.

"Now, he has his back towards me," thought I, "and he is occupied too; perhaps, if I walk softly, I can slip away unnoticed."

I trod on an edging of turf that the crackle of the pebbly gravel might not betray me: he was standing among the beds at a yard or two distant from where I had to pass; the moth apparently engaged him[2]. "I shall get by very well," I meditated. As I crossed his shadow, thrown long over the garden by the moon,

1 warbling: singing pleasantly.
2 engaged him: attracted his attention.

not yet risen high, he said quietly, without turning —

"Jane, come and look at this fellow."

I had made no noise: he had not eyes behind — could his shadow feel? I started at first, and then I approached him.

"Look at his wings," said he, "he reminds me rather of a West Indian insect; one does not often see so large and gay a night — rover in England; there! he is flown."

The moth roamed away. I was sheepishly retreating also; but Mr. Rochester followed me, and when we reached the wicket, he said —

"Turn back: on so lovely a night it is a shame to sit in the house; and surely no one can wish to go to bed while sunset is thus at meeting with moonrise."

It is one of my faults, that though my tongue is sometimes prompt enough at an answer, there are times when it sadly fails me in framing an excuse; and always the lapse[1] occurs at some crisis, when a facile word or plausible pretext is specially wanted to get me out of painful embarrassment. I did not like to walk at this hour alone with Mr. Rochester in the shadowy orchard; but I could not find a reason to allege for leaving him. I followed with lagging step, and thoughts busily bent on discovering a means of extrication[2]; but he himself looked so composed and so grave also, I became ashamed of feeling any confusion: the evil — if evil existent or prospective there was — seemed to lie with me only; his mind was unconscious and quiet.

"Jane," he recommenced, as we entered the laurel walk, and slowly strayed down in the direction of the sunk fence and the horse — chestnut, "Thornfield is a pleasant place in summer, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"You must have become in some degree attached to the house, — you, who have an eye for natural beauties, and a good deal of the organ of Adhesiveness[3]?"

"I am attached to it, indeed."

"And though I don't comprehend how it is, I perceive you have acquired a degree of regard for that foolish little child Adele, too; and even for simple dame Fairfax[4]?"

1 lapse: an interval of time.
2 extrication: being free from a constraint or difficulty.
3 the organ of Adhesiveness: the ability to quickly attach to something or somebody.
4 dame Fairfax: Alice Fairfax, who is the housekeeper at Thornfield Hall.

"Yes, sir; in different ways, I have an affection for both."

"And would be sorry to part with them?"

"Yes."

"Pity!" he said, and sighed and paused. "It is always the way of events in this life," he continued presently: "no sooner have you got settled in a pleasant resting-place, than a voice calls out to you to rise and move on, for the hour of repose is expired."

"Must I move on, sir?" I asked. "Must I leave Thornfield?"

"I believe you must, Jane. I am sorry, Janet, but I believe indeed you must."

This was a blow: but I did not let it prostrate me.

"Well, sir, I shall be ready when the order to march comes."

"It is come now — I must give it to — night."

"Then you ARE going to be married, sir?"

"Ex-act-ly — pre-cise-ly: with your usual acuteness, you have hit the nail straight on the head."[1]

"Soon, sir?"

"Very soon, my — that is, Miss Eyre: and you'll remember, Jane, the first time I, or Rumour, plainly intimated to you that it was my intention to put my old bachelor's neck into the sacred noose, to enter into the holy estate of matrimony — to take Miss Ingram to my bosom, in short (she's an extensive armful: but that's not to the point — one can't have too much of such a very excellent thing as my beautiful Blanche): well, as I was saying — listen to me, Jane! You're not turning your head to look after more moths, are you? That was only a lady-clock, child, 'flying away home.' I wish to remind you that it was you who first said to me, with that discretion I respect in you — with that foresight, prudence, and humility which befit your responsible and dependent position — that in case I married Miss Ingram, both you and little Adele had better trot forthwith[2]. I pass over the sort of slur conveyed in this suggestion on the character of my beloved; indeed, when you are far away, Janet, I'll try to forget it: I shall notice only its wisdom; which is such that I have made it my law of action. Adele must go to school; and you, Miss Eyre, must get a new situation."

"Yes, sir, I will advertise immediately: and meantime, I suppose — I was going to say, I suppose I may stay here, till I find another shelter to betake

1 you have hit the nail straight on the head: you have spoken of this exactly to the point.
2 trot forthwith: walk away at once.

myself to:" but I stopped, feeling it would not do to risk a long sentence, for my voice was not quite under command.

"In about a month I hope to be a bridegroom," continued Mr. Rochester; "and in the interim, I shall myself look out for employment and an asylum for you."

"Thank you, sir; I am sorry to give — "

"Oh, no need to apologise! I consider that when a dependent does her duty as well as you have done yours, she has a sort of claim upon her employer for any little assistance he can conveniently render her; indeed I have already, through my future mother-in-law, heard of a place that I think will suit: it is to undertake the education of the five daughters of Mrs. Dionysius O'Gall of Bitternutt Lodge, Connaught, Ireland. You'll like Ireland, I think: they're such warm — hearted people there, they say."

"It is a long way off, sir."

"No matter — a girl of your sense will not object to the voyage or the distance."

"Not the voyage, but the distance: and then the sea is a barrier — "

"From what, Jane?"

"From England and from Thornfield: and — "

"Well?"

"From YOU, sir."

I said this almost involuntarily, and, with as little sanction of free will, my tears gushed out. I did not cry so as to be heard, however; I avoided sobbing. The thought of Mrs. O'Gall and Bitternutt Lodge struck cold to my heart; and colder the thought of all the brine and foam, destined, as it seemed, to rush between me and the master at whose side I now walked, and coldest the remembrance of the wider ocean-wealth, caste, custom intervened between me and what I naturally and inevitably loved.

"It is a long way," I again said.

"It is, to be sure; and when you get to Bitternutt Lodge, Connaught, Ireland, I shall never see you again, Jane: that's morally certain. I never go over to Ireland, not having myself much of a fancy for the country. We have been good friends, Jane; have we not?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when friends are on the eve of separation, they like to spend the little time that remains to them close to each other. Come! we'll talk over the voyage and the parting quietly half-an-hour or so, while the stars enter into their shining life up in heaven yonder: here is the chestnut tree: here is the bench at

its old roots. Come, we will sit there in peace to-night, though we should never more be destined to sit there together." He seated me and himself.

"It is a long way to Ireland, Janet, and I am sorry to send my little friend on such weary travels: but if I can't do better, how is it to be helped? Are you anything akin to me, do you think, Jane?"

I could risk no sort of answer by this time: my heart was still.

"Because," he said, "I sometimes have a queer feeling with regard to you — especially when you are near me, as now: it is as if I had a string somewhere under my left ribs, tightly and inextricably knotted to a similar string situated in the corresponding quarter of your little frame. And if that boisterous Channel, and two hundred miles or so of land come broad between us, I am afraid that cord of communion will be snapt; and then I've a nervous notion I should take to bleeding inwardly. As for you, — you'd forget me."

"That I never should, sir: you know — " impossible to proceed.

"Jane, do you hear that nightingale singing in the wood? — Listen!"

In listening, I sobbed convulsively; for I could repress what I endured no longer; I was obliged to yield, and I was shaken from head to foot with acute distress. When I did speak, it was only to express an impetuous wish that I had never been born, or never come to Thornfield.

"Because you are sorry to leave it?"

The vehemence[1] of emotion, stirred by grief and love within me, was claiming mastery, and struggling for full sway, and asserting a right to predominate, to overcome, to live, rise, and reign at last: yes, — and to speak.

"I grieve to leave Thornfield: I love Thornfield: — I love it, because I have lived in it a full and delightful life, — momentarily at least. I have not been trampled on[2]. I have not been petrified[3]. I have not been buried with inferior minds, and excluded from every glimpse of communion with what is bright and energetic and high. I have talked, face to face, with what I reverence, with what I delight in, — with an original, a vigorous, an expanded mind. I have known you, Mr. Rochester; and it strikes me with terror and anguish to feel I absolutely must be torn from you for ever. I see the necessity of departure; and it is like looking on the necessity of death."

"Where do you see the necessity?" he asked suddenly.

"Where? You, sir, have placed it before me."

1 vehemence: intensity or forcefulness of expression.
2 trampled on: treated cruelly or harshly.
3 petrified: frightened as to be unable to move; stunned or paralysed with terror.

"In what shape?"

"In the shape of Miss Ingram; a noble and beautiful woman, — your bride."

"My bride! What bride? I have no bride!"

"But you will have."

"Yes; — I will! — I will!" He set his teeth.

"Then I must go: — you have said it yourself."

"No: you must stay! I swear it — and the oath shall be kept."

"I tell you I must go!" I retorted, roused to something like passion. "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton? — a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! — I have as much soul as you, — and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh; — it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal, — as we are!"

"As we are!" repeated Mr. Rochester — "so," he added, enclosing me in his arms. Gathering me to his breast, pressing his lips on my lips: "so, Jane!"

"Yes, so, sir," I rejoined: "and yet not so; for you are a married man — or as good as a married man, and wed to one inferior to you — to one with whom you have no sympathy — whom I do not believe you truly love; for I have seen and heard you sneer at her. I would scorn such a union: therefore I am better than you — let me go!"

"Where, Jane? To Ireland?"

"Yes — to Ireland. I have spoken my mind, and can go anywhere now."

"Jane, be still; don't struggle so, like a wild frantic bird that is rending its own plumage in its desperation."

"I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you."

Another effort set me at liberty, and I stood erect before him.

"And your will shall decide your destiny," he said, "I offer you my hand, my heart, and a share of all my possessions."

"You play a farce, which I merely laugh at."

"I ask you to pass through life at my side — to be my second self, and best earthly companion."

"For that fate you have already made your choice, and must abide by it."

"Jane, be still a few moments: you are over — excited: I will be still too."

A waft of wind came sweeping down the laurel — walk, and trembled through the boughs of the chestnut: it wandered away — away — to an indefinite distance — it died. The nightingale's song was then the only voice of the hour: in listening to it, I again wept. Mr. Rochester sat quiet, looking at me gently and seriously. Some time passed before he spoke; he at last said —

"Come to my side, Jane, and let us explain and understand one another."

"I will never again come to your side: I am torn away now, and cannot return."

"But, Jane, I summon you as my wife: it is you only I intend to marry."

I was silent: I thought he mocked me.

"Come, Jane — come hither."

"Your bride stands between us."

He rose, and with a stride reached me.

"My bride is here," he said, again drawing me to him, "because my equal is here, and my likeness. Jane, will you marry me?"

Still I did not answer, and still I writhed myself from his grasp: for I was still incredulous.

"Do you doubt me, Jane?"

"Entirely."

"You have no faith in me?"

"Not a whit."

"Am I a liar in your eyes?" he asked passionately. "Little sceptic[1], you shall be convinced. What love have I for Miss Ingram? None: and that you know. What love has she for me? None: as I have taken pains to prove: I caused a rumour to reach her that my fortune was not a third of what was supposed, and after that I presented myself to see the result; it was coldness both from her and her mother. I would not — I could not — marry Miss Ingram. You — you strange, you almost unearthly thing! — I love as my own flesh. You — poor and obscure, and small and plain as you are — I entreat to accept me as a husband."

"What, me!" I ejaculated[2], beginning in his earnestness — and especially in his incivility — to credit his sincerity: "me who have not a friend in the world but you — if you are my friend: not a shilling but what you have given me?"

"You, Jane, I must have you for my own — entirely my own. Will you be

1 sceptic: one who habitually doubts accepted beliefs.
2 ejaculated: said quickly and suddenly.

mine? Say yes, quickly."

"Mr. Rochester, let me look at your face: turn to the moonlight."

"Why?"

"Because I want to read your countenance — turn!"

"There! you will find it scarcely more legible than a crumpled, scratched page. Read on: only make haste, for I suffer."

His face was very much agitated and very much flushed, and there were strong workings in the features, and strange gleams in the eyes.

"Oh, Jane, you torture me!" he exclaimed. "With that searching and yet faithful and generous look, you torture me!"

"How can I do that? If you are true, and your offer real, my only feelings to you must be gratitude and devotion — they cannot torture."

"Gratitude!" he ejaculated; and added wildly — "Jane accept me quickly. Say, Edward — give me my name — Edward — I will marry you."

"Are you in earnest? Do you truly love me? Do you sincerely wish me to be your wife?"

"I do; and if an oath is necessary to satisfy you, I swear it."

"Then, sir, I will marry you."

"Edward — my little wife!"

"Dear Edward!"

"Come to me — come to me entirely now," said he; and added, in his deepest tone, speaking in my ear as his cheek was laid on mine, "Make my happiness — I will make yours."

"God pardon me!" he subjoined ere long; "and man meddle not with me: I have her, and will hold her."

"There is no one to meddle, sir. I have no kindred[1] to interfere."

"No — that is the best of it," he said. And if I had loved him less I should have thought his accent and look of exultation savage; but, sitting by him, roused from the nightmare of parting — called to the paradise of union — I thought only of the bliss given me to drink in so abundant a flow. Again and again he said, "Are you happy, Jane?" And again and again I answered, "Yes." After which he murmured, "It will atone — it will atone. Have I not found her friendless, and cold, and comfortless? Will I not guard, and cherish, and solace her? Is there not love in my heart, and constancy in my

1 kindred: relationship by blood.

resolves? It will expiate at God's tribunal. I know my Maker sanctions[1] what I do. For the world's judgment — I wash my hands thereof. For man's opinion — I defy it."

But what had befallen the night? The moon was not yet set, and we were all in shadow: I could scarcely see my master's face, near as I was. And what ailed the chestnut tree? it writhed and groaned; while wind roared in the laurel walk, and came sweeping over us.

"We must go in," said Mr. Rochester: "the weather changes. I could have sat with thee till morning, Jane."

"And so," thought I, "could I with you." I should have said so, perhaps, but a livid, vivid spark leapt out of a cloud at which I was looking, and there was a crack, a crash, and a close rattling peal; and I thought only of hiding my dazzled eyes against Mr. Rochester's shoulder.

The rain rushed down. He hurried me up the walk, through the grounds, and into the house; but we were quite wet before we could pass the threshold. He was taking off my shawl in the hall, and shaking the water out of my loosened hair, when Mrs. Fairfax emerged from her room. I did not observe her at first, nor did Mr. Rochester. The lamp was lit. The clock was on the stroke of twelve.

"Hasten to take off your wet things," said he; "and before you go, good-night — good-night, my darling!"

He kissed me repeatedly. When I looked up, on leaving his arms, there stood the widow, pale, grave, and amazed. I only smiled at her, and ran upstairs. "Explanation will do for another time," thought I. Still, when I reached my chamber, I felt a pang at the idea she should even temporarily misconstrue what she had seen. But joy soon effaced every other feeling; and loud as the wind blew, near and deep as the thunder crashed, fierce and frequent as the lightning gleamed, cataract-like[2] as the rain fell during a storm of two hours' duration, I experienced no fear and little awe. Mr. Rochester came thrice to my door in the course of it, to ask if I was safe and tranquil: and that was comfort, that was strength for anything.

Before I left my bed in the morning, little Adele came running in to tell me that the great horse-chestnut at the bottom of the orchard had been struck by lightning in the night, and half of it split away.

1 sanction: give authority or permission to.
2 cataract-like: like a large waterfall, or violent rush of water over a precipice.

Emily Brontë (1818–1848)

Emily Brontë *was a British novelist and poet, best known for her one novel* Wuthering Heights, *an acknowledged classic of English literature.*

Wuthering Heights

Wuthering Heights, written between October 1845 and June 1846, and published in 1847, is Emily's only novel. The novel was first regarded as excessively morbid and violent, but it was gradually reassessed. Now, it is generally recognised as a blend of highly original Gothic, romantic, and realistic fiction.

Plot Summary

The narrator of the novel is Lockwood, a newcomer to the locale of Wuthering Heights, who narrates the entire novel as an entry in his diary. The story that Lockwood records is told by Nelly Dean, the servant, who had witnessed the destinies of the owners of the Heights, and of the Grange. Lockwood writes most of the narrative in her voice. Nelly frequently comments on what the other characters think and feel, and on what their motivations are, but these comments are all based on her own interpretations of the other characters.

The story happens between two families. The Earnshaws include Mr. Earnshaw, his son Hindley, and his daughter Catherine. They live in their old house, Wuthering Heights, up in the folds of the moor. The Linton family, richer and more genteel, includes Mr. Linton, his wife, his son Edgar, and his daughter Isabella, and they live down in a neighbouring valley at Thrushcross Grange.

Heathcliff, found of unknown parentage in the streets of Liverpool, was brought up by Mr. Earnshaw, who reared the boy as one of his own children. After the death of Mr. Earnshaw, while Hindley bullies and humiliates him, Heathclciff finds complement of his passionate and ferocious nature in the daughter Catherine. When Heathcliff, overhears Catherine tell Nelly that she cannot marry him because it would degrade her, he runs away.

He returns three years later, when Catherine has become Edgar's wife. Heathcliff is rich and is determined to take revenge on Hindley and the Lintons.

Heathcliff's destructive force is unleashed. He marries Edgar's sister Isabella and cruelly ill-treats her. Isabella gives birth to their son, Linton Heathcliff. Between Heathcliff and Edgar, Catherine becomes distracted. After giving birth to Edgar's daughter, she dies.

Heathcliff turns Hindley into a drunkard and gambler, and wins all his possessions so that Hindley's son Hareton becomes a pauper in his house. Heathcliff destroys Isabella, drives her away, and takes possession of young Linton. He contrives to marry Edgar's daughter, the young Cathy, to his own peevish ailing son, Linton Heathcliff, and inherits Thrushcross. Young Linton, always sickly, dies after the marriage. Cathy tries her best to educate the ignorant Hareton, and an affection between Cathy and Hareton springs up. Heathcliff then loses interest in the whole project and dies. After his death people see the ghosts of Heathcliff and Catherine roamed on the moor. Hareton and Cathy are engaged, promising an end to the cycle of revenge.

Introduction to Chapter IX

The chapter reveals the dilemma of Catherine, who is torn between her love for Heathcliff and her desire to be a gentlewoman, and forms the turning-point of the plot.

It is at this point that Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights, after he overheard Catherine say that it would "degrade" her to marry him.

Haworth moor, a supposed location of Wuthering Heights

Shibden valley, a supposed location of Thrushcross Grange

Chapter IX

He[1] entered, vociferating oaths dreadful to hear; and caught me[2] in the act of stowing his son away in the kitchen cupboard. Hareton[3] was impressed with a wholesome terror of encountering either his wild beast's fondness or his madman's rage; for in one he ran a chance of being squeezed and kissed to death, and in the other of being flung into the fire, or dashed against the wall; and the poor thing remained perfectly quiet wherever I chose to put him.

"There, I've found it out at last!" cried Hindley, pulling me back by the skin of my neck, like a dog. "By heaven and hell, you've sworn between you to murder that child! I know how it is, now, that he is always out of my way. But, with the help of Satan, I shall make you swallow the carving-knife, Nelly! You needn't laugh; for I've just crammed Kenneth, head — downmost, in the Black-horse marsh; and two is the same as one — and I want to kill some of you: I shall have no rest till I do!"

"But I don't like the carving-knife, Mr. Hindley," I answered; "it has been cutting red herrings[4]. I'd rather be shot, if you please."

"You'd rather be damned!" he said; "and so you shall. No law in England can hinder a man from keeping his house decent, and mine's abominable! Open your mouth." He held the knife in his hand, and pushed its point between my teeth: but, for my part, I was never much afraid of his vagaries[5]. I spat out, and affirmed it tasted detestably — I would not take it on any account.

1 He: Hindley Earnshaw, Catherine's brother, and Mr. Earnshaw's son. Hindley resents it when Heathcliff is brought to live at Wuthering Heights. After his father dies and he inherits the estate, Hindley begins to abuse the young Heathcliff, terminating his education and forcing him to work in the fields. When Hindley's wife Frances dies shortly after giving birth to their son Hareton, he lapses into alcoholism and dissipation.

2 me: Ellen Dean, also known as Nelly Dean, who serves as the chief narrator of *Wuthering Heights*. A sensible, intelligent, and compassionate woman, she grew up essentially alongside Hindley and Catherine Earnshaw and is deeply involved in the story she tells.

3 Hareton: the son of Hindley and Frances Earnshaw, Catherine's nephew. After Hindley's death, Heathcliff assumes custody of Hareton, and raises him as an uneducated field worker, just as Hindley had done to Heathcliff himself. Illiterate and quick-tempered, Hareton is easily humiliated, but shows a good heart and a deep desire to improve himself. At the end of the novel, he marries Cathy.

4 herring: a silvery fish which is most abundant in coastal waters and is an important food fish.

5 vagaries: unexpected and inexplicable changes of behaviours.

"Oh!" said he, releasing me, "I see that hideous little villain is not Hareton: I beg your pardon, Nell. If it be, he deserves flaying alive for not running to welcome me, and for screaming as if I were a goblin. Unnatural cub, come hither! I'll teach thee to impose on a good-hearted, deluded father.[1] Now, don't you think the lad would be handsomer cropped? It makes a dog fiercer, and I love something fierce — get me a scissors — something fierce and trim! Besides, it's infernal affectation — devilish conceit it is, to cherish our ears — we're asses enough without them. Hush, child, hush! Well then, it is my darling! wisht[2], dry thy eyes — there's a joy; kiss me. What! it won't? Kiss me, Hareton! Damn thee, kiss me! By God, as if I would rear such a monster! As sure as I'm living, I'll break the brat's neck."

Poor Hareton was squalling and kicking in his father's arms with all his might, and redoubled his yells when he carried him upstairs and lifted him over the banister. I cried out that he would frighten the child into fits, and ran to rescue him.

As I reached them, Hindley leant forward on the rails to listen to a noise below; almost forgetting what he had in his hands.

"Who is that?" he asked, hearing some one approaching the stairs' foot.

I leant forward also, for the purpose of signing to Heathcliff, whose step I recognised, not to come further; and, at the instant when my eye quitted Hareton, he gave a sudden spring, delivered himself from the careless grasp that held him, and fell.

There was scarcely time to experience a thrill of horror before we saw that the little wretch was safe. Heathcliff arrived underneath just at the critical moment; by a natural impulse he arrested his descent,[3] and setting him on his feet, looked up to discover the author of the accident.

A miser who has parted with a lucky lottery ticket for five shillings, and finds next day he has lost in the bargain five thousand pounds, could not show a blanker countenance than he did on beholding the figure of Mr. Earnshaw above. It expressed, plainer than words could do, the intensest anguish at having made himself the instrument of thwarting his own revenge. Had it been dark, I daresay he would have tried to remedy the mistake by smashing Hareton's skull on the steps; but, we witnessed his salvation; and I was

1 I'll teach thee to impose on a good-hearted, deluded father: I'll teach you a lesson as you are cheating your kind-hearted, deceived father.
2 wisht: be quiet.
3 he arrested his descent: he caught hold of Hareton who fell down.

presently below with my precious charge pressed to my heart.

Hindley descended more leisurely, sobered and abashed.

"It is your fault, Ellen," he said; "you should have kept him out of sight: you should have taken him from me! Is he injured anywhere?"

"Injured!" I cried angrily; "if he is not killed, he'll be an idiot! Oh! I wonder his mother does not rise from her grave to see how you use him. You're worse than a heathen — treating your own flesh and blood in that manner!"

He attempted to touch the child, who, on finding himself with me, sobbed off his terror directly. At the first finger his father laid on him, however, he shrieked again louder than before, and struggled as if he would go into convulsions.

"You shall not meddle with him!" I continued. "He hates you — they all hate you — that's the truth! A happy family you have; and a pretty state you've come to!"

"I shall come to a prettier, yet, Nelly," laughed the misguided man, recovering his hardness. "At present, convey yourself and him away. And hark you, Heathcliff! clear you too quite from my reach and hearing. I wouldn't murder you to-night; unless, perhaps, I set the house on fire: but that's as my fancy goes."

While saying this he took a pint bottle of brandy from the dresser, and poured some into a tumbler.

"Nay, don't!" I entreated. "Mr. Hindley, do take warning. Have mercy on this unfortunate boy, if you care nothing for yourself!"

"Any one will do better for him than I shall," he answered.

"Have mercy on your own soul!" I said, endeavouring to snatch the glass from his hand.

"Not I! On the contrary, I shall have great pleasure in sending it to perdition to punish its Maker,"[1] exclaimed the blasphemer. "Here's to its hearty damnation!"

He drank the spirits and impatiently bade us go; terminating his command with a sequel of horrid imprecations too bad to repeat or remember.

"It's a pity he cannot kill himself with drink," observed Heathcliff, muttering an echo of curses back when the door was shut. "He's doing his very utmost; but his constitution defies him. Mr. Kenneth says he would wager his

1 in sending it to perdition to punish its Maker: in sending my soul to Hell, to punish God.

mare that he'll outlive any man on this side Gimmerton[1], and go to the grave a hoary sinner; unless some happy chance out of the common course befall him."

I went into the kitchen, and sat down to lull my little lamb to sleep. Heathcliff, as I thought, walked through to the barn. It turned out afterwards that he only got as far as the other side the settle, when he flung himself on a bench by the wall, removed from the fire and remained silent.

I was rocking Hareton on my knee, and humming a song that began, —

"It was far in the night, and the bairnies grat,[2]
The mither beneath the mools heard that,"[3]

when Miss Cathy, who had listened to the hubbub from her room, put her head in, and whispered —

"Are you alone, Nelly?"

"Yes, Miss," I replied.

She entered and approached the hearth. I, supposing she was going to say something, looked up. The expression of her face seemed disturbed and anxious. Her lips were half asunder[4], as if she meant to speak, and she drew a breath; but it escaped in a sigh instead of a sentence.

I resumed my song; not having forgotten her recent behaviour.

"Where's Heathcliff?" she said, interrupting me.

"About his work in the stable," was my answer.

He did not contradict me; perhaps he had fallen into a doze.

There followed another long pause, during which I perceived a drop or two trickle from Catherine's cheek to the flags.

Is she sorry for her shameful conduct? I asked myself. That will be a novelty: but she may come to the point as she will — I sha'n't help her! No, she felt small trouble regarding any subject, save her own concerns.

"Oh, dear!" she cried at last. "I'm very unhappy!"

"A pity," observed I. "You're hard to please; so many friends and so few cares, and can't make yourself content!"

"Nelly, will you keep a secret for me?" she pursued, kneeling down by me,

1 Gimmerton: a town not far from Wuthering Heights.
2 the bairnies grat: the little ones wept.
3 The mither beneath the mools heard that: the mother in the grave heard that. mools: earth of a grave.
4 asunder: apart.

and lifting her winsome eyes to my face with that sort of look which turns off bad temper, even when one has all the right in the world to indulge it[1].

"Is it worth keeping?" I inquired, less sulkily.

"Yes, and it worries me, and I must let it out! I want to know what I should do. To-day, Edgar Linton has asked me to marry him, and I've given him an answer. Now, before I tell you whether it was a consent or denial, you tell me which it ought to have been."

"Really, Miss Catherine, how can I know?" I replied. "To be sure, considering the exhibition you performed in his presence this afternoon, I might say it would be wise to refuse him: since he asked you after that, he must either be hopelessly stupid or a venturesome fool."

"If you talk so, I won't tell you any more," she returned, peevishly rising to her feet. "I accepted him, Nelly. Be quick, and say whether I was wrong!"

"You accepted him! Then what good is it discussing the matter? You have pledged your word, and cannot retract."

"But say whether I should have done so — do!" she exclaimed in an irritated tone; chafing her hands together, and frowning.

"There are many things to be considered before that question can be answered properly," I said, sententiously. "First and foremost, do you love Mr. Edgar?"

"Who can help it? Of course I do," she answered.

Then I put her through the following catechism: for a girl of twenty-two it was not injudicious.

"Why do you love him, Miss Cathy?"

"Nonsense, I do — that's sufficient."

"By no means; you must say why?"

"Well, because he is handsome, and pleasant to be with."

"Bad!" was my commentary.

"And because he is young and cheerful."

"Bad, still."

"And because he loves me."

"Indifferent, coming there."

"And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband."

"Worst of all. And now, say how you love him?"

1 indulge it: give way to bad temper.

"As everybody loves — You're silly, Nelly."

"Not at all — Answer."

"I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says. I love all his looks, and all his actions, and him entirely and altogether. There now!"

"And why?"

"Nay — you are making a jest of it: it is exceedingly ill-natured! It' s no jest to me!" said the young lady, scowling, and turning her face to the fire.

"I'm very far from jesting, Miss Catherine," I replied. "You love Mr. Edgar because he is handsome, and young, and cheerful, and rich, and loves you. The last, however, goes for nothing: you would love him without that, probably; and with it you wouldn't, unless he possessed the four former attractions."

"No, to be sure not: I should only pity him — hate him, perhaps, if he were ugly, and a clown."

"But there are several other handsome, rich young men in the world: handsomer, possibly, and richer than he is. What should hinder you from loving them?"

"If there be any, they are out of my way: I've seen none like Edgar."

"You may see some; and he won't always be handsome, and young, and may not always be rich."

"He is now; and I have only to do with the present. I wish you would speak rationally."

"Well, that settles it — if you have only to do with the present, marry Mr. Linton."

"I don't want your permission for that — I *shall* marry him: and yet you have not told me whether I'm right."

"Perfectly right; if people be right to marry only for the present. And now, let us hear what you are unhappy about. Your brother will be pleased; the old lady and gentleman will not object, I think; you will escape from a disorderly, comfortless home into a wealthy, respectable one; and you love Edgar, and Edgar loves you. All seems smooth and easy: where is the obstacle?"

"*Here*! and *here*!" replied Catherine, striking one hand on her forehead, and the other on her breast. "In whichever place the soul lives. In my soul and in my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong!"

"That's very strange! I cannot make it out."

"It's my secret. But if you will not mock at me, I'll explain it: I can't do it distinctly; but I'll give you a feeling of how I feel."

She seated herself by me again: her countenance grew sadder and graver,

and her clasped hands trembled.

"Nelly, do you never dream queer dreams?" she said, suddenly, after some minutes' reflection.

"Yes, now and then," I answered.

"And so do I. I've dreamt in my life dreams that have stayed with me ever after, and changed my ideas: they've gone through and through me, like wine through water, and altered the colour of my mind. And this is one: I'm going to tell it — but take care not to smile at any part of it."

"Oh! don't, Miss Catherine!" I cried. "We're dismal enough without conjuring up ghosts and visions to perplex us. Come, come, be merry and like yourself! Look at little Hareton! He's dreaming nothing dreary. How sweetly he smiles in his sleep!"

"Yes; and how sweetly his father curses in his solitude! You remember him, I daresay, when he was just such another as that chubby thing[1]: nearly as young and innocent. However, Nelly, I shall oblige you to listen: it's not long; and I've no power to be merry tonight."

"I won't hear it, I won't hear it!" I repeated, hastily.

I was superstitious about dreams then, and am still; and Catherine had an unusual gloom in her aspect, that made me dread something from which I might shape a prophecy, and foresee a fearful catastrophe. She was vexed, but she did not proceed. Apparently taking up another subject, she recommenced in a short time.

"If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable."

"Because you are not fit to go there," I answered. "All sinners would be miserable in heaven."

"But it is not for that. I dreamt once that I was there."

"I tell you I won't hearken to your dreams, Miss Catherine! I'll go to bed," I interrupted again.

She laughed, and held me down; for I made a motion to leave my chair.

"This is nothing," cried she: "I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy. That will do to explain my secret, as well as the other. I've no more business to marry

1 chubby thing: round and plump child, here referring to Hareton.

Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there[1] had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it.[2] It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him: and that, not because he' s handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire."

Ere this speech ended I became sensible of Heathcliff's presence. Having noticed a slight movement, I turned my head, and saw him rise from the bench, and steal out noiselessly. He had listened till he heard Catherine say it would degrade her to marry him, and then he stayed to hear no further.

My companion, sitting on the ground, was prevented by the back of the settle from remarking his presence or departure; but I started, and bade her hush!

"Why?" she asked, gazing nervously round.

"Joseph is here," I answered, catching opportunely the roll of his cartwheels up the road; "and Heathcliff will come in with him. I'm not sure whether he were not at the door this moment."

"Oh, he couldn't overhear me at the door!" said she. "Give me Hareton, while you get the supper, and when it is ready ask me to sup with you. I want to cheat my uncomfortable conscience, and be convinced that Heathcliff has no notion of these things. He has not, has he? He does not know what being in love is!"

"I see no reason that he should not know, as well as you," I returned; "and if you are his choice, he'll be the most unfortunate creature that ever was born! As soon as you become Mrs. Linton, he loses friend, and love, and all! Have you considered how you'll bear the separation, and how he'll bear to be quite deserted in the world? Because, Miss Catherine — "

"He quite deserted! we separated!" she exclaimed, with an accent of indignation. "Who is to separate us, pray? They'll meet the fate of Milo![3] Not as long as I live, Ellen — for no mortal creature. Every Linton on the face of the earth might melt into nothing before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff.

1 the wicked man in there: her brother Hindley.
2 I shouldn't have thought of it: "it" refers to the idea of marrying Edgar.
3 Milo: Milon of Croton (late sixth century BC), the most famous of Greek athletes in antiquity. He was born in the Greek colony of Croton in Southern Italy. A legend says that he offered to cut down a large tree for a woodsman, who was grateful for the help and promised to return with food later in the day. However, the woodsman never returned, and while Milo was working the tree collapsed on his hand, trapping him. Milo was then eaten by wolves.

Oh, that's not what I intend — that's not what I mean! I shouldn't be Mrs. Linton were such a price demanded! He'll be as much to me as he has been all his lifetime. Edgar must shake off his antipathy, and tolerate him, at least. He will, when he learns my true feelings towards him. Nelly, I see now you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars? whereas, if I marry Linton I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power."

"With your husband's money, Miss Catherine?" I asked. "You'll find him not so pliable as you calculate upon: and, though I'm hardly a judge, I think that's the worst motive you've given yet for being the wife of young Linton."

"It is not," retorted she; "it is the best! The others were the satisfaction of my whims: and for Edgar's sake, too, to satisfy him. This is for the sake of one who comprehends in his person my feelings to Edgar and myself. I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation, if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning: my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and HE remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger: I should not seem a part of it. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I *am* always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. So don't talk of our separation again: it is impracticable; and — "

She paused, and hid her face in the folds of my gown; but I jerked it forcibly away. I was out of patience with her folly!

"If I can make any sense of your nonsense, Miss," I said, "it only goes to convince me that you are ignorant of the duties you undertake in marrying; or else that you are a wicked, unprincipled girl. But trouble me with no more secrets: I'll not promise to keep them."

"You'll keep that?" she asked, eagerly.

"No, I'll not promise," I repeated.

She was about to insist, when the entrance of Joseph finished our conversation; and Catherine removed her seat to a corner, and nursed Hareton, while I made the supper.

After it was cooked, my fellow servant and I began to quarrel who should

carry some to Mr. Hindley; and we didn't settle it till all was nearly cold. Then we came to the agreement that we would let him ask, if he wanted any; for we feared particularly to go into his presence when he had been some time alone.

"And how isn't that nowt comed in frough' th' field, be this time?[1] What is he about? girt idle seeght!"[2] demanded the old man, looking round for Heathcliff.

"I'll call him," I replied. "He's in the barn, I've no doubt."

I went and called, but got no answer. On returning, I whispered to Catherine that he had heard a good part of what she said, I was sure; and told how I saw him quit the kitchen just as she complained of her brother's conduct regarding him.

She jumped up in a fine fright, flung Hareton on to the settle, and ran to seek for her friend herself; not taking leisure to consider why she was so flurried, or how her talk would have affected him.

She was absent such a while that Joseph proposed we should wait no longer. He cunningly conjectured they were staying away in order to avoid hearing his protracted blessing. They were "ill eneugh for ony fahl manners,"[3] he affirmed. And on their behalf he added that night a special prayer to the usual quarter-of-an-hour's supplication before meat, and would have tacked another to the end of the grace[4], had not his young mistress broken in upon him with a hurried command that he must run down the road, and, wherever Heathcliff had rambled, find and make him re-enter directly!

"I want to speak to him, and I *must*, before I go upstairs," she said. "And the gate is open: he is somewhere out of hearing; for he would not reply, though I shouted at the top of the fold as loud as I could."

Joseph objected at first; she was too much in earnest, however, to suffer contradiction; and at last he placed his hat on his head, and walked grumbling forth.

Meantime, Catherine paced up and down the floor, exclaiming —

"I wonder where he is — I wonder where he can be! What did I say, Nelly? I've forgotten. Was he vexed at my bad humour this afternoon? Dear! Tell me what I've said to grieve him? I do wish he'd come. I do wish he would!"

1 And how isn't that nowt comed in fro' th' field, be this time: and how isn't that nothing came in from the field by this time?
2 girt idle seeght: great idle sight; referring to Heathcliff.
3 ill eneugh for ony fahl manners: ill enough for only foul manners.
4 the grace: the prayer before a meal.

"What a noise for nothing!" I cried, though rather uneasy myself. "What a trifle scares you! It's surely no great cause of alarm that Heathcliff should take a moonlight saunter on the moors, or even lie too sulky to speak to us in the hay-loft. I'll engage he's lurking there. See if I don't ferret him out!"

I departed to renew my search; its result was disappointment, and Joseph's quest ended in the same.

"Yon lad gets war und war[1]!" observed he on re-entering. "He's left th' gate at t' full swing, and Miss's pony has trodden dahn two rigs o' corn, and plottered through, raight o'er into t' meadow![2] Hahsomdiver, t' maister 'ull play t' devil to-morn,[3] and he'll do weel. He's patience itsseln wi' sich careless, offald craters — patience itsseln he is! Bud he'll not be soa allus — yah's see, all on ye! Yah mun'n' t drive him out of his heead for nowt!"[4]

"Have you found Heathcliff, you ass?" interrupted Catherine. "Have you been looking for him, as I ordered?"

"I sud more likker look for th' horse,"[5] he replied. "It 'ud be to more sense. Bud I can look for norther horse nur man of a neeght loike this — as black as t' chimbley! und Heathcliff's noan t' chap to coom at *my* whistle — happen he'll be less hard o' hearing wi' *ye*!"[6]

It was a very dark evening for summer: the clouds appeared inclined to thunder, and I said we had better all sit down; the approaching rain would be certain to bring him home without further trouble.

However, Catherine would not be persuaded into tranquillity. She kept wandering to and fro, from the gate to the door, in a state of agitation which permitted no repose; and at length took up a permanent situation on one side of the wall, near the road: where, heedless of my expostulations and the growling thunder, and the great drops that began to plash around her, she remained,

1 gets war und war: becomes worse and worse.
2 Miss's pony has trodden dahn two rigs o' corn, ...into t' meadow: Miss's pony has trodden the two ridges of corn, and scrambled through right over into the meadow.
3 Hahsomdiver, t' maister 'ull play t' devil to-morn: howsoever, the master will play the devil tomorrow morning.
4 He's patience itsseln wi' sich careless, ...his heead for nowt: he is patience itself with such careless, worthless creatures—patience itself he is! But he will not be so always—you will see, all of you! You must not drive him out of his head for nothing!
5 I sud more likker look for th' horse: I should more likely look for the horse.
6 It 'ud be to more sense. ... happen he'll be less hard o' hearing wi' *ye*: it would be the more sensible thing. But I can look for neither horse, nor man of a night like this—as black as the chimney. And Heathcliff is none the chap to come at my whistle—happen he'll be less hard of hearing with you.

calling at intervals, and then listening, and then crying outright. She beat Hareton, or any child, at a good passionate fit of crying.

About midnight, while we still sat up, the storm came rattling over the Heights in full fury. There was a violent wind, as well as thunder, and either one or the other split a tree off at the corner of the building: a huge bough fell across the roof, and knocked down a portion of the east chimney-stack, sending a clatter of stones and soot into the kitchen-fire.

We thought a bolt had fallen in the middle of us; and Joseph swung on to his knees, beseeching the Lord to remember the patriarchs Noah and Lot[1], and, as in former times, spare the righteous, though he smote the ungodly. I felt some sentiment that it must be a judgment on us also. The Jonah[2], in my mind, was Mr. Earnshaw; and I shook the handle of his den that I might ascertain if he were yet living. He replied audibly enough, in a fashion which made my companion vociferate[3], more clamorously than before, that a wide distinction might be drawn between saints like himself and sinners like his master. But the uproar passed away in twenty minutes, leaving us all unharmed; excepting Cathy, who got thoroughly drenched for her obstinacy in refusing to take shelter, and standing bonnetless and shawlless to catch as much water as she could with her hair and clothes.

She came in and lay down on the settle, all soaked as she was, turning her face to the back, and putting her hands before it.

1 the patriarchs Noah and Lot: originally a patriarch was a man who exercised autocratic authority as a pater familias over an extended family. The system of such rule of families by senior males is called patriarchy. This is a Greek word, a composition of "pater", meaning father, and "archon", meaning leader, chief, ruler, king, etc. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are referred to as the three patriarchs of the people of Israel, and the period in which they lived is called the Patriarchal Age. Noah or Noach was the tenth and last of the antediluvian Patriarchs, best known for the Deluge which came in his time. His story is contained in the Hebrew Bible (or, as it is called, the Torah)'s book of Genesis, chapters 5-9. The Deluge and Noah's Ark are the best-known element of the story of Noah. Lot was the nephew of the patriarch, Abraham or Abram. He was the son of Abraham's brother Haran.

2 Jonah: a prophet in the Jewish Bible (Old Testament) who was swallowed by a great fish. God orders Jonah to prophesy to the city of Nineveh. Jonah does not want to, and tries to avoid God's command by sailing to Tarshish. A huge storm arises. The sailors throw Jonah overboard, and the sea is calm. Jonah is miraculously saved by being swallowed by a large fish. In Chapter Two, while in the great fish, Jonah prays to God and asks for forgiveness and thanks God for being so faithful, and, as a result, God commands the fish to vomit Jonah out.

3 vociferate: utter in a very loud voice.

"Well, Miss!" I exclaimed, touching her shoulder; "you are not bent on getting your death, are you? Do you know what o'clock it is? Half-past twelve. Come, come to bed! there's no use waiting any longer on that foolish boy: he'll be gone to Gimmerton, and he'll stay there now. He guesses we shouldn't wait for him till this late hour: at least, he guesses that only Mr. Hindley would be up; and he'd rather avoid having the door opened by the master."

"Nay, nay, he's noan at Gimmerton," said Joseph. "I's niver wonder but he's at t' bothom of a bog-hoile.[1] This visitation worn't for nowt, and I wod hev' ye to look out, Miss — yah muh be t' next. Thank Hivin[2] for all! All warks togither for gooid to them as is chozzen, and piked out fro' th' rubbidge! Yah knaw whet t' Scripture ses — "[3]

And he began quoting several texts, referring us to chapters and verses where we might find them.

I, having vainly begged the willful girl to rise and remove her wet things, left him preaching and her shivering, and betook myself to bed with little Hareton, who slept as fast as if everyone had been sleeping round him.

I heard Joseph read on a while afterwards; then I distinguished his slow step on the ladder, and then I dropped asleep.

Coming down somewhat later than usual, I saw, by the sunbeams piercing the chinks of the shutters, Miss Catherine still seated near the fireplace. The house-door was ajar, too; light entered from its unclosed windows; Hindley had come out, and stood on the kitchen hearth, haggard and drowsy.

"What ails you, Cathy?" he was saying when I entered: "you look as dismal as a drowned whelp. Why are you so damp and pale, child?"

"I've been wet," she answered reluctantly, "and I'm cold, that's all."

"Oh, she is naughty!" I cried, perceiving the master to be tolerably sober. "She got steeped in the shower of yesterday evening, and there she has sat the night through, and I couldn't prevail on her to stir."

Mr. Earnshaw stared at us in surprise. "The night through," he repeated. "What kept her up? Not fear of the thunder, surely? That was over hours since."

Neither of us wished to mention Heathcliff's absence, as long as we could conceal it; so I replied, I didn't know how she took it into her head to sit up;

1 at t' bothom of a bog-hoile: at the bottom of a bog-hole.
2 Hivin: Heaven.
3 All warks togither for gooid to them as is chozzen, ...whet t' Scripture ses: all works together for good to them as is chosen and picked out from the rubbish! You know what the Scripture says.

and she said nothing.

The morning was fresh and cool; I threw back the lattice, and presently the room filled with sweet scents from the garden; but Catherine called peevishly to me —

"Ellen, shut the window. I'm starving!" And her teeth chattered as she shrank closer to the almost extinguished embers.

"She's ill," said Hindley, taking her wrist; "I suppose that's the reason she would not go to bed. Damn it! I don't want to be troubled with more sickness here. What took you into the rain?"

"Running after t' lads, as usuald!" croaked Joseph, catching an opportunity from our hesitation to thrust in his evil tongue.

"If I war yah, maister, I'd just slam t' boards i' their faces all on 'em, gentle and simple! Never a day ut yah're off, but yon cat o' Linton comes sneaking hither; and Miss Nelly, shoo's a fine lass! shoo sits watching for ye i' t' kitchen; and as yah're in at one door, he's out at t'other; and, then, wer grand lady goes a courting of her side! It's bonny behaviour, lurking amang t' fields, after twelve o' t' night, wi' that fahl, flaysome divil of a gipsy, Heathcliff! They think *I'm* blind; but I'm noan: nowt ut t' soart! I seed young Linton boath coming and going, and *I seed yah*" (directing his discourse to me), "yah gooid fur nowt, slattenly witch! nip up and bolt into th' house, t' minute yah heard t' maister's horse fit clatter up t' road."[1]

"Silence, eavesdropper!" cried Catherine; "none of your insolence before me! Edgar Linton came yesterday by chance, Hindley; and it was I who told him to be off: because I knew you would not like to have met him as you were."

"You lie, Cathy, no doubt," answered her brother, "and you are a confounded simpleton! But never mind Linton at present: tell me, were you not with Heathcliff last night? Speak the truth, now. You need not be afraid of harming him: though I hate him as much as ever, he did me a good turn a

1 If I war yah, maister, ...t' minute yah heard t' maister's horse fit clatter up t' road: if I were you, master, I'd just slam the doors in their faces all of them, gentle or simple! Never a day if you are off, but your cat of Linton comes sneaking hither; and Miss Nelly she's a fine lass! She sits watching for you in the kitchen and as you are in at one door, she's out at the other; and then our grand lady goes a courting of her side! It's bonny behaviour, lurking among the fields after twelve at night with that foul, flaysome devil of a Gypsy, Heathcliff! They think I'm blind, but I'm none, not of the sort! I saw young Linton, both coming and going, and I saw you... you good for nothing, slovenly witch! Nip up and bolt into the house, the minute you heard the master's horse's feet clatter up the road.

short time since that will make my conscience tender of breaking his neck. To prevent it, I shall send him about his business this very morning; and after he's gone, I'd advise you all to look sharp: I shall only have the more humour[1] for you."

"I never saw Heathcliff last night," answered Catherine, beginning to sob bitterly: "and if you do turn him out of doors, I'll go with him. But, perhaps, you'll never have an opportunity: perhaps, he's gone." Here she burst into uncontrollable grief, and the remainder of her words were inarticulate.

Hindley lavished on her a torrent of scornful abuse, and bade her get to her room immediately, or she shouldn't cry for nothing! I obliged her to obey; and I shall never forget what a scene she acted when we reached her chamber: it terrified me. I thought she was going mad, and I begged Joseph to run for the doctor.

It proved the commencement of delirium: Mr. Kenneth, as soon as he saw her, pronounced her dangerously ill; she had a fever.

He bled her, and he told me to let her live on whey and water-gruel, and take care she did not throw herself downstairs or out of the window; and then he left: for he had enough to do in the parish, where two or three miles was the ordinary distance between cottage and cottage.

Though I cannot say I made a gentle nurse, and Joseph and the master were no better, and though our patient was as wearisome and headstrong as a patient could be, she weathered it through.

Old Mrs. Linton paid us several visits, to be sure, and set things to rights, and scolded and ordered us all; and when Catherine was convalescent, she insisted on conveying her to Thrushcross Grange: for which deliverance we were very grateful. But the poor dame had reason to repent of her kindness: she and her husband both took the fever, and died within a few days of each other.

Our young lady returned to us saucier and more passionate, and haughtier than ever. Heathcliff had never been heard of since the evening of the thunder-storm; and, one day, I had the misfortune, when she had provoked me exceedingly, to lay the blame of his disappearance on her: where indeed it belonged, as she well knew. From that period, for several months, she ceased to hold any communication with me, save in the relation of a mere servant. Joseph fell under a ban also: he would speak his mind, and lecture her all the same as if she were a little girl; and she esteemed herself a woman, and our mistress, and thought that her recent illness gave her a claim to be treated with

1 humour: temper.

consideration. Then the doctor had said that she would not bear crossing much; she ought to have her own way; and it was nothing less than murder in her eyes for any one to presume to stand up and contradict her.

From Mr. Earnshaw and his companions she kept aloof; and tutored by Kenneth, and serious threats of a fit that often attended her rages, her brother allowed her whatever she pleased to demand, and generally avoided aggravating her fiery temper. He was rather too indulgent in humouring her caprices; not from affection, but from pride: he wished earnestly to see her bring honour to the family by an alliance with the Lintons, and as long as she let him alone she might trample on us like slaves, for aught he cared!

Edgar Linton, as multitudes have been before and will be after him, was infatuated: and believed himself the happiest man alive on the day he led her to Gimmerton Chapel, three years subsequent to his father's death.

Much against my inclination, I was persuaded to leave Wuthering Heights and accompany her here, Little Hareton was nearly five years old, and I had just begun to teach him his letters. We made a sad parting; but Catherine's tears were more powerful than ours. When I refused to go, and when she found her entreaties did not move me, she went lamenting to her husband and brother. The former offered me munificent wages; the latter ordered me to pack up: he wanted no women in the house, he said, now that there was no mistress; and as to Hareton, the curate should take him in hand, by-and-by. And so I had but one choice left: to do as I was ordered. I told the master he got rid of all decent people only to run to ruin a little faster; I kissed Hareton, said good-by; and since then he has been a stranger: and it's very queer to think it, but I've no doubt he has completely forgotten all about Ellen Dean, and that he was ever more than all the world to her and she to him!

At this point of the housekeeper's story she chanced to glance towards the time-piece over the chimney; and was in amazement on seeing the minute-hand measure half-past one. She would not hear of staying a second longer: in truth, I[1] felt rather disposed to defer the sequel of her narrative myself. And now that she is vanished to her rest, and I have meditated for another hour or two, I shall summon courage to go also, in spite of aching laziness of head and limbs.

1 I: referring to Lockwood, the narrator. His narration forms a frame around Nelly's; he serves as an intermediary between Nelly and the reader. A somewhat vain and presumptuous gentleman, he deals very clumsily with the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. As a narrator, his vanity and unfamiliarity with the story occasionally lead him to misunderstand events.

Critical Points

Jane Eyre: an interpretation of social class

Jane Eyre is critical of Victorian strict social hierarchy in England. As a governess, Jane is a figure of ambiguous class standing and, consequently, a source of extreme tension for the characters around her. Jane's manners, sophistication and education are those of an aristocrat, because Victorian governesses, who tutored children in etiquette as well as academics, were expected to possess the "culture" of the aristocracy. Yet, as paid employees, they were more or less treated as servants; thus, Jane remains penniless and powerless while at Thornfield.

Jane's understanding of the double standard crystallises when she becomes aware of her feelings for Rochester; she is his intellectual, but not his social, equal. Jane is hesitant to marry Rochester because she senses that she would feel indebted to him for his "condescending" to marry her. Ultimately, Jane is only able to marry Rochester as his equal because she has almost magically come into her own inheritance from her uncle.

Jane herself speaks out against class prejudice at certain moments in the book. For example, in Chapter 23 she chastises Rochester: "Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! — I have as much soul as you — and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you."

Besides, the interpretation of *Jane Eyre*, as a novel, can be focused on its autobiographical elements, the Gothic elements, significance of social criticism, and the form of a Bildungsroman, that is, a novel that tells the story of Jane's growth from childhood to adulthood.

Wuthering Heights: multiple interpretations

Wuthering Heights proves Emily a genius in rendering captivating description and superb passion, and it can be interpreted in many ways.

First of all, the novel can be discussed under the label of Gothic novels. The genre suits well the theme of the novel, which has always been associated with the abnormal and the absurd. The setting is often in a remote or an alien soil. *Wuthering Heights* bears a similar strange Gothic quality, and provides an effective environment in which the dark side of human nature is put under

careful examination. Under a special environment, human love is a source of tragic disaster.

Doubles, that is, to arrange its elements — characters, places, and themes — into pairs, is an important tactic the author used to organise the novel. Catherine and Heathcliff are closely matched in many ways, and see themselves as identical. Catherine's character is divided into two warring sides: the side that wants Edgar and the side that wants Heathcliff. The two houses, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, represent opposing worlds and values. The novel has not one but two distinctly different narrators, Nelly and Mr. Lockwood.

The conflict between nature and culture is another tactic the novelist employs in organising *Wuthering Heights*. Nature is represented by the Earnshaw family, and by Catherine and Heathcliff in particular. These characters are governed by their passions, not by reflection or ideals of civility. Correspondingly, the house where they live — Wuthering Heights — comes to symbolise a similar wildness. On the other hand, Thrushcross Grange and the Linton family represent culture, refinement, convention, and cultivation.

The conflict of social classes is also profoundly explored. Like the protagonist in *Jane Eyre*, Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* is a figure of ambiguous class standing. Considerations of class status often crucially inform the characters' motivations in *Wuthering Heights*. Catherine's decision to marry Edgar so that she will be "the greatest woman of the neighborhood" is a most obvious example.

Questions

1. In what ways might *Jane Eyre* be considered a feminist novel? What points does the novel make about the treatment and position of women in Victorian society? With particular attention to the treatment of marriage in the novel, is there any way in which it might be considered anti-feminist?
2. Does the book criticise or reinforce the existing Victorian social prejudices? Consider the treatment of Jane as a governess, and also of the other servants in the book, along with Jane's attitude toward her impoverished students at Morton.
3. Compare and contrast some of the characters who serve as foils throughout *Jane Eyre*: Blanche to Jane, St. John to Rochester, and, perhaps, Bertha to Jane. Also think about the points of comparison

between the Reed and Rivers families. How do these contrasts aid the development of the novel themes?

4. Discuss the novel's narrative structure. Are the novel's narrators trustworthy? Why or why not? With particular reference to Nelly's story, consider what might be gained from reading between the lines of the narration. What roles do the personalities of the narrators play in the way that the story is told?
5. Discuss revenge in *Wuthering Heights*. In what ways is it connected to love?
6. Think about the influence of the physical landscape in the novel. What role do the moors play in the development of the story, and in the presentation of the characters? What do the moors come to symbolise in the novel?

Class Activities

1. Share your reading experience of Jane Eyre and discuss with your classmates. List the qualities you admire in Jane Eyre.
2. Role Play Discussion

   Make a conversation with your classmates, role playing as Catherine and her best friends. Suppose you were a close friend of Catherine, and you were giving your advice when Catherine was telling you her decision of marrying Linton. Explain how much you agree or disagree with her, analysing her situation and psychology, and reasoning your persuasion.
3. Writing Practice

   After the discussion, imitate the mood of Catherine, and write a letter to Heathcliff, explaining to him your dilemma, intention and choice to marry Linton.

Cheerfulness, it would appear, is a matter which depends fully as much on the state of things within, as on the state of things without and around us.

—Charlotte Brontë

It is foolish to wish for beauty. Sensible people never either desire it for themselves or care about it in others. If the mind be but well cultivated, and the heart well disposed, no one ever cares for the exterior.

—Anne Brontë

I have dreamed in my life, dreams that have stayed with me ever after, and changed my ideas; they have gone through and through me, like wine through water, and altered the color of my mind.

—Emily Brontë

I am now quite cured of seeking pleasure in society, be it country or town. A sensible man ought to find sufficient company in himself.

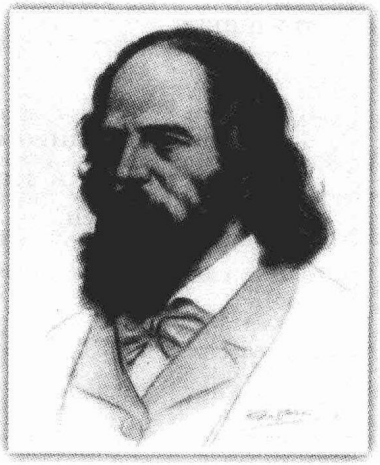
—Emily Brontë

Unit 32

Lord Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

Lord Alfred Tennyson *was appointed Poet Laureate after William Wordsworth, one of the most popular poets in his lifetime, and affirmed as the greatest poet of Victorian England.*

Life and Writing


Alfred Tennyson

Alfred Tennyson was born in Somersby, Lincolnshire, the fourth son in a family of 12 children. His father, a clergyman and a heavy drunkard, was perpetually short of money; but he was a man of considerable learning, and was able to serve as a tutor for his sons in classical and modern languages to prepare them for entering the university. Tennyson and two of his elder brothers were writing poetry in their teens. Before leaving for Cambridge, Alfred had published a volume in collaboration with his brother Charles, *Poems by Two Brothers*, in 1827.

Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1828, where he joined the secret society, "Apostles", a group of gifted undergraduates. The poet was painfully shy, and the most important friendship he found at Cambridge was with Arthur Hallam, a leader of the group. In 1831, Tennyson's father died, forcing him to leave Cambridge before taking his degree. He returned home to study and practise the craft of poetry and shared responsibility for his widowed mother and the large family. Hallam came to stay with him during the summer and became engaged to Tennyson's sister. In 1833, Tennyson published

his second book of poetry, but recieved heavy criticism. In the same year, Hallam died. It seemed an overwhelming calamity to Tennyson. To this early friendship, he wrote the long elegy *In Memoriam* and many other poems.

In 1842, while living modestly in London, Tennyson published two volumes of poems. They met with immediate success. In 1850, Tennyson reached the pinnacle of his career. In the year, he was appointed Poet Laureate in succession to William Wordsworth; he produced his masterpiece, *In Memoriam of A. H. H.*, dedicated to Arthur Hallam; he married Emily Sellwood, whom he had known since childhood, but the marriage was long postponed because of poverty. They had two sons, one of which was named after his friend Hallam.

In 1855, he published his experimental monologue *Maud*. In 1859, he published four books of his *Idylls of the King*. The earnings from his poetry enabled him to purchase a house in the country. In 1884, he accepted a Peerage. He was the first English writer raised to the Peerage. A passionate man with some peculiarities of nature, he was never particularly comfortable as a Peer, and it is widely held that he took the Peerage in order to secure a future for his son Hallam. In 1889, he wrote "Crossing the Bar", which is traditionally the last poem in his anthologies. In 1892, he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Major Works

In Memoriam

In Memoriam is a long elegy written over a period of 17 years, embodying the poet's reflections on man's relation to God and to nature. The death of Hallam, the religious uncertainties he had experienced, together with his own extensive study of writings by geologist, astronomers, and biologists, led him to be preoccupied with problems of his day, and confront many of the religious issues that bewildered his generation and later generations.

Idylls of the King

Idylls of the King is a series of narrative poems based entirely on King Arthur and the Arthurian tales. The work was dedicated to Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's hushand. As a large-scale epic, it is not simply a hymn to progress, but a record of the cycle of change from a society that has emerged from a wasteland into civilisation but may revert to a wasteland once more.

Break, Break, Break

The poem is written in memory of the poet's best friend, Arthur Hallam, whose death has a life long influence on the poet.

In the poem, the contrast of the poet's sadness with the carefree, innocent joys of children is vividly expressed. Sorrow strikes him as the breaks strike against the shore. Everything goes on as usual but his dearest friend exists no more. The beauty of the poem can be found in the association of sound and images, even in the deliberate choice of single word as "O", which is very much like a mouth wide open to cry for the death of his friend.

The poem consists of four quatrains, with combined iambic and anapestic feet. The rhyme scheme is *abcb*.

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would[1] that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for[2] the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven[3] under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand[4],
And the sound of a voice that is still![5]

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day[6] that is dead
Will never come back to me.

1 I would: I wish.
2 O well for: O, it would be well for.
3 haven: harbour.
4 a vanished hand: the hand of his friend who has vanished.
5 a voice that is still: the voice of his friend that can no longer be heard.
6 the tender grace of a day: the loving kindness of the day when I was enjoying your company.

Ulysses

"Ulysses" was written in 1833 but not published until 1842. It is narrated by an aged Ulysses[1], the Latin form of Odysseus, who has become dissatisfied with his life as king of Ithaca. He feels restless and yearns to get back out into the world. He declares his intent to leave the throne to his son Telemachus and gather up all of his old sailors for one final voyage. In the poem, Tennyson questions what becomes of the hero after the quest, and creates a new image of the hero who intends to die contending, rather than in peace.

The poem is written in blank verse. Its strongly-accented iambic pentameter uses simple, strong words, as befits a king on rocky Ithaca, but the many lines give a flow to the monologue that accords with the restlessness of the man of action. Many readers have accepted the last lines of the poem as inspirational.

It little profits[2] that an idle king,
By this still hearth[3], among these barren crags[4],
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole[5]
Unequal laws unto a savage race[6],
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees.[7] All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts[8] the rainy Hyades[9]
Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name;

1 Ulysses had spent years fighting the Trojans (as described in *Iliad*) and trying to return home, which is the subject of *Odyssey*. Tennyson's conception of Ulysses is based more on Dante's depiction of him in the *Divine Comedy* (Canto XXVI of the *Inferno*) than on the character presented by Homer.
2 It little profits: it profits little; it is of little use.
3 still hearth: calm family.
4 these barren crags: his kingdom of the unproductive rocky island of Ithaca.
5 mete and dole: measure and deal out.
6 a savage race: his people of Ithaca
7 I will drink/Life to the lees: I will experience life until my last breath. "Life" here is compared to a cup of wine. lees: dregs.
8 scudding drifts: showers of rain driven quickly be the wind.
9 the rainy Hyades: the Hyades is an open star cluster located in the constellation Taurus, the rising of which is thought to bring storm. The Hyades, at 151 light years from the Earth, forms the nearest star cluster. 毕宿星团

For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known — cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honoured of them all;[1]
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains[2] of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough[3]
Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished[4], not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little,[5] and of one to me
Little remains;[6] but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence[7], something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,[8]
And this gray spirit[9] yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre[10] and the isle —
Well — loved of me, discerning[11] to fulfill

1 Myself not least, but honoured of them all: I am not the least important, but honoured by them all.
2 the ringing plains: plains ringing with war cry.
3 wherethrough: through which.
4 unburnished: not to be polished by rubbing.
5 Life piled on life/Were all too little: even if I should live more than one life, I would still not be satisfied.
6 and of one to me/Little remains: and little of the life of mine remains.
7 that eternal silence: death.
8 vile it were/For some three suns to store and hoard myself: it would be vile to store and hoard myself for about three years. vile: thoroughly unpleasant.
9 this gray spirit: I myself as an old man.
10 the scepter: a staff carried by rulers on ceremonial occasions as a symbol of sovereignty; the imperial authority symbolised by a scepter.
11 discerning: quick to understand.

This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me —
That ever with a frolic[1] welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads,[2] — you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men[3] that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep[4]
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows;[5] for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars,[6] until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles[7],

1 frolic: light-hearted recreational activity for diversion or amusement.
2 Free hearts, free foreheads: referring to his companions who will sail with him.
3 Not unbecoming men: not unsuitable to men.
4 the deep: the sea.
5 in order smite/The sounding furrows: in order to beat the roaring waves vigorously.
6 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths/Of all the western stars: to sail beyond the place where all the western stars take their baths.
7 the Happy Isles: the Islands of the Blest are the abodes of just men after their death.

And see the great Achilles[1], whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides;[2] and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are[3];
One equal temper of heroic hearts,[4]
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Crossing the Bar

Although this is not the last poem written by Tennyson, "Crossing the Bar" appears, at his request, as the final poem in all collections of his work.

Tennyson expresses his fearlessness toward death, his faith in God and an afterlife in the poem. "Bar" usually refers to a bank of stones under the water in a river or along a shore, at the entrance to a harbor. Tennyson uses the title "Crossing the bar" with a special meaning of leaving this world and entering the afterlife world.

Sunset and evening star,[5]
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar[6],
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that[7] which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

1 Achilles: in Greek mythology, Achilles was a hero of the Trojan War, the central character and greatest warrior of Homer's *Iliad*. He is known for being the most "handsome" of the heroes assembled at Troy, as well as the fleetest.
2 Though much is taken, much abides: thought much is taken from us, much remains.
3 that which we are, we are: we are still what we were.
4 One equal temper of heroic hearts: our hearts are tempered by the same heroic spirit.
5 Sunset and evening star: images of the end of life. "Twilight" and "evening bell" in the following lines convey the same meaning.
6 moaning of the bar: mournful sound of the ocean beating on a sand bar at the mouth of a harbour.
7 that: the soul.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne[1] of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot[2] face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

Questions

Break, Break, Break

1. How does the speaker contrast himself with the fisherman's boy and the sailor lad?
2. Why do the pleasant sights make the poet sad?

Ulysses

1. What is Ulysses's view of his family, his people, and his kingship?
2. Analyse the reasons why he cannot be satisfied with his current situation and always wants to set out to travel?

Crossing the Bar

1. What does the poet hope to see when he has crossed the bar, according to Line 15?
2. What does the poet mean by "Crossing the Bar"? Why is the poem so significant in the poet's eyes?
3. What can you infer about Tennyson's attitude toward death?

QUOTATIONS

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me,
than in half the creeds.

—Lord Alfred Tennyson

1 bourne: boundary.
2 my Pilot: God.

Unit 33

The Brownings

Robert Browning (1812–1889)

Robert Browning *was an English poet and playwright whose mastery of the dramatic verse, especially dramatic monologue*[1]*, made him one of the foremost Victorian poets.*

Life and Writing

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell in southeast London. His father was a clerk in the Bank of London, and a learned man with an extensive library of 6,000 volumes. His mother was a kindly, religious-minded woman, interested in music. He received contrasting influences from his reading of Shelley, Byron, and Keats, and from his mother's strong Nonconformist piety. He wrote a volume of lyric poems at the age of 12, but destroyed them. He entered the University of London

Robert Browning, by Gordi-giani

1 A dramatic monologue is a type of lyric poem, developed during the Victorian period, in which a character in fiction or in history delivers a speech explaining his or her feelings, actions, or motives. The monologue is usually directed toward a silent audience, with the speaker's words influenced by a critical situation. Robert Browning is usually credited with perfecting the form, and "My Last Duchess" is the most famous of his monologues. Another example is the Modernist poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T. S. Eliot.

in 1828, but dropped out in his second term. He travelled a little to Russia and Italy. He pursued his education mainly at home, and was tutored in foreign languages, music, boxing, and horsemanship. From this unusual education he acquired a store of knowledge he drew for the background of his poems. His first published poem appeared anonymously in 1833 and attracted little notice. He met Dickens, and Tennyson, and turned to a playwriting in 1837.

Writing dialogue for actors led him to explore another form more congenial to his genius, the dramatic monologue, a form which enabled him through imaginary speakers to avoid explicit autobiography. His first collection of such monologues, *Dramatic Lyrics*, appeared in 1842, which was as poorly received as his plays had been.

Browning met Elizabeth Barrett in 1845. She was six years older than he was, a semi-invalid, jealously guarded by her possessively tyrannical father. But love swept aside all obstacles. After their elopement to Italy, the former was soon enjoying good health and a full life. The husband likewise seemed to thrive during the years of the marriage. He published the masterpiece of his middle period, *Men and Women* in 1855, reflecting his enjoyment of Italy. The happy marriage lasted for 15 years, until Elizabeth died in 1861.

Browning returned to London with his son. He continued to write, and formed a wide circle of acquaintances in London society, and was awarded an honorary degree by Oxford University. *Dramatis Personae* (1864) is a volume containing some of his finest monologues. In 1868 he published his greatest single poem, *The Ring and the Book*. He died in Venice in December 12, 1889, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

My Last Duchess

"My Last Duchess" is frequently anthologised as an outstanding example of the dramatic monologue. It first appeared in 1842 in Browning's *Dramatic Lyrics*.

Set during the Italian Renaissance, the poem is written in heroic couplets. The Duke of Ferrara is the speaker of the poem, and tells us he is entertaining an emissary who has come to negotiate the Duke's marriage to the daughter of another powerful family. As he shows the visitor through his palace, he stops before a portrait of the late Duchess, who was apparently a young and lovely girl. As his monolosue continues, the reader realizes that the Duke in fact caused the Duchess's early death.

Ferrara:
That's my last Duchess[1] painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's[2] hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design[3], for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,[4]
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,[5]
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)[6]
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst[7],
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus.[8] Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called[9] that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,"[10] or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint

1 It is believed that the Duke is most likely based upon Alfonso II, who married a daughter of the Medici family, 14-year-old Lucrezia. The Duke's remarks regarding his gift of a "nine-hundred-years-old name" clearly indicate that he considered her beneath him socially. She came, however, with a sizeable dowry. They married in 1558, and three years later, she was dead at age 17. There was a strong suspicion of poisoning. The Duke then went to seek the hand of Barbara, the eighth daughter of Ferdinand I, Holy Roman Emperor and Anna of Bohemia and Hungary, and the niece of the Count of Tyrol.
2 Frà Pandolf: Brother Pandolf, an imaginary painter.
3 by design: on purpose.
4 for never read/Strangers like you that pictured countenance: for strangers like you never looked at the face in the picture.
5 The depth and passion of its earnest glance: the deep feelings showed on her face as she glanced in earnest.
6 since none puts by/The curtain I have drawn for you, but I: since none but I have the right to draw the curtain for you.
7 durst: dare.
8 not the first/Are you to turn and ask thus: you are not the first to turn to me and ask the question.
9 called: caused.
10 "Her mantle laps/Over my lady's wrist too much: her cloak covers up too much of her wrist.

Half-flush that dies along her throat":[1] such stuff
Was courtesy,[2] she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.[3]
Sir, 'twas all one![4] My favour at her breast,[5]
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious[6] fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but thanked
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift.[7] Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling?[8] Even had you skill
In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will
Quite clear to such an one[9], and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" [10] — and if she let
Herself be lessoned[11] so, nor plainly set

1 the faint/Half-flush that dies along her throat: the light reddish blush that gradually disappears along her throat.
2 such stuff/Was courtesy: Such foolish words were regarded as acts of politeness and respect.
3 her looks went everywhere: she loved to see everything.
4 'twas all one: All the following things meant the same to her.
5 My favour at her breast: the gift I gave her which she wore at her breast.
6 officious: over zealous.
7 as if she ranked/My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name/With anybody's gift: as if she regarded my gift, the title of the Duchess with a history of nine hundred years to be of the same value as the gifts given to her by some insignificant persons.
8 Who'd stoop to blame/This sort of trifling: who would lower himself to find fault with this kind of trivial things? (The Duke is haughty and hypocritical here.)
9 such an one: referring to the Duchess. This is certainly not a respectful and intimate form of address.
10 here you miss,/Or there exceed the mark: you have not done this quite enough, while you have overdone that.
11 be lessoned: be given a lesson.

Her wits to yours,[1] forsooth,[2] and made excuse,
— E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;[3]
Then all smiles stopped together.[4] There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence[5]
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;[6]
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune[7], though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck[8] cast in bronze for me!

Home Thoughts from Abroad

Browning casts himself in the role of the homesick traveller, longing for every detail of his beloved home since he had spent years in Italy in his life. The poem describes a typical springtime scene in the English countryside, with birds singing and flowers blooming.

The poem consists of two stanzas. The first stanza is shorter, establishing the emotional tenor of the poem — the speaker longs for his home. It contains

1 nor plainly set/Her wits to yours: she didn't argue with you.
2 forsooth: indeed; really.
3 This grew; I gave commands: this kind of things grew worse and worse; I gave orders.
4 Then all smiles stopped together: then she died.
5 munificence: bountifulness.
6 pretence/Of mine for dowry will be disallowed: my well-grounded claim for dowry will not be rejected. Dowry: money or property brought by a woman to her husband at marriage.
7 Neptune: the Roman god of the sea. The Duke is showing the statue to the agent as they are going downstairs to meet the others.
8 Claus of Innsbruck: Claus is an imaginary sculptor; Innsbruck is a city in Austria, renowned for its sculpture. Browning visited Innsbruck in 1838.

two trimeter lines, followed by two tetrameter lines, three pentameter lines, and a final trimeter line; it rhymes *ababccdd*. The metrical pattern and the rhyme scheme give it a sort of rising and falling sense that mirrors the emotional rise and fall of the poet: the burst of joy at thinking of home, then the resignation that home lies so far away.

The second stanza is longer, and consists almost entirely of pentameter lines, save the eighth line, which is tetrameter. It rhymes *aabcbcddeeff*. The more even metrical pattern and more drawn-out rhyme plan allow for a more contemplative feeling; it is here that the poet settles back and thinks on the progress of the seasons in the nature.

Oh, To be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole[1] are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch[2] sings on the orchard bough
In England — now!!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat[3] builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture[4]
The first fine careless rapture[5]!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew

1 bole: tree truck.
2 chaffinch: small European bird (finch) with a cheerful song.
3 whitethroat: a common and widespread warbler which breeds throughout Europe and across much of temperate western Asia.
4 recapture: experience anew.
5 rapture: intense pleasure or joy.

The buttercups[1], the little children's dower
— Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower[2]!

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning *was England's most famous woman poet during her lifetime. Passionately admired by contemporaries for her moral and emotional ardour and her energetic engagement with the issues of her day, she was even more famous than her husband at the time of her death.*

Life and Writing

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Elizabeth was the eldest of the 12 children in the Barrett family. Her father's wealth was derived from Jamaican plantations; she spent her childhood at Hope End in Herefordshire. In 1835 the family moved to London. In 1838 she was seriously ill as a result of a broken blood-vessel. She was largely self-educated at home, and became deeply versed in the classics and in prosodic theory, and later published translations from ancient and Byzantine Greek poetry. She read voraciously in history, philosophy, and literature and began to write poetry from an early age. Her first volume of poetry was published at the age of 13.

By the age of 39, Elizabeth Barrett was a prominent woman of letters, lived as an invalid in her father's house, occasionally received visitors in her room.

Robert Browning was moved by her poetry, and began a correspondence with her. In 1846 they secretly married and eloped to Italy, for which her father

1 buttercups: a plant with bright yellow cup-shaped flowers, common as a garden weed.
2 melon-flower: large, trumpet-shaped yellow bloom from a melon plant. Browning contrasts this flower, which is native to a warm climate, with the smaller buttercups seen in early spring in England.

never forgave her. The rest of her life was settled in Casa Guidi in Florence, with long visits to Rome, Siena, Paris and London. She regained health and gave birth to their only child in 1849.

Throughout her marriage, she was passionately interested in Italian and French politics, and she also became fascinated by spiritualism. The Brownings were friends with Ruskin, Carlyle, Tennyson, Thackeray, Hawthorne, and many other famous contemporaries. Mrs. Browning's large-mindedness, vivid intelligence, and quietly sympathetic manner made a lifelong impression on her friends. In June 29, 1861, her happy marriage ended with her death in Browning's arms.

Major Works

Elizabeth Barrett's verse novel *Aurora Leigh* (1857) depicts the growth of a woman poet and is thus the first work in English by a woman writer, in which the heroine herself is an author. The poem is a portrait of the artist as a young woman committed to a socially inclusive realist art.

Virginia Woolf writes that "Elizabeth Barrett was inspired by a flash of true genius when she rushed into the drawing-room and said that here, where we live and work, is the true place for the poet... Aurora Leigh, with her passionate interest in social questions, her conflict as artist and woman, her longing for knowledge and freedom, is the true daughter of her age."

Sonnets from the Portuguese

Sonnets from the Portuguese, first published in 1850, is a sequence of 44 sonnets Elizabeth presented to Robert Brouning. The poems largely chronicle the period leading up to her marriage to Robert Browning.

Elizabeth was initially hesitant to publish the poems, feeling that they were too personal. However, Robert insisted that they were the best sequence of English-language sonnets since Shakespeare's time and urged her to publish them. To offer the couple some privacy, she decided that she might publish them under a title disguising the poems as translations of foreign sonnets.

21

Say over again, and yet once over again,
That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated

Should seem "a cuckoo song[1]," as thou dost treat it,
Remember, never to the hill or plain,
Valley and wood, without her cuckoo-strain
Comes the fresh Spring in all her green completed.
Belovèd, I, amid the darkness greeted
By a doubtful spirit voice, in that doubt's pain,
Cry, "Speak once more — thou lovest!" Who can fear
Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll,
Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year?
Say thou dost love me, love me, love me — toll
The silver iterance[2]! — only minding, Dear,
To love me also in silence with thy soul.

22

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,[3]
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point, — what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think! In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Belovèd, — where the unfit
Contrarious[4] moods of men recoil away[5]
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

32

The first time that the sun rose on thine oath[6]

1 a cuckoo song: the cuckoo has a repeating call.
2 iterance: repetition.
3 drawing nigh and nigher: drawing closer and closer.
4 contrarious: difficult to deal with.
5 recoil away: draw back, as with fear or pain.
6 thine oath: your solemn promise.

To love me, I looked forward to the moon
To slacken[1] all those bonds which seemed too soon
And quickly tied to make a lasting troth[2].
Quick-loving hearts, I thought, may quickly loathe;
And, looking on myself, I seemed not one
For such man's love! — more like an out-of-tune
Worn viol[3], a good singer would be wroth
To spoil his song with, and which, snatched in haste,
Is laid down at the first ill-sounding note.
I did not wrong myself so, but I placed
A wrong on *thee*. For perfect strains may float
'Neath[4] master-hands, from instruments defaced —
And great souls, at one stroke, may do and dote.

43[5]

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with a passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints — I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! — and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

1 slacken: become looser.
2 troth: a solemn pledge of fidelity; a mutual promise to marry
3 viol: a musical instrument of the Renaissance and baroque periods, typically six-stringed, held vertically and played with a bow.
4 'Neath: beneath.
5 This (No. 43) is the most famous poem from the collection, and one of the most famous opening lines in the English language.

Questions

My Last Duchess

1. What is the Duke's view of his last Duchess? What different views we readers form from his narration?
2. What is your understanding of the character of the Duke? How do you draw your conclusion?
3. What does the Duke mean when he mentions the sea-horse in the last three lines? How could that be related to his account of his marriage?

Home Thoughts from Abroad

During what season is the poem written? Make a contrast between the poet' s present surroundings and his homeland.

Sonnets from the Portuguese

Read Sonnet 43. How many different ways, according to the poet, does she love her beloved?

Class Activities

1. Suppose you were the emissary, having met the Duke and heard his monologue, write a report to the Count, and report what a person the Duke is and give your suggestion whether or not the Count should marry his daughter to the Duke.
2. Write a letter to a friend living in a country far away where you once lived, to explain how much you miss the scenes and seasons you experienced when you were together.

QUOTATIONS

Ignorance is not innocence but sin.

—Robert Browning

Unit 34

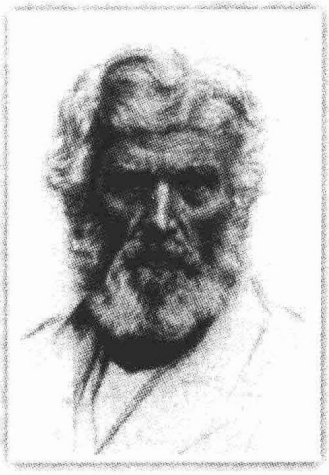
The Victorian Essayists

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881)

Thomas Carlyle *was a Scottish-born British essayist and social critic, a leading figure in the Victorian era. He had great influence upon the thinking of his time and of the younger generation.*

Life and Writing

Thomas Carlyle was born in a Scottish countryside. His father was a stonemason and his mother was the daughter of a bankrupt farmer. He studied at the University of Edinburgh (1809-1814), following his parents' wish to enter the ministry, but left when he felt dissatisfied. He taught mathematics before returning to Edinburgh in 1818 to study law. However, law gave way to reading German literature. He was strongly influenced by Goethe and the transcendental philosophers, and wrote several works interpreting German Romantic thought, including *The Life of Schiller* (1825) and a translation (1824) of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*.



Thomas Carlyle

In 1826 he married Jane Baillie Welsh, the daughter of a doctor. Not long after the marriage, she followed Carlyle to a remote farm, and lived there an isolated life for six years before they moved to London in 1834. He wrote the three volume historical work *The French Revolution* (1837), which brought him both popular and academic fame.

In addition to his historical works, Carlyle also wrote criticisms like *Chartism* (1839), opposing conventional economic theory. These works had achieved fame for Carlyle, and he received invitations to series of lectures. His later historical works include *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1845), and the six volume work *The History of Friedrich II of Prussia* (1858-1865). Carlyle became Lord Rector of Edinburgh University in 1865. His installation address *On the Choice of Books* was published in the following year, and its tone of high moral exhortation made it very successful.

The French Revolution (1837), *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841), and *Past and Present* (1843) are his major works.

On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History

In 1840 when he was at the height of his fame, Thomas Carlyle delivered six popular lectures, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, adrressing the hero as Divinity, Prophet, Poet, Priest, Man of Letters and King in six different titles. Embodied in these titles is the speaker's philosophy of history: "The history of the great men, leaders of men, and in wide sense, creators."

It is an enduring theme in the Western body of literature, religion, and philosophy that apotheosises the hero and the act of heroism. This practice is rooted in the heroic ages, where, as in the *Iliad*, the heroes have unique access to the gods and goddesses. The hero is the man who transcends through the savage wilds of Nature, and who is known not only for physical skill or bravery, but also for inculcation of mental qualities, for cultivation of a superior sense of insight, a higher vision and comprehension.

Thomas Carlyle revives and revisits the ancient concepts of the hero and the heroic. Among the different categories of heroes whom Carlyle discussed, lectures were devoted to "The Hero as Poet" and to "The Hero as Man of Letters". For Carlyle, poet and prophet are equivalent terms. He is the acute listener, the possessor of a keen vision, and the mouthpiece for Nature, God, or Divinity. "The true poet is ever, as of old," he declares, "the Seer; whose eye has been gifted to discern the godlike Mystery of God's Universe, and decipher some new lines of its celestial writing..." The hero as poet exists on a higher level of existence, a person who belongs to all ages, capable of discerning the truth of existence.

The excerpt is from Lecture III, "The Hero as Poet", delivered on May 12, 1840.

The Hero as Poet

The Hero as Divinity, the Hero as Prophet, are productions of old ages; not to be repeated in the new. They presuppose a certain rudeness of conception, which the progress of mere scientific knowledge puts an end to. There needs to be, as it were, a world vacant, or almost vacant of scientific forms, if men in their loving wonder are to fancy their fellow-man either a god or one speaking with the voice of a god. Divinity and Prophet are past. We are now to see our Hero in the less ambitious, but also less questionable, character of Poet; a character which does not pass. The Poet is a heroic figure belonging to all ages; whom all ages possess, when once he is produced, whom the newest age as the oldest may produce; — and will produce, always when Nature pleases. Let Nature send a Hero-soul; in no age is it other than possible that he may be shaped into a Poet.

Hero, Prophet, Poet, — many different names, in different times, and places, do we give to Great Men; according to varieties we note in them, according to the sphere in which they have displayed themselves! We might give many more names, on this same principle. I will remark again, however, as a fact not unimportant to be understood, that the different sphere constitutes the grand origin of such distinction; that the Hero can be Poet, Prophet, King, Priest or what you will, according to the kind of world he finds himself born into. I confess, I have no notion of a truly great man that could not be all sorts of men. The Poet who could merely sit on a chair, and compose stanzas, would never make a stanza worth much. He could not sing the Heroic warrior, unless he himself were at least a Heroic warrior too. I fancy there is in him the Politician, the Thinker, Legislator, Philosopher; — in one or the other degree, he could have been, he is all these. So too I cannot understand how a Mirabeau[1], with that great glowing heart, with the fire that was in it, with the bursting tears that were in it, could not have written verses, tragedies, poems, and touched all hearts in that way, had his course of life and education led him thitherward. The grand fundamental character is that of Great Man; that the man be

1 Here Mirabeau refers to Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791), a French writer, popular orator and statesman in the 18th century. During the French Revolution, he was a moderate, favouring a constitutional monarchy built on the model of Great Britain.

great. Napoleon has words in him which are like Austerlitz Battles[1]. Louis Fourteenth's Marshals are a kind of poetical men withal; the things Turenne[2] says are full of sagacity and geniality, like sayings of Samuel Johnson. The great heart, the clear deep-seeing eye: there it lies; no man whatever, in what province soever, can prosper at all without these. Petrarch[3] and Boccaccio[4] did diplomatic messages, it seems, quite well: one can easily believe it; they had done things a little harder than these! Burns, a gifted song-writer, might have made a still better Mirabeau. Shakspeare, — one knows not what he could not have made, in the supreme degree.

True, there are aptitudes of Nature too. Nature does not make all great men, more than all other men, in the self-same mould. Varieties of aptitude doubtless; but infinitely more of circumstance; and far oftenest it is the latter only that are looked to. But it is as with common men in the learning of trades. You take any man, as yet a vague capability of a man, who could be any kind of craftsman; and make him into a smith, a carpenter, a mason: he is then and thenceforth that and nothing else. And if, as Addison complains, you sometimes see a street-porter, staggering under his load on spindle — shanks, and near at hand a tailor with the frame of a Samson handling a bit of cloth and small Whitechapel[5] needle, — it cannot be considered that aptitude of Nature alone has been consulted here either! — The Great Man also, to what shall

1 Austerlitz Battles: one of Napoleon's greatest victories, effectively destroying the Third Coalition against the French Empire. On December 2, 1805, French troops, commanded by Emperor Napoleon I, decisively defeated a Russo-Austrian army, commanded by Tsar Alexander I, after nearly nine hours of difficult fighting in many sectors. The battle, took place at Austerlitz, is often regarded as a tactical masterpiece.

2 Turenne (1611-1675): Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne, often referred to as Turenne, one of six marshals who has been made Marshal General of France.

3 Petrarch: Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch) (1304-1374) was an Italian scholar, poet, and early humanist. Petrarch is often popularly called the "father of humanism". Petrarch is credited for perfecting the sonnet, making it one of the most popular art forms to date.

4 Boccaccio: Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) was an Italian poet, a friend and correspondent of Petrarch, an important Renaissance humanist in his own right and author of *The Decameron*. Boccaccio's characters are notable for their era in that they are realistic, spirited and clever individuals who are grounded in reality (in contrast to the characters of his contemporaries, who were more concerned with the Medieval virtues of Chivalry, Piety, and Humility).

5 Whitechapel: a place in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, England. It is a built-up inner city district.

he be bound apprentice? Given your Hero, is he to become Conqueror, King, Philosopher, Poet? It is an inexplicably complex controversial-calculation between the world and him! He will read the world and its laws; the world with its laws will be there to be read. What the world, on this matter, shall permit and bid is, as we said, the most important fact about the world.

Poet and Prophet differ greatly in our loose modern notions of them. In some old languages, again, the titles are synonymous; Vates[1] means both Prophet and Poet: and indeed at all times, Prophet and Poet, well understood, have much kindred of meaning. Fundamentally indeed they are still the same; in this most important respect especially, That they have penetrated both of them into the sacred mystery of the Universe; what Goethe calls "the open secret." "Which is the great secret?" asks one. — "The open secret" — open to all, seen by almost none! That divine mystery, which lies everywhere in all Beings, "the Divine Idea of the World, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance," as Fichte[2] styles it; of which all Appearance, from the starry sky to the grass of the field, but especially the Appearance of Man and his work, is but the vesture, the embodiment that renders it visible. This divine mystery is in all times and in all places; veritably is. In most times and places it is greatly overlooked; and the Universe, definable always in one or the other dialect, as the realized Thought of God, is considered a trivial, inert, commonplace matter, — as if, says the Satirist, it were a dead thing, which some upholsterer had put together! It could do no good, at present, to speak much about this; but it is a pity for every one of us if we do not know it, live ever in the knowledge of it. Really a most mournful pity; — a failure to live at all, if we live otherwise!

But now, I say, whoever may forget this divine mystery, the Vates, whether Prophet or Poet, has penetrated into it; is a man sent hither to make it more impressively known to us. That always is his message; he is to reveal that to us, — that sacred mystery which he more than others lives ever present with. While others forget it, he knows it; — I might say, he has been driven to know it; without consent asked of him, he finds himself living in it, bound to live in it. Once more, here is no Hearsay, but a direct Insight and Belief; this man

1 Vates: The earliest Latin writers used vates to denote "prophets" and soothsayers in general; the word fell into disuse in Latin until it was revived by the poet Virgil.
2 Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814): a German philosopher. Fichte is often perceived as a figure whose philosophy forms a bridge between the ideas of Kant and Hegel.

too could not help being a sincere man! Whosoever may live in the shows of things, it is for him a necessity of nature to live in the very fact of things. A man once more, in earnest with the Universe, though all others were but toying with it. He is a Vates, first of all, in virtue of being sincere. So far Poet and Prophet, participators in the "open secret," are one.

With respect to their distinction again: The Vates Prophet, we might say, has seized that sacred mystery rather on the moral side, as Good and Evil, Duty and Prohibition; the Vates Poet on what the Germans call the aesthetic side, as Beautiful, and the like. The one we may call a revealer of what we are to do, the other of what we are to love. But indeed these two provinces run into one another, and cannot be disjoined. The Prophet too has his eye on what we are to love: how else shall he know what it is we are to do? The highest Voice ever heard on this earth said withal, "Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." A glance, that, into the deepest deep of Beauty. "The lilies of the field," — dressed finer than earthly princes, springing up there in the humble furrow-field; a beautiful eye looking out on you, from the great inner Sea of Beauty! How could the rude Earth make these, if her Essence, rugged as she looks and is, were not inwardly Beauty? In this point of view, too, a saying of Goethe's, which has staggered several, may have meaning: "The Beautiful," he intimates, "is higher than the Good; the Beautiful includes in it the Good." The true Beautiful; which however, I have said somewhere, "differs from the false as Heaven does from Vauxhall!" So much for the distinction and identity of Poet and Prophet.

In ancient and also in modern periods we find a few Poets who are accounted perfect; whom it were a kind of treason to find fault with. This is noteworthy; this is right: yet in strictness it is only an illusion. At bottom, clearly enough, there is no perfect Poet! A vein of Poetry exists in the hearts of all men; no man is made altogether of Poetry. We are all poets when we read a poem well. The "imagination that shudders at the Hell of Dante," is not that the same faculty, weaker in degree, as Dante's own? No one but Shakspeare can embody, out of Saxo Grammaticus[1], the story of Hamlet as Shakspeare did: but every one models some kind of story out of it; every one embodies it better or worse. We need not spend time in defining. Where there is no specific difference, as between round and square, all definition must be more or less

1 Saxo Grammaticus (estimated 1150-1220): a Danish medieval historian.

arbitrary. A man that has so much more of the poetic element developed in him as to have become noticeable, will be called Poet by his neighbors. World-Poets too, those whom we are to take for perfect Poets, are settled by critics in the same way. One who rises so far above the general level of Poets will, to such and such critics, seem a Universal Poet; as he ought to do. And yet it is, and must be, an arbitrary distinction. All Poets, all men, have some touches of the Universal; no man is wholly made of that. Most Poets are very soon forgotten: but not the noblest Shakspeare or Homer of them can be remembered forever; — a day comes when he too is not!

...

Of this Shakespeare of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously[1] expressed is, in fact, the right one; I think the best judgment not of this country only, but of Europe at large, is slowly pointing to the conclusion, That Shakespeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of Literature. On the whole, I know not such a power of vision, such a faculty of thought, if we take all the characters of it, in any other man. Such a calmness of depth; placid joyous strength; all things imaged in that great soul of his so true and clear, as in a tranquil unfathomable sea! It has been said, that in the constructing of Shakespeare's Dramas there is, apart from all other 'faculties' as they are called, an understanding manifested, equal to that in Bacon's *Novum Organum*[2]. That is true; and it is not a truth that strikes every one. It would become more apparent if we tried, any of us for himself, how, out of Shakespeare's dramatic materials, we could fashion such a result! The built house seems all so fit, — everyway as it should be, as if it came there by its own law and the nature of things, — we forget the rude disorderly quarry it

1 idolatrously: admiring or worshiping too much.

2 *Novum Organum*: a philosophical work by Francis Bacon published in 1620. The title is translated as "New Instrument". Bacon details a new system of logic he believes to be superior to the old ways of syllogism. For Bacon, finding the essence of a thing was a simple process of reduction. In finding the cause of a phenomenal nature such as heat, one must list all of the situations where heat is found. Then another list should be drawn up, listing situations that are similar to those of the first list except for the lack of heat. A third table lists situations where heat can vary. The form nature, or cause, of heat must be that which is common to all instances in the first table, is lacking from all instances of the second table and varies by degree in instances of the third table. This work was critical in the historical development of the scientific method.

was shaped from.[1] The very perfection of the house, as if Nature herself had made it, hides the builder's merit. Perfect, more perfect than any other man, we may call Shakespeare in this: he discerns, knows as by instinct, what condition he works under, what his materials are, what his own force and its relation to them is. It is not a transitory glance of insight that will suffice; it is deliberate illumination of the whole matter; it is a calmly seeing eye; a great intellect, in short. How a man, of some wide thing that he has witnessed, will construct a narrative, what kind of picture and delineation he will give of it, — is the best measure you could get of what intellect is in the man. Which circumstance is vital and shall stand prominent; which unessential, fit to be suppressed; where is the true beginning, the true sequence and ending? To find out this, you task the whole force of insight that is in the man. He must understand the thing; according to the depth of his understanding, will the fitness of his answer be. You will try him so. Does like join itself to like; does the spirit of method stir in that confusion, so that its embroilment[2] becomes order? Can the man say, *Fiat lux*[3], Let there be light; and out of chaos make a world? Precisely as there is light in himself, will he accomplish this.

Or indeed we may say again, it is in what I called Portrait-painting, delineating of men and things, especially of men, that Shakespeare is great. All the greatness of the man comes out decisively here. It is unexampled, I think, that calm creative perspicacity[4] of Shakespeare. The thing he looks at reveals not this or that face of it, but its inmost heart and generic secret: it dissolves itself as in light before him, so that he discerns the perfect structure of it. Creative, we said: poetic creation, what is this too but seeing the thing

1 *The built house seems all so fit... it was shaped from:* here Carlyle compares Shakespear's drama to a house well built with rude, disorderly materials.
2 embroilment: an intricate and confusing situation.
3 *Fiat lux*: (Latin phrase) "Let there be light", which describes the creation of light by God in Genesis, the first book of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. It is one of the most famous phrases in the English language due to its presence in the third verse of the King James Bible:
1:1-In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
1:2-And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
1:3-And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
1:4-And God saw the light, that it was good:
4 perspicacity: the ability to understand things quickly and make accurate judgments.

sufficiently? The word that will describe the thing, follows of itself from such clear intense sight of the thing. And is not Shakespeare's morality, his valour, candour, tolerance, truthfulness; his whole victorious strength and greatness, which can triumph over such obstructions, visible there too? Great as the world! No twisted, poor convex-concave mirror, reflecting all objects with its own convexities and concavities; a perfectly level mirror; — that is to say withal, if we will understand it, a man justly related to all things and men, a good man. It is truly a lordly spectacle how this great soul takes in all kinds of men and objects, a Falstaff, an Othello, a Juliet, a Coriolanus;[1] sets them all forth to us in their round completeness; loving, just, the equal brother of all. *Novum Organum*, and all the intellect you will find in Bacon, is of a quite secondary order; earthy, material, poor in comparison with this. Among modern men, one finds, in strictness, almost nothing of the same rank. Goethe[2] alone, since the days of Shakespeare, reminds me of it. Of him too you say that he saw the object; you may say what he himself says of Shakespeare: "His characters are like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal; they show you the hour like others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible."

The seeing eye! It is this that discloses the inner harmony of things; what Nature meant, what musical idea Nature has wrapped up in these often rough embodiments. Something she did mean. To the seeing eye that something were discernible. Are they base, miserable things? You can laugh over them, you can weep over them; you can in some way or other genially relate yourself to them; you can, at lowest, hold your peace about them, turn away your own and others' face from them, till the hour come for practically exterminating and extinguishing them! At bottom, it is the Poet's first gift, as it is all men's, that he have intellect enough. He will be a Poet if he have: a Poet in word; or failing that, perhaps still better, a Poet in act. Whether he write at all; and if so, whether in prose or in verse, will depend on accidents: who knows on what extremely trivial accidents, perhaps on his having had a singing-master, on his being taught to sing in his boyhood! But the faculty which enables him

1 a Falstaff, an Othello, a Juliet, a Coriolanus: characters in Shakespear's plays *Henry IV, Othello, Romeo and Juliet*, and *Coriolanus* respectively.

2 Goethe: Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832), German poet, the author of *Faust*. Goethe was one of the key figures of German literature and the movement of Weimar Classicism in the late 18th and early 19th centuries; this movement coincides with Enlightenment, Sentimentality, and Romanticism. He is widely considered to be one of the most important thinkers in Western culture, and is often cited as one of history's greatest geniuses.

to discern the inner heart of things, and the harmony that dwells there (for whatsoever exists has a harmony in the heart of it, or it would not hold together and exist), is not the result of habits or accidents, but the gift of Nature herself; the primary outfit for a Heroic Man in what sort soever[1]. To the Poet, as to every other, we say first of all, See.[2] If you cannot do that, it is of no use to keep stringing rhymes together, jingling sensibilities against each other, and name yourself a Poet; there is no hope for you. If you can, there is, in prose or verse, in action or speculation, all manner of hope.

...

If I say, therefore, that Shakespeare is the greatest of Intellects, I have said all concerning him. But there is more in Shakespeare's intellect than we have yet seen. It is what I call an unconscious intellect; there is more virtue in it than he himself is aware of. Novalis[3] beautifully remarks of him, that those Dramas of his are Products of Nature too, deep as Nature herself. I find a great truth in this saying. Shakespeare's Art is not Artifice; the noblest worth of it is not there by plan or precontrivance. It grows up from the deeps of Nature, through this noble sincere soul, who is a voice of Nature. The latest generations of men will find new meanings in Shakespeare, new elucidations of their own human being; 'new harmonies with the infinite structure of the Universe; concurrences with later ideas, affinities with the higher powers and senses of man.' This well deserves meditating. It is Nature's highest reward to a true simple great soul, that he get thus to be a part of herself. Such a man's works, whatsoever he with utmost conscious exertion and forethought shall accomplish, grow up withal un consciously, from the unknown deeps in him; as the oak-tree grows from the Earth's bosom, as the mountains and waters shape themselves; with a symmetry grounded on Nature's own laws, conformable to all Truth whatsoever. How much in Shakespeare lies hid; his sorrows, his silent struggles

1 soever: a word compounded of so and ever, used in composition with who, what, where, when, how, etc., and indicating any out of all possible or supposable persons, things, places, times, ways, etc.

2 To the Poet, as to every other, we say first of all, See: the vision of insight is the most important quality for a poet, as for other poeple.

3 Novalis: the pen name of Georg von Hardenberg (1772-1801), an author and philosopher of early German Romanticism. Novalis, who had great knowledge in science, law, philosophy, politics and political economy, left an astonishing abundance of notes on these fields of knowledge. The core of Hardenberg's literary works is the quest for the connection of science and poetry, and the result was supposed to be a "progressive universal utopia". Novalis was convinced that philosophy and the higher-ranking poetry have to be continually related to each other.

known to himself; much that was not known at all, not speakable at all: like roots, like sap and forces working underground! Speech is great; but Silence is greater.

Questions

1. According to the Greek tradition, the hero can be of part divinity and part man. Does Carlyle adhere to this classical notion of the hero, or does he stray from this definition?
2. How does Carlyle's primary example of Shakespeare as quintessential hero-poet fit into a Romantic discourse on poetry? Combine Carlyle's definition with Wordsworth's poem: In the final line of Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper", the speaker preserves a sound which has long been dead. In this sense, he is rendering eternal that which is temporal. Does this gift of preservation account for a divine aspect in the character of the poet, or does he remain a sort of demi-god, or heroic prophet?
3. Why is the power of insight so important to a poet?
4. How do you understand that Shakespeare's dramas are products of Nature?

QUOTATIONS

That there should one Man die ignorant who had capacity for Knowledge, this I call a tragedy.

—Thomas Carlyle

What we become depends on what we read after all of the professors have finished with us. The greatest university of all is a collection of books.

—Thomas Carlyle

John Ruskin (1819–1900)

John Ruskin *is best known for his work as an art critic and social critic, and is remembered as an author, poet and artist as well. Ruskin's essays on art and architecture were extremely influential in the Victorian and Edwardian eras.*

Life and Writing

Ruskin was born in London, the son of a wine importer. He was educated at home, and entered the Oxford University without proper qualifications for a degree. Nevertheless he impressed the scholars of Christ Church after he won the Newdigate prize for poetry. In consequence, he was awarded a degree.

John Ruskin, 1894, by Frederick Hollyer.

In 1843, he published his first book *Modern Painters*, under the anonymous identity "An Oxford Graduate". Ruskin followed this book with a second volume, developing his ideas about symbolism in art. He then turned to architecture, writing *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*, both of which argued that architecture cannot be separated from morality, and that the "Decorated Gothic" style was the highest form of architecture yet achieved.

By this time Ruskin was writing in his own name, and had become the most famous cultural theorist of his day. In 1848, he married Effie Gray. Their marriage was notoriously unhappy, eventually being annulled in 1854. During this period, Ruskin wrote regular reviews of the annual exhibitions at the Royal Academy under the title *Academy Notes*. His reviews were so influential and so judgemental that he alienated many artists.

Following a crisis of religious belief, Ruskin abandoned art criticism at the end of the 1850s, moving toward commentary on politics, under the influence of his great friend Thomas Carlyle. In *Unto This Last* he expounded

his theories about social justice, which influenced the development of the British Labour party and of Christian socialism. Upon the death of his father, Ruskin declared that it was not possible to be a rich socialist and gave away most of his inheritance. He founded the charity known as the Guild of St. George in the 1870s and endowed it with large sums of money as well as a remarkable collection of art. He also taught at the Working Men's College, London and was the first Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, from 1869 to 1879. He also served a second term until 1885. Ruskin College in Oxford is named after him.

Ruskin's range was vast. He wrote over 250 works which started from art history, but expanded to cover topics ranging over science, geology, ornithology, literary criticism, the environmental effects of pollution, and mythology. After his death, Ruskin's works were collected together in a massive "library edition", completed in 1912. Its index is famously elaborate, attempting to articulate the complex interconnectedness of his thought.

Sesame and Lilies

John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, first published in 1865, stands as a classic 19th century statement on the natures and duties of men and women. The book is made of two halves: "Of Kings' Treasuries", in which Ruskin critiques Victorian manhood, and "Of Queens' Gardens", in which he counsels women to take their places as the moral guides of men and urges the parents of girls to educate them to this end. Later editions included a third lecture, "The Mystery of Life and Its Arts" and a preface. (1894)

The two lectures which constitute *Sesame and Lilies* deal ostensibly with the reading of books, but the author brings into the discussion his favorite ideas on ethics, esthetics, economics, and many other subjects. It thus gives a fairly comprehensive idea of the nature of the widespread influence which he exerted on English life and thought during the whole of the second half of the 19th century. Its style also, in its earnestness, its richness, and its lofty eloquence, exemplifies the pitch to which he brought the tradition of the highly decorated prose cultivated by DeQuincey in the previous generation, a pitch of gorgeousness in colour and cadence which has been surpassed by none.

This lecture was given on December 6, 1864, at Rusholme Town Hall, Manchester, in aid of a library fund for the Rusholme Institute. The following is one part of the lecture, focusing on "good books".

The good book of the hour, then, — I do not speak of the bad ones, — is simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed for you. Very useful often, telling you what you need to know; very pleasant often, as a sensible friend's present talk[1] would be. These bright accounts of travels; good-humoured and witty discussions of question; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history; — all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar possession of the present age: we ought to be entirely thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them. But we make the worst possible use if we allow them to usurp the place of true books: for, strictly speaking, they are not books at all, but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful, or necessary, today: whether worth keeping or not, is to be considered. The newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast time, but assuredly it is not reading for all day. So, though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather, last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word, a "book" at all, nor, in the real sense, to be "read." A book is essentially not a talking thing, but a written thing; and written, not with a view of mere communication, but of permanence. The book of talk is printed only because its author cannot speak to thousands of people at once; if he could, he would — the volume is mere multiplication of his voice. You cannot talk to your friend in India; if you could, you would; you write instead: that is mere conveyance[2] of voice. But a book is written, not to multiply the voice merely, not to carry it merely, but to perpetuate it. The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful, or helpfully beautiful. So far as he knows, no one has yet said it; so far as he knows, no one else can say it. He is bound to say it, clearly and melodiously if he may; clearly at all events[3]. In the sum of his life he finds this to be the thing, or group of things, manifest to him; — this, the piece of true knowledge, or sight, which his share of sunshine and earth has permitted him to seize. He would fain[4] set it down for ever; engrave it on rock,

1 present talk: face to face talk.
2 conveyance: taking things from place to place.
3 at all events: in spite of whatever may happen.
4 would fain: (old use) would like to.

if he could; saying, "This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another; my life was as the vapour, and is not; but this I saw and knew: this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory." That is his "writing;" it is, in his small human way,[1] and with whatever degree of true inspiration is in him, his inscription, or scripture. That is a "Book."

Perhaps you think no books were ever so written?

But, again, I ask you, do you at all believe in honesty, or at all in kindness, or do you think there is never any honesty or benevolence in wise people? None of us, I hope, are so unhappy as to think that. Well, whatever bit of a wise man's work is honestly and benevolently done, that bit is his book or his piece of art. It is mixed always with evil fragments — ill-done, redundant, affected work. But if you read rightly, you will easily discover the true bits, and those are the book.

Now books of this kind have been written in all ages by their greatest men: — by great readers, great statesmen, and great thinkers. These are all at your choice; and Life is short. You have heard as much before; — yet have you measured and mapped out this short life and its possibilities? Do you know, if you read this, that you cannot read that — that what you lose to-day you cannot gain to-morrow? Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable-boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourself that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect, that you jostle with the hungry and common crowd for entree here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society, wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen, and the mighty, of every place and time? Into that you may enter always; in that you may take fellowship and rank according to your wish; from that, once entered into it, you can never be outcast but by your own fault; by your aristocracy of companionship there, your own inherent aristocracy will be assuredly tested,[2] and the motives with which you strive to take high place in the society of the living, measured, as to all the truth and sincerity that are in them, by the place you desire to take in

1 in his small human way: in his short, ordinary life.
2 by your aristocracy of companionship there, your own inherent aristocracy will be assuredly tested: to judge a person by judging what company he keeps, as in the English proverb: "A man is known by the company he keeps."

this company of the Dead.[1]

"The place you desire," and the place you fit yourself for, I must also say; because, observe, this court of the past differs from all living aristocracy in this: — it is open to labour and to merit, but to nothing else. No wealth will bribe, no name overawe, no artifice deceive, the guardian of those Elysian[2] gates. In the deep sense, no vile or vulgar person ever enters there. At the portieres of that silent Faubourg St. Germain[3], there is but brief question: "Do you deserve to enter? Pass. Do you ask to be the companion of nobles? Make yourself noble, and you shall be. Do you long for the conversation of the wise? Learn to understand it, and you shall hear it. But on other terms? — no. If you will not rise to us, we cannot stoop to you. The living lord may assume courtesy, the living philosopher explain his thought to you with considerate pain; but here we neither feign nor interpret; you must rise to the level of our thoughts if you would be gladdened by them, and share our feelings, if you would recognise our presence."

This, then, is what you have to do, and I admit that it is much. You must, in a word, love these people, if you are to be among them. No ambition is of any use. They scorn your ambition. You must love them, and show your love in these two following ways.

First, by a true desire to be taught by them, and to enter into their thoughts. To enter into theirs, observe; not to find your own expressed by them. If the person who wrote the book is not wiser than you, you need not read it; if he be, he will think differently from you in many respects.

Very ready we are to say of a book, "How good this is — that's exactly what I think!" But the right feeling is, "How strange that is! I never thought of that before, and yet I see it is true; or if I do not now, I hope I shall, some day." But whether thus submissively or not, at least be sure that you go to the author to get at HIS meaning, not to find yours. Judge it afterwards if you think yourself qualified to do so; but ascertain it first. And be sure, also, if the author is worth anything, that you will not get at his meaning all at once; — nay, that

1 in this company of the Dead: cf., Robert Southey's poem, "My Days Among the Dead Are Passed." : My days among the Dead are passed; /Around me I behold,/ Where'er these casual eyes are cast,/The mighty minds of old:/My never–failing friends are they,/With whom I converse day by day.

2 Elysian: relating to Elysium or the Elysian Fields, the place in Greek mythology where heroes were conveyed after death; of or like paradise.

3 Faubourg St. Germain: a famous church in the suburbs of Paris.

at his whole meaning you will not for a long time arrive in any wise. Not that he does not say what he means, and in strong words too; but he cannot say it all; and what is more strange, will not, but in a hidden way and in parables, in order that he may be sure you want it. I cannot quite see the reason of this, nor analyse that cruel reticence in the breasts of wise men which makes them always hide their deeper thought. They do not give it you by way of help, but of reward; and will make themselves sure that you deserve it before they allow you to reach it. But it is the same with the physical type of wisdom, gold. There seems, to you and me, no reason why the electric forces of the earth should not carry whatever there is of gold within it at once to the mountain tops, so that kings and people might know that all the gold they could get was there; and without any trouble of digging, or anxiety, or chance, or waste of time, cut it away, and coin as much as they needed. But Nature does not manage it so. She puts it in little fissures in the earth, nobody knows where: you may dig long and find none; you must dig painfully to find any.

And it is just the same with men's best wisdom. When you come to a good book, you must ask yourself, "Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would? Are my pickaxes and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up to the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper?" And, keeping the figure a little longer, even at cost of tiresomeness, for it is a thoroughly useful one, the metal you are in search of being the author's mind or meaning, his words are as the rock which you have to crush and smelt in order to get at it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning; your smelting furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get at any good author's meaning without those tools and that fire; often you will need sharpest, finest chiselling[1], and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal.

Questions

1. What is the speaker's definition of a book?
2. What can we benefit from good books? How can we enter into the world of a good book?

1 chiseling: a tool with a long metal blade that has a sharp edge for cutting wood, stone, etc.

3. Ruskin says, "It takes a whole life to learn any language perfectly." What are your comments on the idea?

Class Activities

1. Suppose that you were Carlyle or Ruskin, use the essays and give speeches to the class. Atleast one-paragraph is required for the speech.
2. Write your own speech of the similar titles as "On Hero", or "Good Books", and give speeches on your own writing to the class.

QUOTATIONS

Neither by the public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word restoration understood. It means the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered; a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture.

—John Ruskin

For, indeed, the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, not in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity.

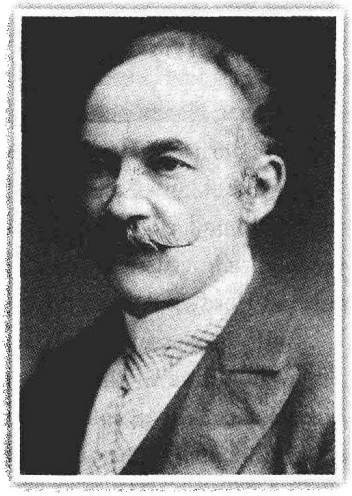
—John Ruskin

Unit 35

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Thomas Hardy *was the last important novelist in the Victorian Age. He began and ended his career as a poet, but is best remembered for his fiction. In his Wessex novels, he vividly and truthfully describes the tragic lives of the tenants in the last decade of the 19th century. His writings reveal a profoundly pessimistic sense of subjection to fate and circumstance.*

Life and Writing



Thomas Hardy

Hardy was born in Higher Bockhampton in Dorset, a county in the southwest of England. His father was a stonemason and taught Hardy the violin, and his mother greatly nurtured his early interest in books. He attended a local school until the age of 15, when his father apprenticed him to a local architect with whom he worked for six years. At the age of 22, he went to London to continue his studies and to practise as an architect. At the same time, he found time for extensive reading, and became interested in both fiction and poetry. He returned home in 1867 to continue architectural work in Dorset, and began his first novel. He then anonymously published his two early novels. By 1874 he was able to support himself by writing. In the same year he married his first wife. Their marriage lasted until her death in 1912, which prompted Hardy to write his collection of poems called *Vestiges of an Old Flame*.

He gave up his architectural work and produced a series of novels as well

as many short stories and poems. Hardy and his wife travelled in Europe and spent several months of nearly every year in London. In 1885 they moved into Max Gate, near Dorset, a forbidding house, shrouded by trees and shrubberies, to Hardy's own design. During the period, Hardy enjoyed the admiration of London's literary and aristocratic society. At the same time, Hardy was severely attacked for his "pessimism" and "immorality", especially in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1896). Criticism of *Jude the Obscure* was so harsh that Hardy stopped writing novels and turned to poetry.

He wrote altogether 918 poems, published in eight collections. Among his most successful short poems are "Channel Firing, April 1914", "Wessex Heights", "God's Funeral" and "Nature's Questioning". Besides, he also wrote a great epic-drama, *The Dynasts*, which was published in three parts (1904, 1906, 1908). He wrote mostly lyric poetry. In 1914, Hardy married Florence Dugdale, who did much to protect Hardy from the adulation of his admirers, and wrote his biography after his death. Public honours fell upon him in his later years. His funeral was held in Westminster Abbey. His reputation is mainly established as a novelist and poet.

Major Works

Thomas Hardy set much of his work in Wessex, an imaginary county in southwestern England. The name suggests the mysterious past of England during the Anglo-Saxson period, for it was here the Wessex kingdom once prospered under King Alfred and the prehistorical Stonehenge was located. The place is rich in its legends, folk customs and superstitions. All these play their roles in Hardy's Wessex novels.

Hardy's Wessex novels show the forces of nature outside and inside man which combine to shape human destiny. Men and women in his fiction are not masters of their fates; they are at the mercy of the indifferent forces which manipulate their behaviour and their relations with others; but they can achieve dignity through endurance, and heroism through simple strength of character.

The most famous novels of Thomas Hardy include *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1896). Hardy also published over 40 short stories.

Far from the Madding Crowd (1874) brought him great fame as a novelist. It depicts how the young and spiritual heroine, Bathsheba Everdene, is pursued

by three men, and how she finds true love in the marriage with the shepherd Gabriel Oak. *The Return of the Native* (1878) is a closely-knit narrative with tragic tone. Through the depiction of the fates of the heroes and the women around them, Hardy lamented the loss of a stable and peaceful rural life in England.

The Mayor of Casterbridge is also a tragic story, centred on the tragic fate of Michael Henchard. An upright country labourer, Henchard, after getting drunk, sells both his wife and his child to a sailor named Newson. Henchard repents and vows to start anew. He accumulates wealth and wins people's respect through hard work, and eventually becomes the mayor of the town of Casterbridge. But he can never escape the control of fate. His wife returns unexpectedly with her daughter Elizabeth Jane. But she dies later, and Elizabeth Jane, whom he wrongly believes to be his daughter, is actually Newson's child. His assistant Farfrae gradually controls his life, taking away his business, his house, and the woman he has hoped to win. Newson returns to take away the daughter. Lonely and desperate, he dies in a hut.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles

Tess of the D'Urbervilles is Hardy's most moving tragic story. The story is about the tragic life of Tess, the daughter of a poor peasant, who believes that he is the descendant of an ancient aristocratic family, and sends Tess to work as a maid for a neighbouring family by the name of d'Urberville. Tess is seduced by Alec, the son of the family, and gives birth to a child, which dies in infancy.

Then Tess goes to work on a dairy farm, where she is engaged to Angel Clare, a man of liberal mind, and the son of a clergyman. On the wedding night, Tess confesses to Angel her seduction by Alec. On hearing her tale, Angel abandons Tess.

Tess lives a hard life, working on a farm, where she meets Alec again. Her father dies and the family is starving. She has to accept Alec's support. Meantime, Angel repents and comes back to find Tess, and is determined to make her happy. In strong despair and great madness, Tess kills Alec. The brief period of her hiding with Angel is their honeymoon. Soon Tess is arrested, tried, and hanged.

Introduction to Chapters 57 and 58

For Chapter 53 through to Chapter 59, the author gives a general title: Phase the Seventh: Fulfilment. The novel reaches its height when it comes to

Chapter 57 and 78. As Angel is awaiting the next train to leave the town, Tess appears with the news that she had killed Alec. Angel is unsure about her story, but now that she is finally his, he takes no chance of her being discovered. One of their stops takes them to a vacant house, called Bramshurst Court. Their week together is uneventful in that Tess and Angel finally become a married couple. She seems to know that her time with Angel is limited, because she will soon be wanted for Alec's murder. "My life can only be a question of a few weeks," she says. Her last wishes are for Angel to marry her sister for "She had all the best of me without the bad of me." Tess and Angel stop at the historic site of Stonehenge after they have travelled a long way, and the chase from Sandbourne ends there.

Chapter 57

Meanwhile Angel Clare had walked automatically along the way by which he had come, and, entering his hotel, sat down over the breakfast, staring at nothingness. He went on eating and drinking unconsciously till on a sudden he demanded his bill; having paid which he took his dressing-bag in his hand, the only luggage he had brought with him, and went out.

At the moment of his departure a telegram was handed to him — a few words from his mother, stating that they were glad to know his address, and informing him that his brother Cuthbert had proposed to and been accepted by Mercy Chant.

Tess at rest at the Stonehenge

Clare crumpled up the paper, and followed the route to the station; reaching it, he found that there would be no train leaving for an hour and more. He sat down to wait, and having waited a quarter of an hour felt that he could wait there no longer. Broken in heart and numbed, he had nothing to hurry for; but he wished to get out of a town which had been the scene of such an experience, and turned to walk to the first station onward, and let the train pick him up there.

The highway that he followed was open, and at a little distance dipped into a valley, across which it could be seen running from edge to edge. He had traversed the greater part of this depression, and was climbing the western acclivity[1], when, pausing for breath, he unconsciously looked back. Why he did so he could not say, but something seemed to impel him to the act. The tape-like surface of the road diminished in his rear as far as he could see, and as he gazed a moving spot intruded on the white vacuity[2] of its perspective.

It was a human figure running. Clare waited, with a dim sense that somebody was trying to overtake him.

The form descending the incline was a woman's, yet so entirely was his mind blinded to the idea of his wife's following him that even when she came nearer he did not recognize her under the totally changed attire in which he now beheld her. It was not till she was quite close that he could believe her to be Tess.

"I saw you — turn away from the station — just before I got there — and I have been following you all this way!"

She was so pale, so breathless, so quivering in every muscle, that he did not ask her a single question, but seizing her hand, and pulling it within his arm, he led her along. To avoid meeting any possible wayfarers[3] he left the high road, and took a footpath under some fir-trees. When they were deep among the moaning boughs he stopped and looked at her inquiringly.

"Angel," she said, as if waiting for this, "do you know what I have been running after you for? To tell you that I have killed him!" A pitiful white smile lit her face as she spoke.

"What!" said he, thinking from the strangeness of her manner that she was in some delirium[4].

1 acclivity: an upward slope.
2 vacuity: total lack of meaning or ideas.
3 wayfarer: a person who travels on foot.
4 delirium: a usually brief state of excitement and mental confusion.

"I have done it — I don't know how," she continued. "Still, I owed it to you, and to myself, Angel. I feared long ago, when I struck him on the mouth with my glove, that I might do it some day for the trap he set for me in my simple youth, and his wrong to you through me. He has come between us and ruined us, and now he can never do it any more. I never loved him at all, Angel, as I loved you. You know it, don't you? You believe it? You didn't come back to me, and I was obliged to go back to him. Why did you go away — why did you — when I loved you so? I can't think why you did it. But I don't blame you; only, Angel, will you forgive me my sin against you, now I have killed him? I thought as I ran along that you would be sure to forgive me now I have done that. It came to me as a shining light that I should get you back that way. I could not bear the loss of you any longer — you don't know how entirely I was unable to bear your not loving me! Say you do now, dear, dear husband; say you do, now I have killed him!"

"I do love you, Tess — O, I do — it all come back!" he said, tightening his arms round her with fervid pressure. "But how do you mean — you have killed him?"

"I mean that I have," she murmured in a reverie.

"What, bodily? Is he dead?"

"Yes. He heard me crying about you, and he bitterly taunted me; and called you by a foul name; and then I did it. My heart could not bear it. He had nagged me about you before. And then I dressed myself and came away to find you."

By degrees he was inclined to believe that she had faintly attempted, at least, what she said she had done; and his horror at her impulse was mixed with amazement at the strength of her affection for himself, and at the strangeness of its quality, which had apparently extinguished her moral sense altogether. Unable to realize the gravity of her conduct she seemed at last content; and he looked at her as she lay upon his shoulder, weeping with happiness, and wondered what obscure strain in the d'Urberville blood had led to this aberration[1] — if it were an aberration. There momentarily flashed through his mind that the family tradition of the coach and murder might have arisen because the d'Urbervilles had been known to do these things. As well as his confused and excited ideas could reason, he supposed that in the moment of mad grief of which she spoke her mind had lost its balance, and plunged her

1 aberration: a departure from what is normal or acceptable.

into this abyss.

It was very terrible if true; if a temporary hallucination, sad. But, anyhow, here was this deserted wife of his, this passionately-fond woman, clinging to him without a suspicion that he would be anything to her but a protector. He saw that for him to be otherwise was not, in her mind, within the region of the possible. Tenderness was absolutely dominant in Clare at last. He kissed her endlessly with his white lips, and held her hand, and said —

"I will not desert you! I will protect you by every means in my power, dearest love, whatever you may have done or not have done!"

They then walked on under the trees, Tess turning her head every now and then to look at him. Worn and unhandsome as he had become, it was plain that she did not discern the least fault in his appearance. To her he was, as of old, all that was perfection, personally and mentally. He was still her Antinous[1], her Apollo even; his sickly face was beautiful as the morning to her affectionate regard on this day no less than when she first beheld him; for was it not the face of the one man on earth who had loved her purely, and who had believed in her as pure!

With an instinct as to possibilities he did not now, as he had intended, make for the first station beyond the town, but plunged still farther under the firs, which here abounded for miles. Each clasping the other round the waist they promenaded[2] over the dry bed of fir-needles, thrown into a vague intoxicating atmosphere at the consciousness of being together at last, with no living soul between them; ignoring that there was a corpse. Thus they proceeded for several miles till Tess, arousing herself, looked about her, and said, timidly —

"Are we going anywhere in particular?"

"I don't know, dearest. Why?"

"I don't know."

"Well, we might walk a few miles further, and when it is evening find lodgings somewhere or other — in a lonely cottage, perhaps. Can you walk well, Tessy?"

"O yes! I could walk for ever and ever with your arm round me!"

Upon the whole it seemed a good thing to do. Thereupon they quickened their pace, avoiding high roads, and following obscure paths tending more or less northward. But there was an unpractical vagueness in their movements

1 Antinous: (born ca. 110 or 111 CE, died 130 CE) who was believed to be the most beautiful youth of the Roman empire, and was the lover of the Emperor Hadrian.
2 promenaded: walked leisurely.

throughout the day; neither one of them seemed to consider any question of effectual escape, disguise, or long concealment. Their every idea was temporary and unforefending[1], like the plans of two children.

At mid-day they drew near to a roadside inn, and Tess would have entered it with him to get something to eat, but he persuaded her to remain among the trees and bushes of this half-woodland, half-moorland part of the country, till he should come back. Her clothes were of recent fashion; even the ivory-handled parasol that she carried was of a shape unknown in the retired spot to which they had now wandered; and the cut of such articles would have attracted attention in the settle of a tavern. He soon returned, with food enough for half-a-dozen people and two bottles of wine — enough to last them for a day or more, should any emergency arise.

They sat down upon some dead boughs and shared their meal. Between one and two o'clock they packed up the remainder and went on again.

"I feel strong enough to walk any distance," said she.

"I think we may as well steer in a general way towards the interior of the country, where we can hide for a time, and are less likely to be looked for than anywhere near the coast," Clare remarked. "Later on, when they have forgotten us, we can make for some port."

She made no reply to this beyond that of grasping him more tightly, and straight inland they went. Though the season was an English May the weather was serenely bright, and during the afternoon it was quite warm. Through the latter miles of their walk their footpath had taken them into the depths of the New Forest, and towards evening, turning the corner of a lane, they perceived behind a brook and bridge a large board on which was painted in white letters, "This desirable Mansion to be Let Furnished"; particulars following, with directions to apply to some London agents. Passing through the gate they could see the house, an old brick building of regular design and large accommodation.

"I know it," said Clare. "It is Bramshurst Court. You can see that it is shut up, and grass is growing on the drive."

"Some of the windows are open," said Tess.

"Just to air the rooms, I suppose."

"All these rooms empty, and we without a roof to our heads!"

1 unforefending: not taking cautious measures.

"You are getting tired, my Tess!" he said. "We'll stop soon." And kissing her sad mouth he again led her onwards.

He was growing weary likewise, for they had wandered a dozen or fifteen miles, and it became necessary to consider what they should do for rest. They looked from afar at isolated cottages and little inns, and were inclined to approach one of the latter, when their hearts failed them, and they sheered off.[1] At length their gait dragged, and they stood still.

"Could we sleep under the trees?" she asked.

He thought the season insufficiently advanced.

"I have been thinking of that empty mansion we passed," he said. "Let us go back towards it again."

They retraced their steps, but it was half an hour before they stood without the entrance-gate as earlier. He then requested her to stay where she was, whilst he went to see who was within.

She sat down among the bushes within the gate, and Clare crept towards the house. His absence lasted some considerable time, and when he returned Tess was wildly anxious, not for herself, but for him. He had found out from a boy that there was only an old woman in charge as caretaker, and she only came there on fine days, from the hamlet near, to open and shut the windows. She would come to shut them at sunset. "Now, we can get in through one of the lower windows, and rest there," said he.

Under his escort she went tardily forward to the main front, whose shuttered windows, like sightless eyeballs, excluded the possibility of watchers. The door was reached a few steps further, and one of the windows beside it was open. Clare clambered in, and pulled Tess in after him.

Except the hall the rooms were all in darkness, and they ascended the staircase. Up here also the shutters were tightly closed, the ventilation being perfunctorily done, for this day at least, by opening the hall-window in front and an upper window behind. Clare unlatched the door of a large chamber, felt his way across it, and parted the shutters to the width of two or three inches. A shaft of dazzling sunlight glanced into the room, revealing heavy, old-fashioned furniture, crimson damask hangings, and an enormous four-post bedstead, along the head of which were carved running figures, apparently

1 sheered off: change direction abruptly.

Atalanta's race[1].

"Rest at last!" said he, setting down his bag and the parcel of viands.

They remained in great quietness till the caretaker should have come to shut the windows: as a precaution, putting themselves in total darkness by barring the shutters as before, lest the woman should open the door of their chamber for any casual reason. Between six and seven o'clock she came, but did not approach the wing they were in. They heard her close the windows, fasten them, lock the door, and go away. Then Clare again stole a chink of light from the window, and they shared another meal, till by-and-by they were enveloped in the shades of night which they had no candle to disperse.

Chapter 58

The night was strangely solemn and still. In the small hours she whispered to him the whole story of how he had walked in his sleep with her in his arms across the Froom stream, at the imminent risk of both their lives, and laid her down in the stone coffin at the ruined abbey. He had never known of that till now.

"Why didn't you tell me next day?" he said. "It might have prevented much misunderstanding and woe."

"Don't think of what's past!" said she. "I am not going to think outside of now. Why should we! Who knows what tomorrow has in store?"

But it apparently had no sorrow. The morning was wet and foggy, and Clare, rightly informed that the caretaker only opened the windows on fine days, ventured to creep out of their chamber, and explore the house, leaving Tess asleep. There was no food on the premises, but there was water, and he took advantage of the fog to emerge from the mansion, and fetch tea, bread,

1 Atalanta's race: Atalanta (Greek, meaning "balanced") is a character from ancient Greek mythology. In order to get her a husband, her father made a deal with Atalanta that she would marry anybody who could beat her in a foot race. Anyone who tried to beat her and failed, however, would be killed. Atalanta agreed, as she could run extremely fast. She outran many suitors, who were then executed. The suitor Hippomenes (also known as Melanion) knew that he could not win a fair race with Atalanta, but was enthralled by her beauty. Hippomenes then prayed to the goddess Aphrodite for help. The goddess gave him three golden apples and told him to drop them one at a time to distract Atalanta. Sure enough, she stopped running long enough to retrieve each golden apple. Hippomenes finally succeeded, winning the race and Atalanta's hand. Some versions hold that she used the apples as an excuse to let him win.

and butter from a shop in a little place two miles beyond, as also a small tin kettle and spirit-lamp, that they might get fire without smoke. His re-entry awoke her; and they breakfasted on what he had brought.

They were indisposed[1] to stir abroad, and the day passed, and the night following, and the next, and next; till, almost without their being aware, five days had slipped by in absolute seclusion, not a sight or sound of a human being disturbing their peacefulness, such as it was. The changes of the weather were their only events, the birds of the New Forest their only company. By tacit consent they hardly once spoke of any incident of the past subsequent to their wedding-day. The gloomy intervening time seemed to sink into chaos, over which the present and prior times closed as if it never had been. Whenever he suggested that they should leave their shelter, and go forwards towards Southampton or London, she showed a strange unwillingness to move.

"Why should we put an end to all that's sweet and lovely!" she deprecated[2]. "What must come will come." And, looking through the shutter-chink: "All is trouble outside there; inside here content."

He peeped out also. It was quite true; within was affection, union, error forgiven: outside was the inexorable[3].

"And — and," she said, pressing her cheek against his, "I fear that what you think of me now may not last. I do not wish to outlive your present feeling for me. I would rather not. I would rather be dead and buried when the time comes for you to despise me, so that it may never be known to me that you despised me."

"I cannot ever despise you."

"I also hope that. But considering what my life had been I cannot see why any man should, sooner or later, be able to help despising me... How wickedly mad I was! Yet formerly I never could bear to hurt a fly or a worm, and the sight of a bird in a cage used often to make me cry."

They remained yet another day. In the night the dull sky cleared, and the result was that the old caretaker at the cottage awoke early. The brilliant sunrise made her unusually brisk; she decided to open the contiguous mansion immediately, and to air it thoroughly on such a day. Thus it occurred that, having arrived and opened the lower rooms before six o'clock, she ascended to the bedchambers, and was about to turn the handle of the one wherein they

1 indisposed: unwilling.
2 deprecated: strongly disapproved
3 inexorable: continuing without any possibility of being stopped.

lay. At that moment she fancied she could hear the breathing of persons within. Her slippers and her antiquity had rendered her progress a noiseless one so far, and she made for instant retreat; then, deeming that her hearing might have deceived her, she turned anew to the door and softly tried the handle. The lock was out of order, but a piece of furniture had been moved forward on the inside, which prevented her opening the door more than an inch or two. A stream of morning light through the shutter-chink fell upon the faces of the pair, wrapped in profound slumber, Tess's lips being parted like a half-opened flower near his cheek. The caretaker was so struck with their innocent appearance, and with the elegance of Tess's gown hanging across a chair, her silk stockings beside it, the pretty parasol, and the other habits in which she had arrived because she had none else, that her first indignation at the effrontery[1] of tramps and vagabonds gave way to a momentary sentimentality over this genteel elopement, as it seemed. She closed the door, and withdrew as softly as she had come, to go and consult with her neighbours on the odd discovery.

Not more than a minute had elapsed after her withdrawal when Tess woke, and then Clare. Both had a sense that something had disturbed them, though they could not say what; and the uneasy feeling which it engendered grew stronger. As soon as he was dressed he narrowly scanned the lawn through the two or three inches of shutter-chink.

"I think we will leave at once," said he. "It is a fine day. And I cannot help fancying somebody is about the house. At any rate, the woman will be sure to come today."

She passively assented, and putting the room in order they took up the few articles that belonged to them, and departed noiselessly. When they had got into the Forest she turned to take a last look at the house.

"Ah, happy house — goodbye!" she said. "My life can only be a question of a few weeks. Why should we not have stayed there?"

"Don't say it, Tess! We shall soon get out of this district altogether. We'll continue our course as we've begun it, and keep straight north. Nobody will think of looking for us there. We shall be looked for at the Wessex ports if we are sought at all. When we are in the north we will get to a port and away."

Having thus persuaded her the plan was pursued, and they kept a bee-line northward[2]. Their long repose at the manor-house lent them walking power

1 effrontery: extreme rudeness and lack of ability to understand that your behaviour is not acceptable to other people.
2 kept a bee-line northward: kept going directly and quickly toward the north.

now; and towards mid-day they found that they were approaching the steepled city of Melchester, which lay directly in their way. He decided to rest her in a clump of trees during the afternoon, and push onward under cover of darkness. At dusk Clare purchased food as usual, and their night march began, the boundary between Upper and Mid-Wessex being crossed at about eight o'clock.

To walk across country without much regard to roads was not new to Tess, and she showed her old agility in the performance. The intercepting city, ancient Melchester, they were obliged to pass through in order to take advantage of the town bridge for crossing a large river that obstructed them. It was about midnight when they went along the deserted streets, lighted fitfully by the few lamps, keeping off the pavement that it might not echo their footsteps. The graceful pile of cathedral architecture rose dimly on their left hand, but it was lost upon them now. Once out of the town they followed the turnpike-road, which after a few miles plunged across an open plain.

Though the sky was dense with cloud a diffused light from some fragment of a moon had hitherto helped them a little. But the moon had now sunk, the clouds seemed to settle almost on their heads, and the night grew as dark as a cave. However, they found their way along, keeping as much on the turf as possible that their tread might not resound, which it was easy to do, there being no hedge or fence of any kind. All around was open loneliness and black solitude, over which a stiff breeze blew.

They had proceeded thus gropingly two or three miles further when on a sudden Clare became conscious of some vast erection[1] close in his front, rising sheer from the grass. They had almost struck themselves against it.

"What monstrous place is this?" said Angel.

"It hums," said she. "Hearken!"

He listened. The wind, playing upon the edifice, produced a booming tune, like the note of some gigantic one-stringed harp. No other sound came from it, and lifting his hand and advancing a step or two, Clare felt the vertical surface of the structure. It seemed to be of solid stone, without joint or moulding. Carrying his fingers onward he found that what he had come in contact with was a colossal rectangular pillar; by stretching out his left hand he could feel a similar one adjoining. At an indefinite height overhead something made the black sky blacker, which had the semblance of a vast architrave uniting the pillars horizontally. They carefully entered beneath and between; the surfaces

1 vast erection: huge structure that has been built.

echoed their soft rustle; but they seemed to be still out of doors. The place was roofless. Tess drew her breath fearfully, and Angel, perplexed, said —

"What can it be?"

Feeling sideways they encountered another tower-like pillar, square and uncompromising as the first; beyond it another and another. The place was all doors and pillars, some connected above by continuous architraves[1].

"A very Temple of the Winds," he said.

The next pillar was isolated; others composed a trilithon[2]; others were prostrate[3], their flanks forming a causeway wide enough for a carriage and it was soon obvious that they made up a forest of monoliths[4] grouped upon the grassy expanse of the plain. The couple advanced further into this pavilion of the night till they stood in its midst.

"It is Stonehenge[5]!" said Clare.

"The heathen[6] temple, you mean?"

"Yes. Older than the centuries; older than the d'Urbervilles! Well, what shall we do, darling? We may find shelter further on."

But Tess, really tired by this time, flung herself upon an oblong slab that lay close at hand, and was sheltered from the wind by a pillar. Owing to the action of the sun during the preceding day the stone was warm and dry, in comforting contrast to the rough and chill grass around, which had damped her skirts and shoes.

"I don't want to go any further, Angel," she said, stretching out her hand for his. "Can't we bide here?"

"I fear not. This spot is visible for miles by day, although it does not seem so now."

1 architraves: the molding around a rectangular opening as a door.
2 a trilithon: a monument consisting of three stones; especially, such a monument forming a kind of doorway, as among the ancient Celts.
3 prostrate: lying stretched out on the ground.
4 monoliths: a large single block of stone in the form of a column.
5 Stonehenge: a Neolithic and Bronze Age megalithic monument located near Amesbury in the English county of Wiltshire, north of Salisbury. It is composed of earthworks surrounding a circular setting of large standing stones and is one of the most famous prehistoric sites in the world. Archaeologists think that the standing stones were erected between 2500 BC and 2000 BC although the surrounding circular earth bank and ditch, which constitute the earliest phase of the monument, have been dated to about 3100 BC.
6 heathen: a person who does not belong to a widely held religion as regarded by those who do.

"One of my mother's people was a shepherd hereabouts, now I think of it. And you used to say at Talbothays[1] that I was a heathen. So now I am at home."

He knelt down beside her outstretched form, and put his lips upon hers.

"Sleepy are you, dear? I think you are lying on an altar."

"I like very much to be here," she murmured. "It is so solemn and lonely — after my great happiness — with nothing but the sky above my face. It seems as if there were no folk in the world but we two; and I wish there were not — except 'Liza-Lu'[2]."

Clare thought she might as well rest here till it should get a little lighter, and he flung his overcoat upon her, and sat down by her side.

"Angel, if anything happens to me, will you watch over 'Liza-Lu for my sake?" she asked, when they had listened a long time to the wind among the pillars.

"I will."

"She is so good and simple and pure. O, Angel — I wish you would marry her if you lose me, as you will do shortly. O, if you would!"

"If I lose you I lose all! And she is my sister-in-law."

"That's nothing, dearest. People marry sister-laws continually about Marlott[3]; and 'Liza-Lu is so gentle and sweet, and she is growing so beautiful. O, I could share you with her willingly when we are spirits![4] If you would train her and teach her, Angel, and bring her up for your own self! ... She had all the best of me without the bad of me; and if she were to become yours it would almost seem as if death had not divided us... Well, I have said it. I won't mention it again."

She ceased, and he fell into thought. In the far north-east sky he could see between the pillars a level streak of light. The uniform concavity of black cloud was lifting bodily like the lid of a pot, letting in at the earth's edge the coming day, against which the towering monoliths and trilithons began to be blackly defined.

"Did they sacrifice to God here?" asked she.

"No," said he.

1 Talbothays: the Tallbothays Dairy in the Froom Valley, where Tess worked as a dairymaid and met Angel.
2 Liza-Lu: Tess's younger sister.
3 Marlott: Tess's home village where she was born and grew up.
4 when we are spirits: when we both are dead and united to live in another world.

"Who to?"

"I believe to the sun. That lofty stone set away by itself is in the direction of the sun, which will presently rise behind it."

"This reminds me, dear," she said. "You remember you never would interfere with any belief of mine before we were married? But I knew your mind all the same, and I thought as you thought — not from any reasons of my own, but because you thought so. Tell me now, Angel, do you think we shall meet again after we are dead? I want to know."

He kissed her to avoid a reply at such a time.

"O, Angel — I fear that means no!" said she, with a suppressed sob. "And I wanted so to see you again — so much, so much! What — not even you and I, Angel, who love each other so well?"

Like a greater than himself, to the critical question at the critical time he did not answer; and they were again silent. In a minute or two her breathing became more regular, her clasp of his hand relaxed, and she fell asleep. The band of silver paleness along the east horizon made even the distant parts of the Great Plain appear dark and near; and the whole enormous landscape bore that impress of reserve, taciturnity, and hesitation which is usual just before day. The eastward pillars and their architraves stood up blackly against the light, and the great flame-shaped Sun-stone beyond them; and the Stone of Sacrifice midway. Presently the night wind died out, and the quivering little pools in the cup-like hollows of the stones lay still. At the same time something seemed to move on the verge of the dip eastward — a mere dot. It was the head of a man approaching them from the hollow beyond the Sunstone. Clare wished they had gone onward, but in the circumstances decided to remain quiet. The figure came straight towards the circle of pillars in which they were.

He heard something behind him, the brush of feet. Turning, he saw over the prostrate columns another figure; then before he was aware, another was at hand on the right, under a trilithon, and another on the left. The dawn shone full on the front of the man westward, and Clare could discern from this that he was tall, and walked as if trained. They all closed in with evident purpose. Her story then was true! Springing to his feet, he looked around for a weapon, loose stone, means of escape, anything. By this time the nearest man was upon him.

"It is no use, sir," he said. "There are sixteen of us on the Plain, and the whole country is reared."

"Let her finish her sleep!" he implored in a whisper of the men as they gathered round.

When they saw where she lay, which they had not done till then, they

showed no objection, and stood watching her, as still as the pillars around. He went to the stone and bent over her, holding one poor little hand; her breathing now was quick and small, like that of a lesser creature than a woman. All waited in the growing light, their faces and hands as if they were silvered, the remainder of their figures dark, the stones glistening green-gray, the Plain still a mass of shade. Soon the light was strong, and a ray shone upon her unconscious form, peering under her eyelids and waking her.

"What is it, Angel?" she said, starting up. "Have they come for me?"

"Yes, dearest," he said. "They have come."

"It is as it should be," she murmured. "Angel, I am almost glad — yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me!"

She stood up, shook herself, and went forward, neither of the men having moved.

"I am ready," she said quietly.

Critical Points

Hardy as a writer of a transitional period

Hardy was noted for his pessimistic novels of rural life. Living at the turn of the century, Hardy is often regarded as a transitional writer, influenced by both the Victorian and the modern. In his novels, there is an apparent nostalgic touch in his description of the primitive rural life, which was gradually declining and disappearing as England was marching fast into an industrial country. And he is always sympathetic with those traditional characters and mourns over their failure and misfortune.

In his works, man is shown driven by a combined forces of "nature", both inside and outside. His inherent nature may prompt him to go and search for some specific happiness or success and set him in conflict with the environment. The outside environment produces mistimed actions and unfortunate coincidences. Man proves impotent before his ordained destiny. This pessimistic view of life predominates most of his works and earns him a reputation as a writer of naturalism.

Though naturalism plays an important part in some of his works, Hardy is never far away from the real life and the existing society. Most of his works are devoted to a realistic presentation of life, and there is often bitter

and sharp criticism and even open defiance of the wicked, hypocritical and corrupted Victorian institution, convention and morality which strangle the individual will and destroy natural human emotions and relationships. The conflicts between the traditional and the modern, between the old rural value of respectability and honesty and the new utilitarian commercialism, between the old, false social moral and the natural human passion, etc., are all closely set in a realistic background.

Tess as a victim of both fate and society

All of Tess's life is the result of either an accident, fate, or the intervention of the gods. As an insecure and inferior being, she can never love in a genuine and generous way. She is not the master of her own life. She is exploited, preyed upon, then humiliated and abandoned. The book ends: "Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess." The last words highlight Hardy's critical attitude toward the unjust treatment of women and his denunciation of the hypocrisy of the social structures and moral codes of Victorian England.

On the one hand, Tess's fate is personal, because she happens to be so beautiful, pure, innocent, obedient, and poor, and because she happens to get involved with the two men who, though apparent rivals, actually join their forces in bringing about her destruction. On the other hand, her fate is a social one. It can be the fate of any country girl like her. It can be the fate of all the tenants who are driven out of their land and home and forced to seek somewhere else for sustenance.

Questions

1. Discuss the differences found in Angel Clare and Alec d'Urberville.
2. How is the novel an indictment of the class system of English society at the time?
3. How do nature and fate play a role in this novel? What does the author mean when he entitled the part "Phase the Seventh: Fulfilment"?

Class Activities

It is Angel's love and betrayal that changes the final fate of Tess. Is Angel a great lover or an unintended murderer? Act as the defence attorney or the

prosecuting attorney and assemble evidence from the novel that supports Angel's guilt or innocence.

QUOTATIONS

My opinion is that a poet should express the emotion of all the ages and the thought of his own.

—Thomas Hardy

Everybody is so talented nowadays that the only people I care to honour as deserving real distinction are those who remain in obscurity.

—Thomas Hardy

Unit 36

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)

Oscar Wilde, *Irish dramatist, novelist and poet, was the representative of Aestheticism.*

Life and Writing

Oscar Wilde

Wilde was born in Dublin in 1854. His father, Sir William Wilde, was Ireland's leading ear and eye surgeon, and a prominent poet, translator, and an outspoken writer for the Young Ireland Movement of the 1840s. His mother was well known as a writer and literary hostess. For three years, Wilde studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and established him as a brilliant classical scholar. At the age of 23, he attended Oxford, and won prize for his poem in 1878, and became known as the most favoured student of John Ruskin. A great conversationalist and a famous wit, Wilde began by publishing mediocre poetry but soon achieved widespread fame for his comic plays.

His career and social personality soon became well known all over Europe and America. Following the publication of the first volume of his *Poems* (1881), Wilde went to visit the United States in 1882, lecturing on his impressions of America, and reading some of his works. He left a famous saying "I have nothing to declare but my genius!" when going through US Customs. In 1883 he returned to London, full of talent and passion. In 1884 he married Constance Lloyd, with whom he had two sons. In 1888 he published a volume of fairy stories, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. In 1891 he wrote another collection of fairy tales, *A House of Pomegranates*.

His first play, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, was produced in 1892. His other plays include *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895), and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). All his plays are full of paradoxes and witty sayings, and the epigrammatic brilliance and shrewd social observation brought him great success.

Wilde's fate changed dramatically. In 1891, the same year that the second edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was published, Wilde met young poet Lord Alfred Douglas, who translated Wilde' s play *Salome* from French to English in 1894. The affair between them caused a good deal of scandal. Douglas's father, the Marquess of Queensberry, eventually criticised it publicly. Lord Alfred convinced Wilde to sue Queensbury for libel, a suit that was eventually lost. Wilde was sentenced to two years in prison with hard labour, the life he would record in his memoir "The Ballad of Reading Goal" (1898).

After his release, Wilde lived a few years in France in desperately poor and isolated condition before he died in a hotel in Paris on November 30, 1900.

Major Works

Lady Windermere's Fan is a delightful comedy about upper-class manners and morals. Originally, it was entitled "A Good Woman". But Wilde's mother believed that no one would care about the story of a "Good Woman" and the play would attract a small attendance. Taking his mother's advice, Wilde gave the play its present title.

Set in London, the central character of the play is Mrs. Erlynne, a "depraved" woman who sacrifices her reputation to save her daughter's marriage. Lady Windermere learns from a friend that her husband is friendly with a Mrs. Erlynne. Suspecting that he is being unfaithful to her, she decides to visit Lord Darlington, who has won several women's "affections". Unintentionally, she leaves her fan in Lord Darlington's apartment. Mrs. Erlynne saves Lady Windermere's reputation by claiming that the fan belongs to her. Thus, she is assumed to be involved in the love affair with Lord Darlington. Mrs. Erlynne is actually Lady Windermere's divorced mother, who, for the past 20 years, has been presumed dead. She has been watching her daughter's relationship with Lord Darlington closely, and prevents her from making a similar mistake she made 20 years ago.

The Importance of Being Earnest is Oscar Wilde's most successful play, and is regarded as his masterpiece. The plot is simple and old-fashioned:

Two young ladies love two gentlemen. These two gentlemen, for their respective reasons, have to invent false identities for themselves. Therefore, misunderstanding occur one after another, bringing the audience one surprise after another. The ending is also conventional: all the misunderstandings have been cleared up and the four lovers become two couples. This is a comedy full of wit and elegance.

Wilde is well known for his witty humour, and his characters are masters of conversation. In most of his plays, Wilde likes to design a "woman with a past", who might have once been a prostitute or have committed a terrible but secret crime. Wilde used this character as a device for building suspense and holding interest.

The Picture of Dorian Gray

The first edition of his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* appeared in the summer of 1890 in *Monthly Magazine*. However, it was criticised as scandalous and immoral. Disappointed with its reception, Wilde revised the novel in 1891, adding a preface and six new chapters.

Plot Summary

In the stately London home of his aunt, Lady Brandon, the well-known artist Basil Hallward meets Dorian Gray. Dorian immediately captures Basil's artistic imagination. Dorian sits for several portraits. Lord Henry upsets Dorian with a speech about the transient nature of beauty and youth. Dorian curses his portrait, which he believes will one day remind him of the beauty he will have lost. In a fit of distress, he pledges his soul if only the painting could bear the burden of age and infamy, allowing him to stay forever young.

The youth becomes a disciple of the "new Hedonism" and proposes to live a life dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure. He falls in love with Sibyl Vane, a young actress who performs in a theatre in London's slums. He adores her acting; she, in turn, refers to him as "Prince Charming". Overcome by her emotions for Dorian, Sibyl decides that she can no longer act. Dorian, who loves Sibyl because of her ability to act, cruelly breaks his engagement with her. Sibyl kills herself.

Dorian lives a life devoted to new experiences and sensations, regardless of conventional standards of morality or the consequences of his actions. Eighteen years have passed. Dorian remains young and beautiful. The figure in the painting, however, grows increasingly wizened and hideous. One night,

Dorian shows Basil the now-hideous portrait, and Hallward, horrified, begs him to repent. Dorian claims it is too late for penance and kills Basil.

Dorian resolves to amend his life but cannot muster the courage to confess his crimes, and the painting now reveals his supposed desire to repent for what it is — hypocrisy. In a fury, Dorian picks up the knife he used to stab Basil Hallward and attempts to destroy the painting. There is a crash, and the portrait, unharmed, shows Dorian Gray as a beautiful young man. On the floor lies the body of an old man, horribly wrinkled and disfigured, with a knife plunged into his heart.

Introduction to the Preface, Chapter II and Main Characters

The preface is a series of epigrams, or concise, witty sayings, that express the major points of Oscar Wilde's aesthetic philosophy. Wilde praises beauty and repudiates the notion that art serves a moral purpose.

In Chapter II, Basil introduces Dorian to Lord Henry. Lord Henry discusses his personal philosophy, which holds that "the highest of all duties [is] the duty that one owes to one's self." While Basil continues to work, Lord Henry escorts Dorian into the garden, where he praises Dorian's youth and beauty and warns him how surely and quickly those qualities will fade. He urges Dorian to live life to its fullest, to spend his time "always searching for new sensations". Inside again, the portrait makes Dorian unhappy. He reflects that his portrait will remain young even as he himself grows old and wrinkled.

Dorian Gray is a radiantly handsome, impressionable, and wealthy young man. Under the influence of Lord Henry Wotton, he becomes extremely concerned with the transience of his beauty and begins to pursue his own pleasure above all else.

Lord Henry Wotton is a nobleman. He is urbane and witty, perpetually armed and ready with well-phrased epigrams criticising the moralism and hypocrisy of Victorian society. His pleasure-seeking philosophy of "new Hedonism" plays a vital role in Dorian's development.

Basil Hallward is an artist, and a friend of Lord Henry. Basil claims that Dorian possesses a beauty so rare that it has helped him realise a new kind of art, and fully play his artistic potential, as his portrait of Dorian proves to be his masterpiece.

Preface

The artist is the creator of beautiful things.

To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim.

The critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things.

The highest as the lowest form of criticism is a mode of autobiography.

Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault.

Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope.

They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only beauty.

There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.

The nineteenth century dislike of realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass.

The nineteenth century dislike of romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass.

The moral life of man forms part of the subject-matter of the artist, but the morality of art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium.

No artist desires to prove anything. Even things that are true can be proved.

No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style.

No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything.

Thought and language are to the artist instruments of an art.

Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for an art.

From the point of view of form, the type of all the arts is the art of the musician. From the point of view of feeling, the actor's craft is the type.

All art is at once surface and symbol.

Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.

Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.

It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.

Diversity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new, complex, and vital.

When critics disagree, the artist is in accord with himself.

We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely.

All art is quite useless.

Chapter II

As they entered they saw Dorian Gray. He was seated at the piano, with his back to them, turning over the pages of a volume of Schumann's "Forest Scenes." "You must lend me these, Basil," he cried. "I want to learn them. They are perfectly charming."

"That entirely depends on how you sit[1] today, Dorian."

"Oh, I am tired of sitting, and I don't want a life-sized portrait of myself," answered the lad, swinging round on the music-stool in a wilful, petulant manner. When he caught sight of Lord Henry, a faint blush coloured his cheeks for a moment, and he started up. "I beg your pardon, Basil, but I didn't know you had any one with you."

"This is Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian, an old Oxford friend of mine. I have just been telling him what a capital sitter you were, and now you have spoiled everything."

"You have not spoiled my pleasure in meeting you, Mr. Gray," said Lord Henry, stepping forward and extending his hand. "My aunt has often spoken to me about you. You are one of her favourites, and, I am afraid, one of her victims also."

"I am in Lady Agatha's black books at present,"[2] answered Dorian with a funny look of penitence. "I promised to go to a club in Whitechapel with her last Tuesday, and I really forgot all about it. We were to have played a duet together three duets, I believe. I don't know what she will say to me. I am far too frightened to call."

"Oh, I will make your peace with[3] my aunt. She is quite devoted to you. And I don't think it really matters about your not being there. The audience probably thought it was a duet. When Aunt Agatha sits down to the piano, she makes quite enough noise for two people."

"That is very horrid to her, and not very nice to me," answered Dorian, laughing.

Lord Henry looked at him. Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his finely curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair. There was something in his face that made one trust him at once. All the candour[4] of

1 sit: pose for a portrait.
2 "I am in Lady Agatha's black books at present": I'm not in Lady Agatha's favour.
3 make your peace with: settle the quarrel with.
4 candour: frankness.

youth was there, as well as all youth's passionate purity. One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world. No wonder Basil Hallward worshipped him.

"You are too charming to go in for philanthropy, Mr. Gray — far too charming." And Lord Henry flung himself down on the divan and opened his cigarette-case.

The painter had been busy mixing his colours and getting his brushes ready. He was looking worried, and when he heard Lord Henry's last remark, he glanced at him, hesitated for a moment, and then said, "Harry, I want to finish this picture to-day. Would you think it awfully rude of me if I asked you to go away?"

Lord Henry smiled and looked at Dorian Gray. "Am I to go, Mr. Gray?" he asked.

"Oh, please don't, Lord Henry. I see that Basil is in one of his sulky moods, and I can't bear him when he sulks. Besides, I want you to tell me why I should not go in for philanthropy."

"I don't know that I shall tell you that, Mr. Gray. It is so tedious a subject that one would have to talk seriously about it. But I certainly shall not run away, now that you have asked me to stop. You don't really mind, Basil, do you? You have often told me that you liked your sitters to have some one to chat to."

Hallward bit his lip. "If Dorian wishes it, of course you must stay. Dorian's whims[1] are laws to everybody, except himself."

Lord Henry took up his hat and gloves. "You are very pressing[2], Basil, but I am afraid I must go. I have promised to meet a man at the Orleans. Good-bye, Mr. Gray. Come and see me some afternoon in Curzon Street. I am nearly always at home at five o'clock. Write to me when you are coming. I should be sorry to miss you."

"Basil," cried Dorian Gray, "if Lord Henry Wotton goes, I shall go, too. You never open your lips while you are painting, and it is horribly dull standing on a platform and trying to look pleasant. Ask him to stay. I insist upon it."

"Stay, Harry, to oblige Dorian, and to oblige me," said Hallward, gazing intently at his picture. "It is quite true, I never talk when I am working, and never listen either, and it must be dreadfully tedious for my unfortunate sitters.

1 whims: odd or fanciful ideas.
2 pressing: demanding.

I beg you to stay."

"But what about my man at the Orleans?"

The painter laughed. "I don't think there will be any difficulty about that. Sit down again, Harry. And now, Dorian, get up on the platform, and don't move about too much, or pay any attention to what Lord Henry says. He has a very bad influence over all his friends, with the single exception of myself."

Dorian Gray stepped up on the dais[1] with the air of a young Greek martyr, and made a little *moue*[2] of discontent to Lord Henry, to whom he had rather taken a fancy. He was so unlike Basil. They made a delightful contrast. And he had such a beautiful voice. After a few moments he said to him, "Have you really a very bad influence, Lord Henry? As bad as Basil says?"

"There is no such thing as a good influence, Mr. Gray. All influence is immoral — immoral from the scientific point of view."

"Why?"

"Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts, or burn with his natural passions. His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of some one else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him. The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly — that is what each of us is here for. People are afraid of themselves, nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty that one owes to one's self. Of course, they are charitable. They feed the hungry and clothe the beggar. But their own souls starve, and are naked. Courage has gone out of our race. Perhaps we never really had it. The terror of society, which is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion these are the two things that govern us. And yet — "

"Just turn your head a little more to the right, Dorian, like a good boy," said the painter, deep in his work and conscious only that a look had come into the lad's face that he had never seen there before.

"And yet," continued Lord Henry, in his low, musical voice, and with that graceful wave of the hand that was always so characteristic of him, and that he had even in his Eton days, "I believe that if one man were to live out his life fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling, expression to every

1 dais: a platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.
2 *moue*: pouting, a look of discontent in which the lips are pressed together and forward.

thought, reality to every dream I believe that the world would gain such a fresh impulse of joy that we would forget all the maladies of mediaevalism[1], and return to the Hellenic ideal to something finer, richer than the Hellenic ideal[2], it may be. But the bravest man amongst us is afraid of himself. The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives.[3] We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind and poisons us. The body sins once, and has done with its sin, for action is a mode of purification. Nothing remains then but the recollection of a pleasure, or the luxury of a regret. The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful. It has been said that the great events of the world take place in the brain. It is in the brain, and the brain only, that the great sins of the world take place also. You, Mr. Gray, you yourself, with your rose-red youth and your rose-white boyhood, you have had passions that have made you afraid, thoughts that have fined you with terror, day-dreams and sleeping dreams whose mere memory might stain your cheek with shame — "

"Stop!" faltered Dorian Gray, "stop! you bewilder me. I don't know what to say. There is some answer to you, but I cannot find it. Don't speak. Let me think. Or, rather, let me try not to think."

For nearly ten minutes he stood there, motionless, with parted lips and eyes strangely bright. He was dimly conscious that entirely fresh influences were at work within him. Yet they seemed to him to have come really from himself. The few words that Basil's friend had said to him — words spoken by chance, no doubt, and with wilful paradox[4] in them — had touched some secret chord that had never been touched before, but that he felt was now vibrating and throbbing to curious pulses.

Music had stirred him like that. Music had troubled him many times. But music was not articulate. It was not a new world, but rather another chaos, that it created in us. Words! Mere words! How terrible they were! How clear, and vivid, and cruel! One could not escape from them. And yet what a subtle magic

1 mediaevalism: the method or spirit of the Middle Ages; devotion to the institutions and practices of the Middle Ages.
2 the Hellenic ideal: the ideal of ancient Greece.
3 The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives: The development of civilisation denies man himself many pleasures, which damages his life.
4 wilful paradox: paradox on purpose. paradox: a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that may in fact be true.

there was in them! They seemed to be able to give a plastic form to formless things, and to have a music of their own as sweet as that of viol or of lute. Mere words! Was there anything so real as words?

Yes; there had been things in his boyhood that he had not understood. He understood them now. Life suddenly became fiery-coloured to him. It seemed to him that he had been walking in fire. Why had he not known it?

With his subtle smile, Lord Henry watched him. He knew the precise psychological moment when to say nothing. He felt intensely interested. He was amazed at the sudden impression that his words had produced, and, remembering a book that he had read when he was sixteen, a book which had revealed to him much that he had not known before, he wondered whether Dorian Gray was passing through a similar experience. He had merely shot an arrow into the air. Had it hit the mark? How fascinating the lad was!

Hallward painted away with that marvellous bold touch of his, that had the true refinement and perfect delicacy that in art, at any rate comes only from strength. He was unconscious of the silence.

"Basil, I am tired of standing," cried Dorian Gray suddenly. "I must go out and sit in the garden. The air is stifling here."

"My dear fellow, I am so sorry. When I am painting, I can't think of anything else. But you never sat better. You were perfectly still. And I have caught the effect I wanted the half-parted lips and the bright look in the eyes. I don't know what Harry has been saying to you, but he has certainly made you have the most wonderful expression. I suppose he has been paying you compliments. You mustn't believe a word that he says."

"He has certainly not been paying me compliments. Perhaps that is the reason that I don't believe anything he has told me."

"You know you believe it all," said Lord Henry, looking at him with his dreamy languorous eyes. "I will go out to the garden with you. It is horribly hot in the studio. Basil, let us have something iced to drink, something with strawberries in it."

"Certainly, Harry. Just touch the bell, and when Parker comes I will tell him what you want. I have got to work up this background, so I will join you later on. Don't keep Dorian too long. I have never been in better form for painting than I am today. This is going to be my masterpiece. It is my masterpiece as it stands."

Lord Henry went out to the garden and found Dorian Gray burying his face in the great cool lilac-blossoms, feverishly drinking in their perfume as if it had been wine. He came close to him and put his hand upon his shoulder. "You are quite right to do that," he murmured. "Nothing can cure the soul but the senses,

just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul."

The lad started and drew back. He was bareheaded, and the leaves had tossed his rebellious curls and tangled all their gilded threads. There was a look of fear in his eyes, such as people have when they are suddenly awakened. His finely chiselled nostrils quivered, and some hidden nerve shook the scarlet of his lips and left them trembling.

"Yes," continued Lord Henry, "that is one of the great secrets of life to cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul. You are a wonderful creation. You know more than you think you know, just as you know less than you want to know."

Dorian Gray frowned and turned his head away. He could not help liking the tall, graceful young man who was standing by him. His romantic, olive-coloured face and worn expression interested him. There was something in his low languid voice that was absolutely fascinating. His cool, white, flowerlike hands, even, had a curious charm. They moved, as he spoke, like music, and seemed to have a language of their own. But he felt afraid of him, and ashamed of being afraid. Why had it been left for a stranger to reveal him to himself? He had known Basil Hallward for months, but the friendship between them had never altered him. Suddenly there had come some one across his life who seemed to have disclosed to him life's mystery. And, yet, what was there to be afraid of? He was not a schoolboy or a girl. It was absurd to be frightened.

"Let us go and sit in the shade," said Lord Henry. "Parker has brought out the drinks, and if you stay any longer in this glare, you will be quite spoiled, and Basil will never paint you again. You really must not allow yourself to become sunburnt. It would be unbecoming."

"What can it matter?" cried Dorian Gray, laughing, as he sat down on the seat at the end of the garden.

"It should matter everything to you, Mr. Gray."

"Why?"

"Because you have the most marvellous youth, and youth is the one thing worth having."

"I don't feel that, Lord Henry."

"No, you don't feel it now. Some day, when you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when thought has seared[1] your forehead with its lines, and passion

1 seared: burned or scorched the face of.

branded your lips with its hideous fires, you will feel it, you will feel it terribly. Now, wherever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so?... You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray. Don't frown. You have. And beauty is a form of genius — is higher, indeed, than genius, as it needs no explanation. It is of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or spring-time, or the reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has its divine right of sovereignty. It makes princes of those who have it. You smile? Ah! when you have lost it you won't smile. ...People say sometimes that beauty is only superficial. That may be so, but at least it is not so superficial as thought is. To me, beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible. ...Yes, Mr. Gray, the gods have been good to you. But what the gods give they quickly take away. You have only a few years in which to live really, perfectly, and fully. When your youth goes, your beauty will go with it, and then you will suddenly discover that there are no triumphs left for you, or have to content yourself with those mean triumphs that the memory of your past will make more bitter than defeats. Every month as it wanes brings you nearer to something dreadful. Time is jealous of you, and wars against your lilies and your roses[1]. You will become sallow, and hollow-cheeked, and dull-eyed. You will suffer horribly. ...Ah! realize your youth while you have it. Don't squander the gold of your days, listening to the tedious, trying to improve the hopeless failure, or giving away your life to the ignorant, the common, and the vulgar. These are the sickly aims, the false ideals, of our age. Live! Live the wonderful life that is in you! Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always searching for new sensations. Be afraid of nothing. ...A new Hedonism[2] that is what our century wants. You might be its visible symbol. With your personality there is nothing you could not do. The world belongs to you for a season. ...The moment I met you I saw that you were quite unconscious of what you really are, of what you really might be. There was so much in you that charmed me that I felt I must tell you something about yourself. I thought how tragic it would be if you were wasted. For there is such a little time that your youth will last such a little time. The common hill-flowers wither, but they

1 your lilies and your roses: referring to the youth.
2 Hedonism: the theory that pleasure (in the sense of the satisfaction of desires) is the highest good and proper aim of human life.

blossom again. The laburnum[1] will be as yellow next June as it is now. In a month there will be purple stars on the clematis[2], and year after year the green night of its leaves will hold its purple stars. But we never get back our youth. The pulse of joy that beats in us at twenty becomes sluggish. Our limbs fail, our senses rot. We degenerate into hideous puppets, haunted by the memory of the passions of which we were too much afraid, and the exquisite temptations that we had not the courage to yield to. Youth! Youth! There is absolutely nothing in the world but youth!"

Dorian Gray listened, open-eyed and wondering. The spray of lilac fell from his hand upon the gravel. A furry bee came and buzzed round it for a moment. Then it began to scramble all over the oval stellated[3] globe of the tiny blossoms. He watched it with that strange interest in trivial things that we try to develop when things of high import make us afraid, or when we are stirred by some new emotion for which we cannot find expression, or when some thought that terrifies us lays sudden siege to the brain and calls on us to yield. After a time the bee flew away. He saw it creeping into the stained trumpet of a Tyrian convolvulus[4]. The flower seemed to quiver, and then swayed gently to and fro.

Suddenly the painter appeared at the door of the studio and made staccato[5] signs for them to come in. They turned to each other and smiled.

"I am waiting," he cried. "Do come in. The light is quite perfect, and you can bring your drinks."

They rose up and sauntered down the walk together. Two green-and-white butterflies fluttered past them, and in the pear-tree at the corner of the garden a thrush began to sing.

"You are glad you have met me, Mr. Gray," said Lord Henry, looking at him.

"Yes, I am glad now. I wonder shall I always be glad?"

"Always! That is a dreadful word. It makes me shudder when I hear it. Women are so fond of using it. They spoil every romance by trying to make it last for ever. It is a meaningless word, too. The only difference between a

1 laburnum: a small hardwood tree with hanging clusters of yellow flowers followed by pods of poisonous seeds. 金莲花
2 clematis: an ornamental climbing plant bearing white, pink, or purple flowers and feathery seeds. 铁线莲
3 stellated: starred.
4 a Tyrian convolvulus: a twining plant with purple trumpe-shaped flowers. 田旋花，牵牛花
5 staccato: with each sound or note sharply separated from the others.

caprice and a lifelong passion is that the caprice lasts a little longer."

As they entered the studio, Dorian Gray put his hand upon Lord Henry's arm. "In that case, let our friendship be a caprice," he murmured, flushing at his own boldness, then stepped up on the platform and resumed his pose.

Lord Henry flung himself into a large wicker arm-chair and watched him. The sweep and dash of the brush on the canvas made the only sound that broke the stillness, except when, now and then, Hallward stepped back to look at his work from a distance. In the slanting beams that streamed through the open doorway the dust danced and was golden. The heavy scent of the roses seemed to brood over everything.

After about a quarter of an hour Hallward stopped painting, looked for a long time at Dorian Gray, and then for a long time at the picture, biting the end of one of his huge brushes and frowning. "It is quite finished," he cried at last, and stooping down he wrote his name in long vermilion letters on the left-hand corner of the canvas.

Lord Henry came over and examined the picture. It was certainly a wonderful work of art, and a wonderful likeness as well.

"My dear fellow, I congratulate you most warmly," he said. "It is the finest portrait of modern times. Mr. Gray, come over and look at yourself."

The lad started, as if awakened from some dream.

"Is it really finished?" he murmured, stepping down from the platform.

"Quite finished," said the painter. "And you have sat splendidly to-day. I am awfully obliged to you."

"That is entirely due to me," broke in Lord Henry. "Isn't it, Mr. Gray?"

Dorian made no answer, but passed listlessly in front of his picture and turned towards it. When he saw it he drew back, and his cheeks flushed for a moment with pleasure. A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time. He stood there motionless and in wonder, dimly conscious that Hallward was speaking to him, but not catching the meaning of his words. The sense of his own beauty came on him like a revelation. He had never felt it before. Basil Hallward's compliments had seemed to him to be merely the charming exaggeration of friendship. He had listened to them, laughed at them, forgotten them. They had not influenced his nature. Then had come Lord Henry Wotton with his strange panegyricon youth[1], his terrible warning of its brevity. That had stirred him at the time, and

1 strange panegyric on youth: strange speech in praise of youth.

now, as he stood gazing at the shadow of his own loveliness, the full reality of the description flashed across him. Yes, there would be a day when his face would be wrinkled and wizen, his eyes dim and colourless, the grace of his figure broken and deformed. The scarlet would pass away from his lips and the gold steal from his hair. The life that was to make his soul would mar his body. He would become dreadful, hideous, and uncouth.

As he thought of it, a sharp pang of pain struck through him like a knife and made each delicate fibre of his nature quiver. His eyes deepened into amethyst[1], and across them came a mist of tears. He felt as if a hand of ice had been laid upon his heart.

"Don't you like it?" cried Hallward at last, stung a little by the lad's silence, not understanding what it meant.

"Of course he likes it," said Lord Henry. "Who wouldn't like it? It is one of the greatest things in modern art. I will give you anything you like to ask for it. I must have it."

"It is not my property, Harry."

"Whose property is it?"

"Dorian's, of course," answered the painter.

"He is a very lucky fellow."

"How sad it is!" murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June. ...If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that for that I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!"

"You would hardly care for such an arrangement, Basil," cried Lord Henry, laughing. "It would be rather hard lines on your work."

"I should object very strongly, Harry," said Hallward.

Dorian Gray turned and looked at him. "I believe you would, Basil. You like your art better than your friends. I am no more to you than a green bronze figure. Hardly as much, I dare say."

The painter stared in amazement. It was so unlike Dorian to speak like that. What had happened? He seemed quite angry. His face was flushed and his cheeks burning.

1 amethyst: a violet or purple colour.

"Yes," he continued, "I am less to you than your ivory Hermes[1] or your silver Faun[2]. You will like them always. How long will you like me? Till I have my first wrinkle, I suppose. I know, now, that when one loses one's good looks, whatever they may be, one loses everything. Your picture has taught me that. Lord Henry Wotton is perfectly right. Youth is the only thing worth having. When I find that I am growing old, I shall kill myself."

Hallward turned pale and caught his hand. "Dorian! Dorian!" he cried, "don't talk like that. I have never had such a friend as you, and I shall never have such another. You are not jealous of material things, are you? — you who are finer than any of them!"

"I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Every moment that passes takes something from me and gives something to it. Oh, if it were only the other way! If the picture could change, and I could be always what I am now! Why did you paint it? It will mock me some day — mock me horribly!" The hot tears welled into his eyes; he tore his hand away and, flinging himself on the divan, he buried his face in the cushions, as though he was praying.

Critical Points

The Picture of Dorian Gray: an illustration of the relation between art and moral purpose

The preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* serves as an explanation of Wilde's philosophy of art. Wilde believes that art possesses an intrinsic value — that it is beautiful and therefore valuable, and thus needs serve no other purpose. His

1 Hermes: in Greek mythology, Hermes is the Olympian god of the travelers who cross them, of shepherds and cowherds, of orators and wit, of literature and poets, of athletics, of weights and measures and invention and commerce in general, and of the cunning of thieves and liars. As a translator, Hermes is the messenger from the gods to humans, a duty which he shares with Iris. An interpreter who bridges the boundaries with strangers is a hermeneus. Hermes gives us our word "hermeneutics" for the art of interpreting hidden meaning.

2 Faun: in Roman mythology, fauns are place-spirits of untamed woodland. Romans connected their fauns with the Greek satyrs, wild and orgiastic drunken followers of Dionysus.

attitude was revolutionary at his time.

In order to understand this claim fully, one needs to consider the moral climate of Wilde's time and the Victorian sensibility regarding art and morality. In Victorian England, popular belief held that art could be used as a tool for social education and moral enlightenment, as illustrated in works by writers as Charles Dickens. The Aestheticism Movement sought to free art from this social purpose and find the meaning of art in itself.

Two works of art dominate the novel — the portrait of Dorian by Basil and the mysterious yellow book given by Lord Henry to Dorian. Both serve a purpose: the first acts as a type of "the most magical of mirrors", showing Dorian the physical dissipation his own body has been spared, while the second leads him further along the path toward crime. Art does reveal both the artist and the subject. This, in itself, is a moral lesson.

Class Activities

Seven students are expected to participate in the activity. Four students read the text on their seats, respectively taking the role of the narrator, the dialogues of Dorian Gray, Basil Hallward, and Lord Henry Wotton. Another three students pose or act in front of the class simultaneously as the reading going on, also respectively taking the role of Dorian Gray, Basil Hallward, and Lord Henry Wotton.

Questions

1. "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book," Wilde says in the Preface. "Books are well written, or badly written. That is all." Does the novel confirm this argument?
2. Discuss the character of Lord Henry and his impact on Dorian.
3. Compare and contrast the characters of Basil and Lord Henry, and their different attitudes about art and life.
4. Discuss the parallels between Dorian's story and the Faust legend. Does Dorian make a pact with the devil? What is it? How does it influence his life? Does Knowledge or Beauty give people comfort? Why or why not?

QUOTATIONS

I was working on the proof of one of my poems all the morning, and took out a comma. In the afternoon I put it back again.

—Oscar Wilde

Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter.

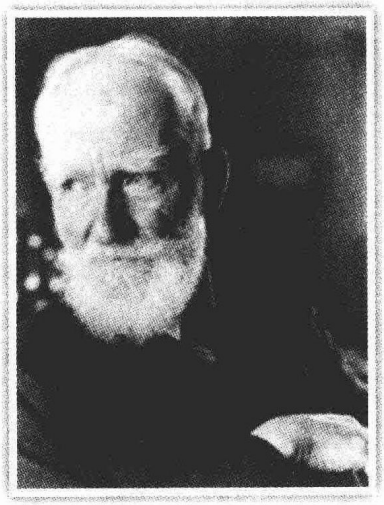
—Oscar Wilde

Unit 37

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

George Bernard Shaw *was an Irish playwright, social critic and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925 "for his work which is marked by both idealism and humanity, its stimulating satire often being infused with a singular poetic beauty".*

Life and Writing



George Bernard Shaw in 1934

Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, the youngest son of the family. His father was in the wholesale grain trade, and was always heavily drunk. Shaw's mother eventually left her husband for London to teach music. Shaw started to work in his early teens as a land-agent office boy at a very low pay and become a cashier at 16. In the spring of 1876, he moved to London, joining his sister and mother. Since then, he didn't return to Ireland for nearly 30 years.

During the next nine years in London, Shaw had no regular work. He wrote five novels but none of them was successful. He wrote music, art, and book criticism, and produced a series of remarkable and controversial weekly articles, which were published in book form as *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (1932). In his articles, he expressed his impatience with the artificiality of the London theatre, pleading for the performance of plays dealing with contemporary social and moral problems. He campaigned for a theatre of ideas in Britain, which can be comparable to that of Henrik

Ibsen[1] and Johan Strindberg[2] in Scandinavia. He took up various causes and joined several literary and political societies. In 1884 he joined the Fabian Society, which consisted of a group of politicians and intellectuals who advocated gradual social changes. He made himself into an effective speaker, and gave over 1,000 lectures. He was a freethinker, defending women's rights, and advocating the equality of income, the abolition of private property, and a radical change in the voting system. He also campaigned for the simplification of spelling and punctuation and the reform of the English alphabet.

When his first play *Widower's House* was produced in 1892, he was well known as a journalist and public speaker. The play began his long career as the most notable dramatist of his time. Shaw wrote 51 plays in a variety of genres, ranging from the comedy to the chronicle, of which the most well-known are *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1898), *The Devil's Disciple* (1901), *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1901), *Man and Superman* (1903), *Major Barbara*, *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906), and *Pygmalion* (1914). After the interruption of his dramatic output caused by World War I, Shaw returned to the stage with last major works, including *Heartbreak House* (1919) and *Saint Joan* (1923). Shaw's plays were most impressive for unorthodox views, humour, and love of paradox.

In 1925 Shaw was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He accepted

1 Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906) was a Norwegian playwright largely responsible for the rise of modern realistic drama. He is often referred to as the "father of modern drama", and is held to be the greatest of Norwegian authors and one of the most important playwrights of all time, celebrated as a national symbol by Norwegians. Ibsen largely founded the modern stage by introducing a critical eye and free inquiry into the conditions of life and issues of morality. Victorian plays were expected to be moral dramas with noble protagonists pitted against darker forces; every drama was expected to result in a morally appropriate conclusion, meaning that goodness was to bring happiness, and immorality pain. Ibsen challenged this notion and the beliefs of his times and shattered the illusions of his audiences. Ibsen's works include: *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881), *An Enemy of the People* (1882), *The Wild Duck* (1884), *Hedda Gabler* (1890) and *The Master Builder* (1892).

2 Johan August Strindberg (1849-1912) was a Swedish writer, playwright, and painter. Along with Henrik Ibsen, he is regarded as one of the most influential and most important Scandinavian authors. His work falls into two major literary movements, Naturalism and Expressionism. His early works include a novel *The Red Room* (1879) and a play *Miss Julie* (1888). Later as one of the pioneers of the Modern European stage and Expressionism, *The Dance of Death* (1900), *A Dream Play* (1902) and *The Ghost Sonata* (1907) are his well-known plays.

the honour but refused the money, explaining that he was rich enough and the money can be more helpful to younger writers. He remained as independent as ever and still wrote for the theatre until he died in 1950.

Major Works

Widowers' House

Widowers' House is Shaw's first comedy. Harry Trench, a well-intentioned young Englishman, falls in love with Blanche Sartorius. When he realises that her father is a slum landlord, Harry wonders whether it is proper to continue their relationship. He can't bring himself to accept Sartouris' money though he needs it. His youthful ideals conflict with social realities. By the end of the play, Harry becomes practical and cynical. He willingly joins in a business venture with the help of Sartorius. The change in him seems to indicate that one individual's rebellion against the social system can never last long.

Mrs. Warren's Profession

Mrs. Warren's Profession deals with a similar subject. When Vivie, Mrs. Warren's daughter, discovers that the money for her education and living is from her mother's immoral earnings, she refuses to accept it any longer. She goes to London to earn her own money through "honest work". But her job is also related with the exploitation of the poor. She is facing a difficult situation — how to maintain her innocence in a corrupt social environment? As a master of language, Bernard Shaw managed to achieve the satirical effect through many brilliant conversations.

Pygmalion

Pygmalion (1914), a tale on gender, class and phonetics, is a play based on Ovid's tale of *Pygmalion*[1]. It tells the story of Henry Higgins, a professor of phonetics, who makes a bet with his friend Colonel Pickering that he can turn a Cockney flower girl, Eliza Doolittle, into a refined society lady merely by teaching her how to speak with an upper class accent and training her in

1 Pygmalion is a mythological figure found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Pygmalion was a Cypriot sculptor who carved a woman out of ivory. According to Ovid, Pygmalion's statue is so realistic that he falls in love with it. He offers the statue presents and eventually prays to Venus, who takes pity on him and brings the statue to life. They get married and have a son.

etiquette. In the process, Higgins and Doolittle grow close, but she ultimately rejects his domineering ways and declares she will marry a poor and young gentleman.

Despite his previous insistence that the original ending remain intact, Shaw provided a more ambiguous end to the 1938 film: Eliza apparently reconciles with Henry, leaving open the possibility of their marriage. The musical version *My Fair Lady* and its 1964 film have similarly happy endings.

Major Barbara

The melodrama *Major Barbara* was written in London in the early 1900s, and first produced in 1905 at the Royal Court Theatre, London. The first publication came out in 1907. The protagonists of the play are Barbara, Andrew Undershaft and Adolphus Cusins. The themes of the play can be illustrated as the crime of poverty, the ideal community as well as the relation between the arms and the man.

Plot Summary

Lady Britomart has invited her ex-husband, the great military industrialist Andrew Undershaft, to meet his long-estranged family and to assure her children's respective futures. Her eldest daughter Barbara is a major in the Salvation Army, a Christian organisation working to help the poor, intent on saving her father's soul. Undershaft, however, offers his gospel money and gunpowder. Father and daughter strike a bargain: each will visit the other's place of work in a competition for the other's soul and the true path of salvation. When Barbara learns that her father supports the organisation with his "tainted" money, she quits the work in the Salvation Army. But she is surprised to find while visiting her father' s factory that the workers there do not seem to suffer miserably. The factory is clean and the workers are well looked after. Her father tells her that money can bring power and with it people can do good for the society. Barbara takes her father's advice and allows her fiancé to enter her father's business.

Known as one of Shaw's "discussion plays", *Major Barbara* is primarily structured through a series of conversations on morality, religion, and social engineering. The primary topic of discussion is what Shaw identifies in the preface as the "Gospel of Saint Andrew Undershaft". That is, the gospel that would promise society's redemption.

Introduction to Act III: Part One

The family plans to visit Undershaft's cannon works. Lomax enters and bluntly expresses his surprise at Barbara being out of uniform. A weary Cusins enters, he was up late drinking with Undershaft. Lady Britomart sends the children out to ready for the excursion, and raises the topic of Stephen. Undershaft protests that tradition demands Stephen's dispossession. The firm needs a man without relations or education, a man who would be out of the running if he were not strong.

Stephen enters and announces that he wants no part of the foundry. Undershaft asks Stephen about his interests. Stephen answers that he knows the difference between right and wrong. Undershaft jeers and decides that, as Stephen knows nothing and thinks he knows everything, he should go into politics. Stephen balks at his father's insults to the government. Undershaft brutally reminds him that he himself and his partner are the government.

The group returns to the library. Undershaft promises that his canon works is a "spotlessly clean and beautiful hillside town." He never has to play the tyrannical owner because the community's system of social hierarchy keeps everything in order. Barbara announces to her father that she will never forgive him for taking a man's soul from her hands. Barbara finds hope again and departs for the foundry.

Act III

Next day after lunch Lady Britomart is writing in the library in Milton Crescent. Sarah is reading in the armchair near the window. Barbara, in ordinary dress, pale and brooding, is on the settee. Charles Lomax enters. Coming forward between the settee and the writing table, he starts on seeing Barbara fashionably attired and in low spirits.

LOMAX. You've left off your uniform!

Barbara says nothing; but an expression of pain passes over her face.

LADY BRITOMART [*warning him in low tones to be careful*]. Charles!

LOMAX [*much concerned, sitting down sympathetically on the settee beside Barbara*]. I'm awfully sorry, Barbara. You know I helped you all I could with the concertina and so forth. [*Momentously.*] Still, I have never shut my eyes to the fact that there is a certain amount of tosh about the Salvation Army. Now the claims of the Church of England

LADY BRITOMART. Thats enough, Charles. Speak of something suited to

your mental capacity.

LOMAX. But surely the Church of England is suited to all our capacities.

BARBARA [*pressing his hand*]. Thank you for your sympathy, Cholly. Now go and spoon with Sarah.

LOMAX. [*rising and going to Sarah*] How is my ownest today?

SARAH. I wish you wouldnt tell Cholly to do things, Barbara. He always comes straight and does them. Cholly: we're going to the works at Perivale St. Andrews this afternoon.

LOMAX. What works?

SARAH. The cannon works.

LOMAX. What! Your governor's shop!

SARAH. Yes.

LOMAX. Oh I say!

Cusins enters in poor condition. He also starts visibly when he sees Barbara without her uniform.

BARBARA. I expected you this morning, Dolly. Didnt you guess that?

CUSINS. [*sitting down beside her*]. I'm sorry. I have only just breakfasted.

SARAH. But weve just finished lunch.

BARBARA. Have you had one of your bad nights?

CUSINS. No: I had rather a good night: in fact, one of the most remarkable nights I have ever passed.

BARBARA. The meeting?

CUSINS. No: after the meeting.

LADY BRITOMART. You should have gone to bed after the meeting. What were you doing?

CUSINS. Drinking.

LADY BRITOMART. Adolphus!

SARAH. Dolly!

BARBARA. Dolly!

LOMAX. Oh I say!

LADY BRITOMART. What were you drinking, may I ask?

CUSINS. A most devilish kind of Spanish burgundy, warranted free from added alcohol: a Temperance burgundy in fact. Its richness in natural alcohol made any addition superfluous.

BARBARA. Are you joking, Dolly?

CUSINS. [*patiently*] No. I have been making a night of it with the nominal head of this household: that is all.

LADY BRITOMART. Andrew made you drunk!

CUSINS. No: he only provided the wine. I think it was Dionysos who made me drunk. [*To Barbara*] I told you I was possessed.

LADY BRITOMART. Youre not sober yet. Go home to bed at once.

CUSINS. I have never before ventured to reproach you, Lady Brit; but how could you marry the Prince of Darkness?

LADY BRITOMART. It was much more excusable to marry him than to get drunk with him. That is a new accomplishment of Andrew's, by the way. He usent to drink.

CUSINS. He doesnt now. He only sat there and completed the wreck of my moral basis, the rout of my convictions, the purchase of my soul. He cares for you, Barbara. That is what makes him so dangerous to me.

BARBARA. That has nothing to do with it, Dolly. There are larger loves and diviner dreams than the fireside ones. You know that, dont you?

CUSINS. Yes: that is our understanding. I know it. I hold to it. Unless he can win me on that holier ground he may amuse me for a while; but he can get no deeper hold, strong as he is.

BARBARA. Keep to that; and the end will be right. Now tell me what happened at the meeting?

CUSINS. It was an amazing meeting. Mrs. Baines almost died of emotion. Jenny Hill went stark mad with hysteria. The Prince of Darkness played his trombone like a madman: its brazen roarings were like the laughter of the damned. 117 conversions took place then and there. They prayed with the most touching sincerity and gratitude for Bodger, and for the anonymous donor of the £5,000. Your father would not let his name be given.

LOMAX. That was rather fine of the old man, you know. Most chaps would have wanted the advertisement.

CUSINS. He said all the charitable institutions would be down on him like kites on a battle field if he gave his name.

LADY BRITOMART. Thats Andrew all over, He never does a proper thing without giving an improper reason for it.

CUSINS. He convinced me that I have all my life been doing improper things for proper reasons.

LADY BRITOMART. Adolphus: now that Barbara has left the Salvation Army, you had better leave it too. I will not have you playing that drum in the streets.

CUSINS. Your orders are already obeyed, Lady Brit.

BARBARA. Dolly: were you ever really in earnest about it? Would you have joined if you had never seen me?

CUSINS [*disingenuously*] Well — er — well, possibly, as a collector of religions —

LOMAX [*cunningly*] Not as a drummer, though, you know. You are a very clearheaded brainy chap, Cholly; and it must have been apparent to you that there is a certain amount of tosh about —

LADY BRITOMART. Charles: if you must drivel, drivel like a grown-up man and not like a schoolboy.

LOMAX [*out of countenance*] Well, drivel is drivel, dont you know, whatever a man's age.

LADY BRITOMART. In good society in England, Charles, men drivel at all ages by repeating silly formulas with an air of wisdom. Schoolboys make their own formulas out of slang, like you. When they reach your age, and get political private secretaryships and things of that sort, they drop slang and get their formulas out of *The Spectator* or *The Times*. You had better confine yourself to *The Times*. You will find that there is a certain amount of tosh about The Times; but at least its language is reputable.

LOMAX [*overwhelmed*] You are so awfully strongminded, Lady Brit —

LADY BRITOMART. Rubbish! [*Morrison comes in.*] What is it?

MORRISON. If you please, my lady, Mr. Undershaft has just drove up to the door.

LADY BRITOMART. Well, let him in. [*Morrison hesitates.*] Whats the matter with you?

MORRISON. Shall I announce him, my lady; or is he at home here, so to speak, my lady?

LADY BRITOMART. Announce him.

MORRISON. Thank you, my lady. You wont mind my asking, I hope. The occasion is in a manner of speaking new to me.

LADY BRITOMART. Quite right. Go and let him in.

MORRISON. Thank you, my lady. [*He withdraws.*]

LADY BRITOMART. Children: go and get ready. [*Sarah and Barbara go upstairs for their out-of-door wraps.*] Charles: go and tell Stephen to come down here in five minutes: you will find him in the drawing room. [*Charles goes.*] Adolphus: tell them to send round the carriage in about fifteen minutes. [*Adolphus goes.*]

MORRISON [*at the door*] Mr. Undershaft.

[*Undershaft comes in. Morrison goes out.*]

UNDERSHAFT. Alone! How fortunate!

LADY BRITOMART [*rising*] Don't be sentimental, Andrew. Sit down. [*She*

sits on the settee: he sits beside her, on her left. She comes to the point before he has time to breathe.] Sarah must have £800 a year until Charles Lomax comes into his property. Barbara will need more, and need it permanently, because Adolphus hasnt any property.

UNDERSHAFT [*resignedly*] Yes, my dear: I will see to it. Anything else? for yourself, for instance?

LADY BRITOMART. I want to talk to you about Stephen.

UNDERSHAFT [*rather wearily*] Don't, my dear. Stephen doesn't interest me.

LADY BRITOMART. He does interest me. He is our son.

UNDERSHAFT. Do you really think so? He has induced us to bring him into the world; but he chose his parents very incongruously, I think. I see nothing of myself in him, and less of you.

LADY BRITOMART. Andrew: Stephen is an excellent son, and a most steady, capable, highminded young man. You are simply trying to find an excuse for disinheriting him.

UNDERSHAFT. My dear Biddy: the Undershaft tradition disinherits him. It would be dishonest of me to leave the cannon foundry to my son.

LADY BRITOMART. It would be most unnatural and improper of you to leave it anyone else, Andrew. Do you suppose this wicked and immoral tradition can be kept up for ever? Do you pretend that Stephen could not carry on the foundry just as well as all the other sons of the big business houses?

UNDERSHAFT. Yes: he could learn the office routine without understanding the business, like all the other sons; and the firm would go on by its own momentum until the real Undershaft — probably an Italian or a German — would invent a new method and cut him out.

LADY BRITOMART. There is nothing that any Italian or German could do that Stephen could not do. And Stephen at least has breeding.

UNDERSHAFT. The son of a foundling! nonsense!

LADY BRITOMART. My son, Andrew! And even you may have good blood in your veins for all you know.

UNDERSHAFT. True. Probably I have. That is another argument in favor of a foundling.

LADY BRITOMART. Andrew: don't be aggravating. And don't be wicked. At present you are both.

UNDERSHAFT. This conversation is part of the Undershaft tradition, Biddy.

Every Undershaft's wife has treated him to it ever since the house[1] was founded. It is mere waste of breath. If the tradition be ever broken it will be for an abler man than Stephen.

LADY BRITOMART [*pouting*] Then go away.

UNDERSHAFT [*deprecatory*] Go away!

LADY BRITOMART. Yes: go away. If you will do nothing for Stephen, you are not wanted here. Go to your foundling, whoever he is; and look after him.

UNDERSHAFT. The fact is, Biddy —

LADY BRITOMART. Don't call me Biddy. I don't call you Andy.

UNDERSHAFT. I will not call my wife Britomart: it is not good sense. Seriously, my love, the Undershaft tradition has landed me in a difficulty. I am getting on in years; and my partner Lazarus has at last made a stand and insisted that the succession must be settled one way or the other; and of course he is quite right. You see, I havnt found a fit successor yet.

LADY BRITOMART [*obstinately*] There is Stephen.

UNDERSHAFT. That's just it: all the foundlings I can find are exactly like Stephen.

LADY BRITOMART. Andrew!!

UNDERSHAFT. I want a man with no relations and no schooling: that is, a man who would be out of the running[2] altogether if he were not a strong man. And I can't find him. Every blessed foundling nowadays is snapped up[3] in his infancy by Barnardo homes, or School Board officers, or Boards of Guardians; and if he shews the least ability, he is fastened on by schoolmasters; trained to win scholarships like a racehorse; crammed with secondhand ideas; drilled and disciplined in docility and what they call good taste; and lamed for life so that he is fit for nothing but teaching. If you want to keep the foundry in the family, you had better find an eligible foundling and marry him to Barbara.

LADY BRITOMART. Ah! Barbara! Your pet! You would sacrifice Stephen to Barbara.

UNDERSHAFT. Cheerfully. And you, my dear, would boil Barbara to make soup for Stephen.

LADY BRITOMART. Andrew: this is not a question of our likings and

1 the house: here referring to the munition factory.
2 out of the running: having no chance to succeed.
3 snapped up: seized suddenly.

dislikings: it is a question of duty. It is your duty to make Stephen your successor.

UNDERSHAFT. Just as much as it is your duty to submit to your husband. Comet Biddy! these tricks of the governing class are of no use with me. I am one of the governing class myself; and it is waste of time giving tracts[1] to a missionary. I have the power in this matter; and I am not to be humbugged[2] into using it for your purposes.

LADY BRITOMART. Andrew: you can talk my head off; but you can't change wrong into right. And your tie is all on one side. Put it straight.

UNDERSHAFT [*disconcerted*] It won't stay unless it's pinned [*he fumbles at it with childish grimaces*]. Stephen comes in.

STEPHEN [*at the door*]. I beg your pardon [*about to retire*].

LADY BRITOMART. No: come in, Stephen. [*Stephen comes forward to his mother's writing table.*]

UNDERSHAFT [*not very cordially*]. Good afternoon.

STEPHEN [coldly]. Good afternoon.

UNDERSHAFT [*to Lady Britomart*]. He knows all about the tradition, I suppose?

LADY BRITOMART. Yes. [*To Stephen.*] It is what I told you last night, Stephen.

UNDERSHAFT [*sulkily*] I understand you want to come into the cannon business.

STEPHEN. I go into trade! Certainly not.

UNDERSHAFT [*opening his eyes, greatly eased in mind and manner*] Oh! in that case!

LADY BRITOMART. Cannons are not trade, Stephen. They are enterprise.

STEPHEN. I have no intention of becoming a man of business in any sense. I have no capacity for business and no taste for it. I intend to devote myself to politics.

UNDERSHAFT [*rising*] My dear boy: this is an immense relief to me. And I trust it may prove an equally good thing for the country. I was afraid you would consider yourself disparaged and slighted. [*He moves towards Stephen as if to shake hands with him.*]

LADY BRITOMART [*rising and interposing*]. Stephen: I cannot allow you to

1 tracts: a brief treatise on a subject of interest, published in the form of a booklet.
2 humbugged: tricked or deceived.

throw away an enormous property like this.

STEPHEN [*stiffly*]. Mother: there must be an end of treating me as a child, if you please. [*Lady Britomart recoils, deeply wounded by his tone.*] Until last night I did not take your attitude seriously, because I did not think you meant it seriously. But I find now that you left me in the dark as to matters which you should have explained to me years ago. I am extremely hurt and offended. Any further discussion of my intentions had better take place with my father, as between one man and another.

LADY BRITOMART. Stephen! [*She sits down again; and her eyes fill with tears.*]

UNDERSHAFT [*with grave compassion*]. You see, my dear, it is only the big men who can be treated as children.

STEPHEN. I am sorry, mother, that you have forced me —

UNDERSHAFT [*stopping him*]. Yes, yes, yes, yes: thats all right, Stephen. She wont interfere with you any more: your independence is achieved: you have won your latchkey. Don't rub it in;[1] and above all, don't apologize. [*He resumes his seat.*] Now what about your future, as between one man and another — I beg your pardon, Biddy: as between two men and a woman.

LADY BRITOMART [*who has pulled herself together strongly*]. I quite understand, Stephen. By all means go your own way if you feel strong enough. [*Stephen sits down magisterially in the chair at the writing table with an air of affirming his majority.*]

UNDERSHAFT. It is settled that you do not ask for the succession to the cannon business.

STEPHEN. I hope it is settled that I repudiate the cannon business.

UNDERSHAFT. Come, come! Don't be so devilishly sulky: it's boyish. Freedom should be generous. Besides, I owe you a fair start in life in exchange for disinheriting you. You can't become prime minister all at once. Haven't you a turn for something? What about literature, art and so forth?

STEPHEN. I have nothing of the artist about me, either in faculty or character, thank Heaven!

UNDERSHAFT. A philosopher, perhaps? Eh?

STEPHEN. I make no such ridiculous pretension.

UNDERSHAFT. Just so. Well, there is the army, the navy, the Church, the Bar.

1 Don't rub it in: don't keep repeating or emphasising something unimportant.

The Bar requires some ability. What about the Bar?

STEPHEN. I have not studied law. And I am afraid I have not the necessary push — I believe that is the name barristers give to their vulgarity — for success in pleading.

UNDERSHAFT. Rather a difficult case, Stephen. Hardly anything left but the stage, is there? [*Stephen makes an impatient movement.*] Well, come! is there anything you know or care for?

STEPHEN [*rising and looking at him steadily*]. I know the difference between right and wrong.

UNDERSHAFT [*hugely tickled*]. You don't say so! What! no capacity for business, no knowledge of law, no sympathy with art, no pretension to philosophy; only a simple knowledge of the secret that has puzzled all the philosophers, baffled all the lawyers, muddled all the men of business, and ruined most of the artists: the secret of right and wrong. Why, man, you're a genius, a master of masters, a god! At twenty-four, too!

STEPHEN [*keeping his temper with difficulty*]. You are pleased to be facetious. I pretend to nothing more than any honorable English gentleman claims as his birthright [*he sits down angrily*].

UNDERSHAFT. Oh, that's everybody's birthright. Look at poor little Jenny Hill, the Salvation lassie! She would think you were laughing at her if you asked her to stand up in the street and teach grammar or geography or mathematics or even drawingroom dancing; but it never occurs to her to doubt that she can teach morals and religion. You are all alike, you respectable people. You can't tell me the bursting strain of a ten-inch gun, which is a very simple matter; but you all think you can tell me the bursting strain of a man under temptation. You daren't handle high explosives; but you're all ready to handle honesty and truth and justice and the whole duty of man, and kill one another at that game. What a country! what a world!

LADY BRITOMART [*uneasily*]. What do you think he had better do, Andrew?

UNDERSHAFT. Oh, just what he wants to do. He knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career. Get him a private secretaryship to someone who can get him an Under Secretaryship; and then leave him alone. He will find his natural and proper place in the end on the Treasury bench.

STEPHEN [*springing up again*]. I am sorry, sir, that you force me to forget the respect due to you as my father. I am an Englishman; and I will not hear the Government of my country insulted. [*He thrusts his hands in his pockets, and walks angrily across to the window.*]

UNDERSHAFT [*with a touch of brutality*]. The government of your country! I am the government of your country: I, and Lazarus. Do you suppose that you and half a dozen amateurs like you, sitting in a row in that foolish gabble shop[1], can govern Undershaft and Lazarus? No, my friend: you will do what pays us. You will make war when it suits us, and keep peace when it doesn't. You will find out that trade requires certain measures when we have decided on those measures. When I want anything to keep my dividends up, you will discover that my want is a national need. When other people want something to keep my dividends down, you will call out the police and military. And in return you shall have the support and applause of my newspapers, and the delight of imagining that you are a great statesman. Government of your country! Be of with you, my boy, and play with your caucuses[2] and leading articles and historic parties and great leaders and burning questions and the rest of your toys. I am going back to my counting house to pay the piper and call the tune.[3]

STEPHEN [*actually smiling, and putting his hand on his father's shoulder with indulgent patronage*]. Really, my dear father, it is impossible to be angry with you. You don't know how absurd all this sounds to me. You are very properly proud of having been industrious enough to make money; and it is greatly to your credit that you have made so much of it. But it has kept you in circles where you are valued for your money and deferred to for it, instead of in the doubtless very old-fashioned and behind-the-times public school and university where I formed my habits of mind. It is natural for you to think that money governs England; but you must allow me to think I know better.

UNDERSHAFT. And what does govern England, pray?

STEPHEN. Character, father, character.

UNDERSHAFT. Whose character? Yours or mine?

STEPHEN. Neither yours nor mine, father, but the best elements in the English national character.

1 foolish gabble shop: a place where people talk foolishly and rapidly, here referring to the Parliament. Gabble: rapid, unintelligible talk.
2 caucuses: (a meeting of) a small group of people in a political party or organization who have influence, or who have similar interests.
3 I am going back to my counting house to pay the piper and call the tune: I am the boss behind the scene, and with my money I'll let the government do whatever suits me.

UNDERSHAFT. Stephen: I've found your profession for you. You're a born journalist. I'll start you with a high-toned weekly review. There!

Before Stephen can reply Sarah, Barbara, Lomax, and Cusins come in ready for walking. Barbara crosses the room to the window and looks out. Cusins drifts amiably to the armchair, and Lomax remains near the door, whilst Sarah comes to her mother. Stephen goes to the smaller writing table and busies himself with his letters.

SARAH. Go and get ready, mamma: the carriage is waiting. [*Lady Britomart leaves the room.*]

UNDERSHAFT [*to Sarah*]. Good day, my dear. Good afternoon, Mr. Lomax.

LOMAX [*vaguely*]. Ahdedoo.

UNDERSHAFT [*to Cusins*]. Quite well after last night, Euripides,[1] eh?

CUSINS. As well as can be expected.

UNDERSHAFT. Thats right. [*To Barbara.*] So you are coming to see my death and devastation factory, Barbara?

BARBARA [*at the window*]. You came yesterday to see my salvation factory. I promised you a return visit.

LOMAX [*coming forward between Sarah and Undershaft*]. You'd find it awfully interesting. I've been through the Woolwich Arsenal; and it gives you a ripping feeling of security, you know, to think of the lot of beggars we could kill if it came to fighting. [*To Undershaft, with sudden solemnity.*] Still, it must be rather an awful reflection for you, from the religious point of view as it were. You're getting on, you know, and all that.

SARAH. You don't mind Cholly's imbecility, papa, do you?

LOMAX [*much taken aback*]. Oh I say!

UNDERSHAFT. Mr Lomax looks at the matter in a very proper spirit my dear.

LOMAX. Just so. That's all I meant, I assure you.

SARAH. Are you coming, Stephen?

STEPHEN. Well, I am rather busy — er — [*Magnanimously*[2].] Oh well, yes: I'll come. That is, if there is room for me.

UNDERSHAFT. I can take two with me in a little motor I am experimenting with for field use. You won't mind its being rather unfashionable. It's not painted yet; but it's bullet proof.

1 Euripides: Euripides (ca. 480–406 BC) was the last of the three great tragedians of classical Athens (the other two being Aeschylus and Sophocles).

2 Magnanimously: very kind and generous toward an enemy or someone you have defeated.

LOMAX [*appalled at the prospect of confronting Wilton Crescent in an unpainted motor*]. Oh I say!

SARAH. The carriage for me, thank you. Barbara doesn't mind what she's seen in.

LOMAX. I say, Dolly old chap: do you really mind the car being a guy[1]? Because of course if you do I'll go in it. Still —

CUSINS. I prefer it.

LOMAX. Thanks awfully, old man. Come, Sarah. [*He hurries out to secure his seat in the carriage. Sarah follows him.*]

CUSINS [*moodily walking across to Lady Britomart's writing table*]. Why are we two coming to this Works Department of Hell? That is what I ask myself.

BARBARA. I have always thought of it as a sort of pit where lost creatures with blackened faces stirred up smoky fires and were driven and tormented by my father? Is it like that, dad?

UNDERSHAFT [*scandalized*]. My dear! It is a spotlessly clean and beautiful hillside town.

CUSINS. With a Methodist[2] chapel? Oh do say theres a Methodist chapel.

UNDERSHAFT. There are two: a Primitive one and a sophisticated one. There is even an Ethical Society; but it is not much patronized, as my men are all strongly religious. In the High Explosives Sheds they object to the presence of Agnostics[3] as unsafe.

CUSINS. And yet they don't object to you!

BARBARA. Do they obey all your orders?

UNDERSHAFT. I never give them any orders. When I speak to one of them it is "Well, Jones, is the baby doing well? and has Mrs. Jones made a good recovery?" "Nicely, thank you, sir." And that's all.

CUSINS. But Jones has to be kept in order. How do you maintain discipline among your men?

1 guy: an odd figure.

2 Methodism or the Methodist movement is a group of historically related denominations of Protestant Christianity. It originated in 18th century Britain, and through vigorous missionary activity, spread throughout the British Empire. Originally it appealed especially to workers, agricultural workers, and slaves, Theologically most Methodists emphasise that all people can be saved, and low church in liturgy.

3 Agnostics: Agnosticism (from the Greek, meaning "without knowledge") is the philosophical view that the true value of certain claims—particularly theological claims regarding metaphysics, afterlife or the existence of God, god(s), or deities—is unknown or (possibly) inherently unknowable.

UNDERSHAFT. I don't. They do. You see, the one thing Jones won't stand is any rebellion from the man under him, or any assertion of social equality between the wife of the man with four shillings a week less than himself, and Mrs. Jones! Of course they all rebel against me, theoretically. Practically, every man of them keeps the man just below him in his place. I never meddle with them. I never bully them. I don't even bully Lazarus. I say that certain things are to be done; but I don't order anybody to do them. I don't say, mind you, that there is no ordering about and snubbing[1] and even bullying. The men snub the boys and order them about; the carmen snub the sweepers; the artisans snub the unskilled laborers; the foremen drive and bully both the laborers and artisans; the assistant engineers find fault with the foremen; the chief engineers drop on the assistants; the departmental managers worry the chiefs; and the clerks have tall hats and hymnbooks and keep up the social tone by refusing to associate on equal terms with anybody. The result is a colossal profit, which comes to me.

CUSINS [*revolted*]. You really are a — well, what I was saying yesterday.

BARBARA. What was he saying yesterday?

UNDERSHAFT. Never mind, my dear. He thinks I have made you unhappy. Have I?

BARBARA. Do you think I can be happy in this vulgar silly dress? I! Who have worn the uniform. Do you understand what you have done to me? Yesterday I had a man's soul in my hand. I set him in the way of life with his face to salvation. But when we took your money he turned back to drunkenness and derision. [*With intense conviction.*] I will never forgive you that. If I had a child, and you destroyed its body with your explosives — if you murdered Dolly with your horrible guns — I could forgive you if my forgiveness would open the gates of heaven to you. But to take a human soul from me, and turn it into the soul of a wolf! That is worse than any murder.

UNDERSHAFT. Does my daughter despair so easily? Can you strike a man to the heart and leave no mark on him?

BARBARA [*her face lighting up*]. Oh, you are right: he can never be lost now: where was my faith?

CUSINS. Oh, clever clever devil!

BARBARA. You may be a devil; but God speaks through you sometimes. [*She*

1 snubbing: treating with scorn.

takes her father's hands and kisses them.] You have given me back my happiness: I feel it deep down now, though my spirit is troubled.

UNDERSHAFT. You have learnt something. That always feels at first as if you had lost something.

BARBARA. Well, take me to the factory of death, and let me learn something more. There must be some truth or other behind all this frightful irony. Come, Dolly. [*She goes out.*]

CUSINS. My guardian angel! [*To Undershaft.*] Avaunt![1] [*He follows Barbara.*]

STEPHEN [*quietly, at the writing table*] You must not mind Cusins, father. He is a very amiable good fellow; but he is a Greek scholar and naturally a little eccentric.

UNDERSHAFT. Ah, quite so. Thank you, Stephen. Thank you. [*He goes out.*] *Stephen smiles patronizingly; buttons his coat responsibly; and crosses the room to the door. Lady Britomart, dressed for out-of-doors, opens it before he reaches it. She looks round for the others; looks at Stephen; and turns to go without a word.*

STEPHEN [*embarrassed*] Mother —

LADY BRITOMART. Don't be apologetic, Stephen. And don't forget that you have outgrown your mother. [*She goes out.*]

Critical Points

Major Barbara: main characters

Andrew Undershaft is a man of "formidable reserves of power, both bodily and mentally, in his capacious chest and long head." His gentleness is that of a "strong man who has learnt by experience that his natural grip hurts ordinary people". Undershaft understands that he is a man who has bent the world to his will.

Barbara is a robust, jolly, and energetic girl. She begins the play as a major for the Salvation Army. She is peacefully convinced of her mission to redeem mankind. Her father's arrival will force her to recognise that the wealthy, rather than God, hold the world and its salvation in their hands. She experiences a radical transition of viewpoint.

1 avaunt: depart; move away.

Lady Britomart Undershaft is a "very typical managing matron of the upper class", and she is "limited in the oddest way with domestic and class limitations". She is presented through a series of paradoxes: Lady Britomart is at once well-dressed and careless in her dress, well-bred and reckless of her breeding, well-mannered and yet appallingly outspoken.

Stephen Undershaft is Lady Britomart's only son. He is a "gravely correct young man", who takes himself and his sense of morality very seriously. He remains in some awe from his mother "childish habit and bachelor shyness" but quickly comes to assert his majority in planning his future. The dialogue with his father reveals his innocent self.

Shaw's artistic view

Shaw is the greatest critical realistic playwright in the 20th century England. His radical political attitude played an important role in forming his artistic point of view. In his opinion, theatre should take itself seriously "as a factory of thought, a prompter of conscience, and elucidation of social conduct, an armoury against despair and dullness, a temple of the ascent Man". To further explain his purpose of writing, he said, "I regard much current morality as to economic and sexual relations as disastrously wrong; and I regard certain doctrines of the Christian religion as understood in England today with abhorrence. I write plays with the deliberate object of converting the nation to my opinions in these matters."

Influenced by Henrik Ibsen, Shaw fought heroically for the staging of social dramas which reflected the realistic conflicts of the modern society. Structurally and thematically, Shaw followed the great traditions of realism. With his wit and love of paradox, he made full use of comic satire and brought a new kind of intelligence to the drama. Social criticism characterises almost all his plays.

Discussion play

The dramatic conflict in Shaw's plays is the conflict of thought and belief, not that of neurosis or physical passion. Discussion is the basis of the plays, and thus some of his famous plays are called "**discussion plays**" -- that is, works primarily driven by ideas, argument, and debate, while plot is sometimes of little importance, sometimes of none.

Another term to define Shaw's playwriting is **"problem play"**, which is a

play that explores a controversial social issue of its day. Most English plays before did not discuss serious social issues, and had been remote from real life. He recognised the value of the stage as a platform for the transmission of ideas, and of social and political reform. Shaw used the stage to explore social problems and introduced to the stage such subjects as slum poverty, prostitution, war, religion, family disturbances, health, and economics. He always raised questions in his works and demanded the audience to think about these questions themselves. His significant exposure of the society placed him among the most important representatives of critical realism in modern English drama.

Class Activities

Performance

Step 1. Character analysis

Divide the class into eight groups, and each group is assigned to analyse one of the following characters: Lady Britomart, Lomax, Morrison, Stephen, Sarah, Barbara, Cusins, and Undershaft.

Step 2. Role play

Each group selects one representative to play the role. That is, eight students should be selected to play the eight roles in Act III, *Major Barbara*. A ninth student should act as narrator to read the stage notes.

Questions

1. Discuss Shaw's character portraits in the stage notes. Consider in particular their tone and the use of paradox. You may choose two or three characters for comparison.
2. Consider the subplot involving Undershaft, Lady Britomart, and Stephen. Why does Undershaft insist that his heir must be a foundling? Why does Lady Britomart protest her son's dispossession? How does Stephen respond?

QUOTATIONS

The power of accurate observation is commonly called cynicism by those who have not got it.

—George Bernard Shaw

My method is to take the utmost trouble to find the right thing to say, and then to say it with the utmost levity.

—George Bernard Shaw

Part VII

The Twentieth Century (1901-2000)

Key Words

Modernism	interior duplication
temporal juxtaposition	stream of consciousness
the Theatre of the Absurd	the epiphany
Bildungsroman	Oedipus complex

Historical background

The beginning of a new century did not bring peace and prosperity to English people. Instead, the turning of the century witnessed further economical depressions and social unrest in Britain. The conflicts between low wage earners and the capitalists increased, and women uttered a louder cry for equality with men. The Irish nationalist movement for independence reached a new upsurge with its armed uprising in 1916, and in 1922 Ireland became an independent nation.

The two World Wars fundamentally changed the political structure of the whole world with the British Empire at the centre of the storm. The First World War tremendously shook the foundation of the British Empire. The postwar Britain experienced economic dislocation and spiritual disillusion. The Second World War marked the last stage of the disintegration of the British Empire. A powerful movement for independence was rising right after the war. Up to 1970, Britain had lost most of her former colonies, and the Empire collapsed. But as one of the major powers in the world, and with its long cultural tradition, Britain still has a profound influence upon the world.

Cultural background

In the second half of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century, both natural and social sciences had advanced enormously. The rapid development of natural sciences not only led to great gains in material wealth, but also gave rise to all kinds of pessimism, which became a standard feature of late Victorian thought. Naturalism is one of its reflections in literature. Darwin's Theory of Evolution caused many people to lose their religious faith. Einstein's Theory of Relativity gave a great momentum to the scientific research, providing entirely new ideas to the concepts of time and space.

After 1900, the ideas of Henri Bergson[1] (1859-1941) and Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud[2] (1861-1951) became important tools for

1 Henri Bergson: one of the most famous and influential French philosophers of the late 19th century and early 20th century.

2 Sigmund Freud was the originator of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis focuses on the unconscious aspects of personality. According to Freud, the human mind is like an iceberg. It is mostly hidden in the unconscious. Freud described its constructs as the id, ego and the superego.

writers. Bergson established his irrational philosophy by putting the emphasis on creation, intuition, irrationality and unconsciousness. His conceptions of life impulse and psychic time made the Western philosophy afresh. Freud put forward his psychological analysis of the mind, which drastically altered the conception of human nature.

After the Second World War, Jean-Paul Sartre[1] (1905-1980) carried the irrational philosophy to an extreme. With the spur of the existentialist idea that "the world is absurd, and the human life was an agony", there rose varieties of Modernism or Postmodernism, such as Existentialist literature, the Theatre of Absurd, black humour, etc.

Modernism

Modernism may be seen as a literary movement, spanning the period from the last quarter of the 19th century in France and from 1890 in Great Britain and Germany to the beginning of the Second World War.

Generally speaking, Modernism emphasises on the need to move away from the public to the private, from the objective to the subjective. It elevates the individual and the inner being over the social being, prefers the subconscious to the self-conscious, and stresses on passion and will over reason and intellection, on dynamic visions over the static images.

In their writing, the Modernists adopt more complicated narrative frames; the works may be reflexive, about their own writing, or they may place one story inside another, a device known as **interior duplication**. Instead of plot events, there is an emphasis on characters' consciousness, unconsciousness, memory, and perception.

Modernism upholds a new view of time by emphasising the psychic time over the chronological one. The Modernist novel is often non-chronological, with experiments in the representation of time such as sudden jumps, **temporal juxtapositions**, or "spatialisation of time", in which many different moments of time are presented with an effect of simultaneity, or studies of duration, that is, making a great deal occurrence within a small amount of text, or stretching a small amount of action over a large textual space.

1 Jean-Paul Sartre: French novelist, playwright, Existentialist philosopher, and literary critic. Sartre was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1964, but he declined the honour in protest of the values of bourgeois society.

Modernist novels are often oriented around a centre or centres of consciousness, and characterised by the use of techniques as free indirect style and **stream of consciousness**[1]. The narrators are often strangely limited third-person, unreliable first-person narrators, or multiple shifting narrators. Instead of using closure and the fulfillment of reader expectations, or following genre conventions and formulas, Modernists often work toward open endings or unique forms: they utilise enigma, ellipsis, narrative gap, and they value ambiguity and complexity.

The best spokesmen in fiction of Modernism are James Joyce (1882-1941), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) and David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930). James Joyce began with Naturalism and urban Realism in his story collection *Dubliners* (1914), but in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) he started to experiment with interior monologue and free indirect discourse. His other two influential novels are *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). Woolf is experimental in technique and narrative structure in novels such as *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *The Waves* (1931), and *Between the Acts* (1941). D. H. Lawrence is well-known for his works like *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920).

Poetry of Modernism tends to overthrow the rhyme and traditional forms, moving toward fragmentation, juxtaposition of images from widely scattered times and cultures, complex intertextual allusion and patterning, and personal discourse, often purposefully obscure.

British poetry of the modern period finds best representatives in the three figures: W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound[2] and T. S. Eliot. Yeats moved to London from Dublin. Pound lived in London from 1908 to 1920, where he became the greatest promoter of Modernism. Eliot arrived in London in 1914. His

1 stream of consciousness: a special literary method for representing the continuity of impressions and thoughts in the human mind in unpunctuated or fragmentary forms of interior monologue. The term was coined in American philosopher William James's *Principles of Psychology* (1890), in the firs sense. It was most famously used by James Joyce in his novel *Ulysses* (1922), later by Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner.

2 Ezra Pound (1885-1972): American poet and critic, often called "the poets's poet" because his profound influence on 20th century writing in English. Pound believed that poetry is the highest form of arts. He challenged many of the common views of his time. His epic poem, the *Cantos*, is an extremely complex "poem with history", which was published in ten sections between 1925 and 1969, and then as a one-volume collected edition, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound I-CXVII* (1970), with the length of almost 800 pages.

masterpiece *The Waste Land* (1922) captured more audience than any other 20th-century English poem.

The Theatre of the Absurd

The Theatre of the Absurd refers to particular plays written by a number of primarily European playwrights in the late 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, as well as to the style of theatre which has evolved from their work. This genre of theatre achieved popularity when World War II highlighted the essential precariousness of human life.

The term was coined by the English critic Martin Esslin (1918-2002) in his book *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1962). According to his definition, "the theatre of the absurd strives to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought."

In practice, the Theatre of the Absurd departs from realistic characters, situations and all of the associated theatrical conventions. Time, place and identity are ambiguous and fluid, and even basic causality frequently breaks down. Meaningless plots, repetitive or nonsensical dialogue and dramatic absurdism are often used to create dream-like or even nightmare-like moods. While many of the plays of this genre seem to be quite random and meaningless on the surface, an underlying structure and meaning is usually found in the midst of the chaos.

The genre finds its best representation in *Waiting for Godot* (1956), a play by Irish playwright Samuel Beckett.

Unit 38

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

William Butler Yeats *is a great Irish poet and one of the greatest poets in English during the 20th century. Yeats drew from mystical traditions, Irish history and mythology, and his own life and passions. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923 for "his always inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation".*

Life and Writing

Yeats was born to an artistic family. His father was a portrait painter, moved the family first from Sandymount, County Dublin, to County Sligo, and then to London to further his career. His mother, who was homesick for Sligo, entertained her children with stories and folktales from her county of birth. The family returned to Dublin toward the end of 1880, then back to London seven years later. Yeats' first book publication was the pamphlet *Mosada: A Dramatic Poem* (1886), the printing of 100 copies being paid for by his father.

William Butler Yeats

In 1889, Yeats met Maud Gonne, an Irish patriot and beauty who was to devote herself to the Irish nationalist movement. He fell immediately in love with her, and remained so for the rest of his life. Yeats proposed to her three times, but was rejected again and again. She portrayed the lead role in several of his plays, but they were never romantically involved. Partly because of his love for Maud Gonne, Yeats devoted himself during the early part of his career to the Literary Revival and to Irish patriotism,

seeking to develop a new religious iconography based on Irish mythology. His early work was best represented by the title of his 1893 collection *The Celtic Twilight*.

Yeats quickly rose to literary prominence, and helped to found what became the Abbey Theatre, one of the most important cultural institutions in Ireland. In 1913, younger American poet Ezra Pound travelled to London to meet Yeats, whom he considered "the only poet worthy of serious study". From that year until 1916, Pound nominally acted as Yeats's secretary. Inspired by his relationships with Ezra Pound and other Modernist poets as well as his involvement in Irish nationalist politics, he moved toward a harder, more modern style in his 40s. Yeats did not get married until 1917. His wife Georgie Hyde-Lees was 26 and he was 52 at the time. The marriage was successful and they had two children.

Yeats lived during a tumultuous time in Ireland, during the political rise and fall of Charles Stuart Parnell, the Irish Revival, and the civil war. His themes, images, symbols, metaphors, and poetic sensibilities encompass the breadth of his personal experience as well as his nation's experience during the troubled time. Because his work straddles the 19th and 20th centuries, Yeats is stylistically quite a unique poet: his early work seems curiously modern for the 19th century, and his late work often seems curiously un-modern for the 1930s. But Yeats wrote great poems in every decade, and remained the height to the end of his life.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

This is one of Yeats' first great and also one of his most enduring poems. It was published in his second lyrical collection *The Rose* (1893). The isle refers to Island in Lough Gill, County Sligo. Yeats says, "My father had read to me some passage out of (Thoreau's) *Walden*, and I planned to live some day in a cottage on a little island called Innisfree." The poem is a simple imagery of the quiet life the poet longs to lead, until the penultimate line jolts him back into the reality of his drab urban existence: "While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey."

"The Lake Isle of Innisfree" is written mostly in hexameter, with six stresses in each line, in a loosely iambic pattern. The last line of each four-line stanza shortens the line to tetrameter, with only four stresses. Each of the three stanzas has the same rhyme scheme *abab*. The tranquil, hypnotic hexameters recreate the rhythmic pulse of the tide.

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles[1] made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade[2].

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the mourning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.[3]

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core[4].

When You Are Old

The poem is also from *The Rose* (1893). It is suggested by French poet Pierre de Ronsard's *Sonnets Pour Helene* (1578), which begins with "*Quand vous serez biez vieille, au soir, à la chandelle*" ("When you are old, sitting at evening by candle light"), but Yeats's poem ends very differently.

Like many other poems in this collection, "When You Are Old" was written for Maud Gonne, too. The idea of love in age is an ancient one, meant to express the fact that love inheres not merely in youth, but in something deeper and more lasting. The poem is rich with mythical imagery.

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look

1 wattles: stakes interwoven with twigs or branches.
2 the bee-loud glade: an open place in the wood where bees buzz loudly.
3 full of the linnet's wings: with linnets flying here and there. Linnet: a mainly brown and grey bird with a reddish breast and forehead.
4 in the deep heart's core: at the bottom of my heart. The final line is a crucial statement for Yeats, not only in this poem but also in his career as a whole. The implication that the truths of the "deep heart's core" are essential to life is one that would preoccupy Yeats as a poet; the struggle to remain true to the deep heart's core may be thought of as Yeats's primary undertaking as a poet.

Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim Soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,[1]
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love[2] fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

Easter, 1916

The Easter Rising was a rebellion against British colonial rule staged in Ireland in Easter Week, 1916. The rising was an attempt by militant Irish republicans to win independence from Britain by force of arms. The Rising lasted from April 24 to April 30, 1916. After the week of street fighting, the rising was suppressed, and its leaders were court-martialled and executed. Despite its military failure, it can be judged as being a significant stepping-stone in the eventual foundation of the Irish Republic.

Yeats knew the chief rebels personally, and wrote the poem to celebrate the Easter Rising of 1916. As George MacBeth said in "Poetry 1900 to 1975", "Yeats was clearly fascinated and at the same time troubled by this heroic and yet in some ways pointless sacrifice. He later returned to the theme in poem after poem."

I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,

1 bars: the grate.
2 Yeats capitalises "Love", thus personifying the concept, which can be understood as a modernization of the ancient figure, Eros.

Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley[1] is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

That woman's days were spent
In ignorant good-will,
Her nights in argument
Until her voice grew shrill.
What voice more sweet than hers
When, young and beautiful,
She[2] rode to harriers?
This man had kept a school
And rode our winged horse;[3]
This other his helper and friend[4]
Was coming into his force;
He might have won fame in the end,
So sensitive his nature seemed,
So daring and sweet his thought.
This other man I had dreamed
A drunken, vainglorious lout.[5]
He had done most bitter wrong
To some who are near my heart,

1 motley: Jester's parti-coloured costume.
2 She: Constance Gore-Booth, a member of the Sligo County aristocracy. A gay and beautiful woman, she had annoyed Yeats by becoming an embittered nationalist.
3 This man had kept a school/And rode our winged horse: Padraic Pearse, a school master, a leader in the movement to restore the Gaelic language in Ireland, and a poet (hence the reference to "our winged horse"—Pegasus, the horse of the Muses).
4 his helper and friend: Thomas MacDonagh.
5 A drunken, vainglorious lout: Major John MacBride. Gonne, to Yeats's great disgust, had married Maud in 1903.

Yet I number him in the song;
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream.
The horse that comes from the road.
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud,
Minute by minute they change;
A shadow of cloud on the stream
Changes minute by minute;
A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
And a horse plashes within it;
The long-legged moor-hens dive,
And hens to moor-cocks call;
Minute by minute they live:
The stone's in the midst of all.

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough

To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse —
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly[1] and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

The Second Coming

The poem was written in 1919 in the aftermath of the First World War, utilising religious symbolism to express Yeats's sense of the dissolution of the civilisation of his time, the end of one cycle of history and the approach of another.

Yeats explained in his own notes: "The end of an age, which always receives the revelation of the character of the next age, is represented by the coming of one gyre to its place of greatest expansion and of the other to that of its greatest contraction. At the present moment the life gyre is sweeping outward, unlike that before the birth of Christ which was narrowing, and has almost reached its greatest expansion. ..."

"The Second Coming" is written in a very rough iambic pentameter, with loose metre and rhymes.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre[2]
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

1 Connolly: James Connolly, Perse's partner in leading the insurrection. Like the other rebels named here, he was executed by firing squad.
2 The origin of the term "gyre" and Yeats's theory of history: Yeats called each cycle of history a "gyre", literally "a circular or spiral turn". The word "gyre" is drawn from Yeats's prose work *A Vision*, which sets out a theory of history and metaphysics. The poem lists a nightmarish scene in the following lines of the stanza. The "rough beast" slouching toward Bethlehem is the symbol of this new age; the speaker's vision of the rising sphinx is his vision of the character of the new world.

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.[1]
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi[2]
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,[3]
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep[4]
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle[5],
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem[6] to be born?

1 "The ceremony of innocence" suggests Yeats's view of ritual as the basis of civilised living. The lines "The best lack all conviction, while the worst/Are full of passionate intensity" are a paraphrase of one of the most famous passages from Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, a book which Yeats admitted to regard from his childhood with religious awe.
2 Spiritus Mundi: The spirit or soul of the universe, with which all individual souls are connected through the "Great Memory", which Yeats held to be a universal subconscious in which the human race preserves its past memories. It is thus a source of symbolic images for the poet. The idea is similar to Carl Jung's concept of the collective unconscious.
3 The sphinx or sphinx-like beast described in the poem had long captivated Yeats's imagination. He wrote the introduction to his play *The Resurrection*, "I began to imagine [around 1904], as always at my left side just out of the range of sight, a brazen winged beast which I associated with laughing, ecstatic destruction", noting that the beast was "Afterwards described in my poem 'The Second Coming'".
4 The phrase "stony sleep" is drawn from *The Book of Urizen* by William Blake. In Blake's poem, Urizen falls, unable to bear the battle in heaven he has provoked. To ward off the fiery wrath of his vengeful brother Eternals, he frames a rocky womb for himself: "But Urizen laid in a stony sleep/Unorganiz'd, rent from Eternity." During this stony sleep, Urizen goes through seven ages of creation-birth as fallen man, until he emerges. This is the man who becomes the Sphinx of Egypt.
5 a rocking cradle: the cradle of the infant Jesus.
6 Bethlehem: the birthplace of Jesus.

Sailing to Byzantium

Written in 1926 and included in Yeats's greatest single collection *The Tower* (1928), "Sailing to Byzantium" is one of Yeats's most inspired works, and one of the greatest poems of the 20th century.

The poem is about an imaginative journey, not an actual one. Yeats did not travel to Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople in the fourth century AD and later renamed Istanbul, but he did argue that, in the sixth century, it offered the ideal environment for the artist. Yeats wrote in *A Vision*: "I think that if I could be given a month of antiquity and leave to spend it where I chose, I would spend it in Byzantium a little before Justinian opened St. Sophia and closed the Academy of Plato... I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic, and practical life were one, that architects and artificers... spoke to the multitude in gold and silver. The painter, the mosaic worker, the worker in gold and silver, the illuminator of sacred books were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design, absorbed in their subject matter and that the vision of a whole people."

The four eight-line stanzas of "Sailing to Byzantium" are metred in iambic pentameter and rhymed *abababcc*.

1

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
— Those dying generations — at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

2

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;

And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

3

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall[1],
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,[2]
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

4

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;[3]
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

Critical Points

Yeats's poetry: artistic features and thematic focus

Yeats is generally considered to be one of the 20th century's key English language poets. Yet, unlike most Modernists who experimented with free verse,

1 the gold mosaic of a wall: Yeats had in mind the mosaic frieze of the holy martyrs in the church of San Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna, which he had visited in 1907.
2 perne in a gyre: whirl round in a spiral motion. perne: pirn, a bobbin, reel, or spool, on which something is wound. Yeats used it as a verb meaning "to spin round"; he associated the spinning with the spinning of fate.
3 "I have read somewhere," Yeats wrote, "that in the Emperor's palace at Byzantium was a ree made of gold and silver, and artificial birds that sang."

Yeats was a master of the traditional verse forms. The impact of modernism on Yeats's work can be seen in the increasing abandonment of the more conventionally poetic diction of his early work in favour of the more austere language and more direct approach to his themes.

Yeats's great poetic project was to reify his own life — his thoughts, feelings, speculations, conclusions, dreams — into poetry: to render all of himself into art, but not in a merely confessional or autobiographical manner; he was not interested in the common-place. His thematic focus could be sweepingly grand. He takes elements from Irish mythology, Greek mythology, 19th-century occultism, English literature, Byzantine art, European politics, and Christian imagery, all wound together and informed with his own experience and interpretive understanding. In the 1920s and 1930s, he even concocted a mystical theory of the universe, which explained history, imagination, and mythology in light of an occult set of symbols. However, in his greatest poems, he mitigates this grandiosity with a focus on his own deep feeling.

"The Second Coming": The structure and theme

"The Second Coming" is one of Yeats's most famous and most anthologised poems, and also one of the most thematically obscure and difficult to understand.

Structurally, the poem is quite simple — the first stanza describes the conditions present in the world (things falling apart, anarchy, etc.), and the second surmises from those conditions that a monstrous Second Coming is about to take place, not of the Jesus we first knew, but of a new messiah, a "rough beast", the slouching sphinx rousing itself in the desert and lumbering toward Bethlehem.

The poem may not be a poem with which many people can personally identify; but the aesthetic experience of its passionate language is powerful enough to ensure its value and its importance in Yeats's work as a whole. "The Second Coming" is a magnificent statement about the contrary forces at work in history, and about the conflict between the modern world and the ancient world.

Questions

1. How does Yeats exhibit both the public and private dimensions of his encounterment of the historical event in the poem "Easter, 1916"?

2. Some of Yeats's least accessible poems, such as "The Second Coming", are his works of visionary history. Is there a way in which they embrace more universal elements of human experience than their occult, mythological frame of reference might imply? Take "The Second Coming" as a case study.
3. Yeats's style is quite unique among poets of the 19th and 20th centuries. What characterises his poetic style? What kind of consciousness seems to be indicated by his rough meters, half-rhymes, and frequent violations of formal constraints? How do these traits affect, enhance, or interfere with his aesthetic articulation of his themes?

Class Activites

Compare John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" to Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium", and discuss the following questions: "In what ways does Yeats's poem seem designed to refute Keats's poem? How does Yeats's singing golden bird differ from Keats's singing nightingale?"

QUOTATIONS

Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.

—William Butler Yeats

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

—William Butler Yeats

Unit 39

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965)

Thomas Stearns Eliot *was a poet, dramatist and literary critic, one of the most influential poets of the 20th century. His poetry was marked by its juxtapositon of fragments, its humourous mixture of forms and linguistic registers, its intertextuality, and its use of personas and bleak, urban settings. His works, such as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", "The Waste Land", "The Hollow Men", and* Four Quartets, *are considered major achievements of the 20th century Modernist poetry. His other major works include the plays* Murder in the Cathedral *and* The Cocktail Party, *and the essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent". In 1948, he was announced the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature "for his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry".*

Life and Writing

Eliot was born in a prominent family from St. Louis, Missouri. Later, he said that "having passed one's childhood beside the big river (the Mississippi)" influenced his poetry. His father was a successful businessman; his mother wrote poems and was also a social worker. Eliot was the last of six surviving children.

Thomas Stearns Eliot

He studied at Harvard from 1906 to 1909, where he was awarded a B.A. The next year, he earned a master's degree at Harvard. Then he lived in Paris for a year, studying at the Sorbonne and touring the continent. Returning to Harvard in 1911 as a doctoral student in philosophy, Eliot studied

the writings of F. H. Bradley[1], Buddhism and Indic philology. When the First World War broke out, however, he went to London and then to Oxford. In June 1915 he got married, and in the same month appeared his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", with the encouragement of Pound. He continued to work on his doctoral dissertation and, in the spring of 1916, sent it to Harvard. Because he did not appear in person to defend his thesis, however, he was not awarded his PhD. In 1964, the dissertation was published as *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley.*

His first volume of verse, *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917), was followed by *Poems* (1919). In 1922 Eliot found a new quarterly, the *Criterion*; in the first issue appeared "The Waste Land", which established his position decisively as the voice of a disillusioned generation.

In 1925 he became a director of Faber and Faber[2]. From this time on, he was regarded as a figure of great cultural authority, whose influence was inescapable. In 1927 he became a British subject and a member of the Anglican Church. He describes himself as "classical in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion".

Eliot was also very influential as a critic. As an important member of the New Criticism, Eliot is considered by some to be one of the great literary critics of the 20th century. In his critical and theoretical writing, Eliot is known for his advocacy of the "objective correlative", the notion that art should not be a personal expression, but should work through objective universal symbols. He also plays a major role in the revival of interest in the metaphysical poets.

1 F. H. Bradley (1846-1924) was the most famous, original and philosophically influential of the British Idealists. It is for his metaphysics that Bradley has become best known. He argued that our everyday conceptions of the world contain hidden contradictions which appear, fatally, when we try to think out their consequences. In particular, Bradley rejected on these grounds the view that reality can be understood as consisting of many objects existing independently of each other (pluralism) and of our experience of them (realism). Consistently, his own view combined monism—the claim that reality is one, that there are no real separate things—with absolute idealism—the claim that reality consists solely of idea or experience. This vision of the world had a profound effect on the verse of T. S. Eliot, who studied philosophy at Harvard and wrote a PhD. thesis on Bradley.

2 Faber and Faber is a celebrated independent publishing house in the UK, notable in particular for publishing a great deal of poetry and for its former editor T. S. Eliot. Faber has a rich tradition of publishing a wide range of fiction, drama and film books, and books for children. It played an important part in the 20th century British and world literature.

The Waste Land

"The Waste Land" consists of five sections, i.e. "The Burial of the Dead", "A Game of Chess", "The Fire Sermon", "Death by Water", and "What the Thunder Said", together with Eliot's own "Notes" which explain his many varied and multicultural allusions, quotations, and half-quotations.

The poem was rapidly acclaimed as a statement of the post-war sense of depression and futility; it was praised by I. A. Richards (1893-1979), an English scholar and critic, as "a perfect emotive description of a state of mind which is probably inevitable for a while to all meditative people" (*Science and Poetry*, 1926). Complex, erudite, cryptic, satiric, spiritually earnest, and occasionally lyrical, it became one of the most recognisable landmarks of Modernism, and original voice speaking through many echoes and parodies of echoes. Its despairing mood, gallows humour, and seemingly hopeful ending appealed to many readers just after the First World War.

Eliot's own remark is that the poem could be seen not so much as "an important bit of social criticism", but as "the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling."

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", a Modernistic poem in the form of a dramatic monologue, and with excellent use of the stream of consciousness, marked the start of Eliot's career as one of the 20th century's most influential poets. This is one of the most anthologised 20th-century poems in English.

The action takes place in the evening in a bleak section of a smoky city. This city is probably St. Louis, where Eliot grew up. But it could also be London, to which Eliot moved in 1914. However, Eliot probably intended the setting to be any city anywhere.

J. Alfred Prufrock is a timid, overcautious middle-aged man. He escorts his silent listener through streets in a shabby part of a city, past cheap hotels and restaurants, to a social gathering where women he would like to meet are conversing. However, he is hesitant to take part in the activity for fear of making a fool of himself. In his narration, he expresses his thoughts about the dull, uneventful, mediocre life he leads as a result of his feelings of inadequacy and his fear of making decisions. Unable to seize opportunities or take risks, he lives in a world that is the same today as it was yesterday and will be the same tomorrow as it is today. He does try to make progress, but his timidity and fear

of failure inhibit him from taking action. The listener of his monologue is an unidentified companion, who could also be interpreted as Prufrock's inner self.

S'io credesse che mia riposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.[1]

— Spoken by Count Guido da Montefeltro, a Damned Soul in the Eighth Circle of Hell in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the *Inferno*, Canto 27, Lines 61 — 66.

LET us go then, you[2] and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table;[3]
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants[4] with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent

1 The epigram is in Latin. The translation is: "If I thought my answer were to one who could return to the world, I would not reply, but as none ever did return alive from this depth, without fear of infamy I answer thee." (by G.B. Harrison et al., eds. *Major British Writers*. Shortened. New York: Harcourt. 1967, Page 1015.) Eliot begins "The Love Song" with this quotation from Dante's epic poem to suggest that Prufrock, like Count Guido, is in hell. But Prufrock is in a hell on earth—a hell in the form of a modern, impersonal city with smoky skies. The quotation also points out that Prufrock, again like Count Guido, can present his feelings "without fear of infamy".

2 you: the Listener, an unidentified companion of Prufrock. The listener could also be Prufrock's inner self, one that prods him but fails to move him to action.

3 etherised: anesthetised with ether, a liquid obtained by combining sulfuric acid and ethyl alcohol, to render patients unconscious before an operation. upon a table: lying on the table of a hospital operating room. The imagery suggests that the evening is lifeless and listless.

4 cheap hotels/And sawdust restaurants: cheap hotels and restaurants with sawdust on the floors. sawdust: substance used to absorb spilled beverages and food, making it easy to sweep up at the end of the day.

To lead you to an overwhelming question...[1]
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room[2] the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo[3].

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,[4]
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.[5]

1 The shabby establishments will remind the speaker of his own shortcomings, their images remaining in his mind as he walks on. They will then prod the listener to ask the speaker a question about the speaker's life—perhaps why he visits these seedy haunts, and why he has not acted to better himself or to take a wife?
2 in a room: at a social gathering in a room.
3 the women come and go/Talking of Michelango: if women are speaking of the great Michelango, how could the lowly Prufrock possibly be of interest to them? Prufrock would like to meet one of them, but worries that she will look down on him. Michelangelo (1475-1564), Renaissance sculptor, painter, and architect and one of the greatest artists in history. Eliot borrowed most of this line from the Uruguayan-born French poet Jules LaForgue (1860-1887). In one of his works, LaForgue wrote (in French): *Dans la piece les femmes vont et viennent / En parlant des maôtres de Sienne* (*In the room the women go and come while speaking of the Siennese* (*painting*) *masters*).
4 Lines 17-19: Prufrock alludes to his inferiority as well as his inability to act decisively: He consigns himself to corners; stands idly by doing nothing; and becomes the brunt of ridicule or condescension—the soot that falls on him.
5 Lines 15-20: Smoky haze spreads across the city. The haze is like a quiet, timid cat padding to and fro, rubbing its head on objects, licking its tongue, and curling up to sleep after allowing soot to fall upon it. The speaker resembles the cat as he looks into windows or into "the room", trying to decide whether to enter and become part of the activity. Eventually, he curls up in the safety and security of his own soft arms—alone, separate.

And indeed there will be time[1]
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face[2] to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days[3] of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.[4]

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.[5]

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"[6]
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair —

1 There will be time: this phrase replies to the opening line of "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell (1621-1678): "Had we but world enough, and time." In Marvell's poem, the speaker/persona urges his beloved not to be coy but instead to seize the moment to take advantage of youth and "sport us while we may." Prufrock, of course, continually postpones even meeting a woman, saying "There will be time".
2 face: affectation.
3 works and days: a long poem by Hesiod, a Greek writer who lived in the 700s B.C. "Works" refers to farm labour and "Days" to periods of the year for performing certain agricultural chores. The poem, addressed to Hesiod's brother, was intended to instruct readers, stressing the importance of hard work and right living and condemning moral decay.
4 There's no hurry, though, the speaker tells himself. There will be time to decide and then to act—time to put on the right face and demeanor to meet people. There will be time to kill and time to act; in fact, there will be time to do many things—There will even be time to think about doing things, time to dream and then revise those dreams—before sitting down with a woman to take toast and tea.
5 The women are still coming and going, still talking of Michelangelo, suggesting that life is repetitive and dull.
6 Prufrock says there will be time to wonder whether he dares to approach a woman.

[They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!"]
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin[1] —
[They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!"]
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all: —
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall[2]
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?[3]

And I have known the eyes already, known them all —
The eyes that fix[4] you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,[5]
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?

1 He feels like turning back. After all, he has a bald spot, thinning hair, and thin arms and legs. Moreover, he has doubts about the acceptability of his clothing. simple pin: pin inserted through the tie and shirt to hold the tie in place.
2 dying fall: phrase borrowed from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Duke Orsino speaks it in Line 4 of Act I, Scene I: "If music be the food of love, play on;/Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,/The appetite may sicken, and so die./That strain again! it had a dying fall:/O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,/That breathes upon a bank of violets,/Stealing and giving odour!"
3 What will people think of him? Does he dare to approach a woman? He will think about it and make a decision, then reverse the decision. Of course, he realises that the people here are the same as the people he has met many times before—the same, uninteresting people in the same uninteresting world. They all even sound the same. So why should he do anything?
4 fix: evaluate.
5 He has seen their gazes before, many times—gazes that form an opinion of him, treating him like a butterfly or another insect pinned into place in a display.

And how should I presume?[1]

And I have known the arms already, known them all —
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
[But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!]
It is perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?[2]
Arms that lie along a table,[3] or wrap about a shawl.
And should I then presume?[4]
And how should I begin?[5]

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes[6]
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows?[7] ...
I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.[8]

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep... tired... or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor,[9] here beside you and me.

1 How will he be able to explain himself to them—the ordinariness, the mediocrity, of his life?
2 He has known women like these before, wearing jewelry but really bare, lacking substance. Why is he thinking about them? Perhaps it is the smell of a woman's perfume. digress: lose clarity or turn aside especially from the main subject of attention or course of argument in writing, thinking, or speaking.
3 Arms that lie along a table: this phrase echoes Line 3.
4 should... presume?: this clause repeats words in Lines 54 and 68.
5 how should I begin?: this clause repeats words in Line 59.
6 smoke that rises from the pipes: the smoke becomes part of the haze (Lines 15-16).
7 Shall I say, ...leaning out of windows: shall I tell a woman that I came through narrow streets, where lonely men (like Prufrock) lean out of windows watching life go by but not taking part in it?
8 I should have been a pair of ragged claws/Scuttling across the floors of silent seas: I should have been nothing more than crab claws in the depths of the silent ocean.
9 And the afternoon... stretched on the floor: the time passes peacefully, as if sleeping, very tired, or it simply wastes time, stretched out on the floor. This personification echoes the simile in Lines 2 and 3.

Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?[1]
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head [grown slightly bald] brought in upon a platter,[2]
I am no prophet[3] — and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman[4] hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.[5]

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain[6], among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,

1 Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,/Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis: Should the speaker sit down with someone and have dessert? Should he take a chance, make an acquaintance? cakes and ices: cakes or cookies, ice cream.
2 A biblical allusion to St. Matthew, 14: 3-11. John the Baptist: Jewish prophet of the First Century AD who urged people to reform their lives and who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus as the Messiah. John denounced Herod Antipas (4 BC-39 AD), the Roman-appointed ruler of Galilee and Perea, for violating the law of Moses by marrying Herodias, the divorced wife of his half-brother, Philip. In retaliation, Herod Antipas imprisoned John but was afraid to kill him because of his popularity with the people. Salome, the daughter of Herodias and stepdaughter of Herod Antipas, danced at a birthday party for Herod Antipas. Her performance was so enthralling that Herod said she could have any reward of her choice. Prompted by Herodias, who was outraged by John the Baptist's condemnation of her marriage, Salome asked for the head of the Baptist on a platter. Because he did not want to go back on his word, Herod fulfilled her request. John was a cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Accounts of his activities appear in the Bible in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and in the *Acts of the Apostles.*
3 prophet: another reference to John the Baptist.
4 Footman: usually servant in a uniform who opens doors, waits on tables, helps people into carriages. The eternal footman is a symbol of death, indicates someone who helps a person into the afterlife.
5 He has suffered; he has even imagined his head being brought in on a platter, like the head of John the Baptist. Of course, unlike John, he is no prophet. He has seen his opportunities pass and even seen death up close, holding his coat, snickering. He has been afraid.
6 porcelain: the glassware or hard, brittle people.

To have squeezed the universe into a ball[1]
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus[2], come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all" —
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
Should say: That is not what I meant at all.
That is not it, at all.[3]

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets[4],
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor —
And this, and so much more?[5] —
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern[6] threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:

1 To have squeezed the universe into a ball: this phrase is another allusion to Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress". In the last stanza of that poem, the speaker/persona says, " Let us roll all our strength and all/Our sweetness up into one ball." In Eliot's poem, the speaker asks whether it would have been worth it to do the same thing with a woman of his choosing.
2 Lazarus: name of two New Testament figures: (1) Lazarus of Bethany, brother of Martha and Mary. Jesus raised him from the dead (Gospel of John, Chapter 11: Verses 18, 30, 32, 38); (2) Lazarus, a leprous beggar (Gospel of Luke, Chapter 16: Verses 19-31). When Lazarus died, he was taken into heaven. When a rich man named Dives died, he went to hell. He requested that Lazarus be returned to earth to warn his brothers about the horror of hell, but his request was denied.
3 Would it have been worth for the speaker while drinking tea to try to make a connection with one of the women? Would it have been worth to arise from his lifeless life and dare to engage in conversation with a woman, only to let her criticize him or reject him?
4 Would it have been worth, considering all the times he would be with the woman at sunset or with her in a dooryard? Would it have been worth after all the mornings or evenings when workmen sprinkled the streets? sprinkled streets: This may be a reference to the practice of wetting dirt streets with oil or water to control dust.
5 after all the novels he would discuss with her over tea, after all the times he heard the drag of her skirt along the floor, after so many other occasions.
6 magic lantern: early type of slide projector. The magic lantern projected an image from a glass plate.

Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all.[1]

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord,[2] one that will do
To swell a progress[3], start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence[4], but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous —
Almost, at times, the Fool.[5]

I grow old... I grow old...
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.[6]

1 Would it have been worth if, after plumping a pillow or throwing off her shawl, she turned casually toward a window and told him that he was mistaken about her intentions toward him?
2 Prufrock and Hamlet (the protagonist of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*) are both indecisive. But Prufrock lacks the majesty and charisma of Hamlet. Therefore, he fancies himself as Polonius. attendant lord: Polonius, the lord chamberlain in *Hamlet*, a bootlicking advisor to the new king, Claudius, sometimes uses a whole paragraph of important-sounding words to say what most other people could say in a simple declarative sentence. His pedantry makes him look foolish at times. Prufrock is worried that the words he speaks will make him look foolish, too.
3 progress: In the time of a Shakespeare, a journey that a king or queen of England made with his or her entourage.
4 high sentence: The high-flown, pretentious language of Polonius.
5 Fool: a court jester (a fool) in *Hamlet*, referred to in previous lines. In the courts of England in Shakespeare's time, a fool was a comic figure with a quick tongue who entertained the king, the queen, and their guests. He was allowed to—and even expected to—criticise anyone at court. Many fools were dwarfs or cripples, their odd appearance enhancing their appeal and, according to prevailing beliefs, bringing good luck to the court.
6 wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled: to look youthful and confident.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.[1]
I have heard the mermaids[2] singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.[3]

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Critical Points

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock": stylistic features

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is a Modernistic poem that expresses the thoughts of the title character via the following techniques.

Conversational language combined with the stylised language of poetry. The poem opens straightforwardly with "Let us go then, you and I." It then presents a bizarre personification, comparing the evening to an anesthetised hospital patient. The anesthetised hospital patient represents the indecisiveness of Prufrock. The yellow fog and yellow smoke of Lines 15-16 are compared in succeeding lines to a timid cat, which represents the timidity of Prufrock. Besides, the subject under discussion sometimes shifts abruptly, from trifling matters to the universe, from abstract to concrete.

Repetition is also frequently used by Eliot to suggest the monotony in Prufrock's life. For example, he begins a line with "And" 20 times. And

1 The speaker realises that time is passing and that he is growing old. However, like other men going through a middle-age crisis, he considers changing his hairstyle and clothes.
2 mermaids: probably an allusion to the sirens in Homer's *Odyssey*.
3 Like *Odysseus* in the Odyssey, he has heard the song of the sirens. However, they are not singing to Prufrock.

also, like many of Eliot's poems, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" makes numerous allusions to other works, which are often symbolic in and of themselves. Various other figures of speech are adopted in the poem: simile (Lines 2-3): Prufrock uses *like* to compare the evening to a patient; personifications (Lines 8-9): streets become persons because they follow; metaphor (Line 51): life is compared to coffee; alliteration (Lines 20-21, Line 34, Line 56, and Line 58); hyperbole and metaphor (Lines 92-93): the universe becomes a ball that is rolled.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock": a thematic study

Many believe that the poem is a criticism of Victorian society and Prufrock's dilemma represents the inability to live a meaningful existence in the modern world.[1] McCoy and Harlan wrote: "For many readers in the 1920s, Prufrock seemed to epitomise the frustration and impotence of the modern individual. He seemed to represent thwarted desires and modern disillusionment. Such phrases as 'I have measured out my life in coffee spoons' (Line 51) capture the sense of the unheroic nature of life in the 20th century. Prufrock's weaknesses could be mocked, but he is a pathetic figure, not grand enough to be tragic."[2]

Prufrockian paralysis is a frequently discussed topic. Paralysis, the incapacity to act, has been the Achilles heel of many famous, mostly male, literary characters. Shakespeare's Hamlet is the paragon of paralysis. Unable to sort through his waffling, anxious mind, Hamlet makes a decisive action only at the end of the play. Eliot updates Hamlet's paralysis to the modern world in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". What seems ridiculous is that Prufrock's paralysis is just over whether he should "dare to eat a peach" (Line 122) in front of a group of high-society women.

According to different understanding of Prufrock's character and behaviour, the themes of the poem could also be interpreted as loneliness and alienation, indecision, inadequacy or pessimism.

1 "On 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'", from Roger Mitchell in Myers Jack, David Wojahan (ed.). *A Profile of Twentieth-Century American Poetry.* Southern Illinois UP, 1991.

2 from Kathleen McCoy's and Judith Harlan's *English Literature from 1785.* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992: 265-266)

Questions

1. Does the month of the year, October (Line 21), mean that the speaker is running out of time to make something of his life or to find the right woman?
2. Prufrock says he sees lonely men leaning out of windows. How does Prufrock know they are lonely?

Class Activities

Writing Contest

1. Adapt the poem into a narrative essay.
2. Imitate the protagonist's style and write a letter to the lady he wants to speak to but dare not do so publicly.
3. Write an essay that attempts to fathom Prufrock's psyche, and summarise some stylistic features of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" as a Modernistic poem.

QUOTATIONS

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things.

—T. S. Eliot

We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

—T. S. Eliot

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different.

—T. S. Eliot

Unit 40

James Joyce (1882-1941)

James Joyce *is celebrated as one of the great literary pioneers of the 20th century. He was one of the first writers to make extensive and convincing use of the stream of consciousness. And he is also noted for another stylistic technique,* ***the epiphany****, a moment in which a character makes a sudden, profound realisation — whether prompted by an external object or a voice from within — that creates a change in his or her perception of the world.*

Life and Writing

James Joyce was born on February 2, 1882, in Dublin, Ireland. He was the oldest of 10 children in the family. Joyce was sent to Clongowes Wood, a prestigious boarding school. Later, He attended University College in Dublin. He left the university and moved to Paris in 1902, and in the rest of his life, he only briefly returned to Ireland in 1903 upon the death of his mother.

James Joyce, by Berenice Abbott, 1928

Joyce started a nomadic life on the European continent, and he spent most of his lifetime in Paris, Trieste, Rome, and Zurich, but his native country remained basic to all his writings.

In 1905 he completed a collection of 15 stories, entitled *Dubliners*. However, it was not until 1913 that the volume was published. *Dubliners* was enthusiastically greeted by Pound in a review. His second famous work, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* appeared in the next two years.

In the following years, Joyce wrote two more major novels, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. They revolutionised the form and structure of the novel, decisively influenced the development of the stream of consciousness, and pushed language and linguistic experiments to the extreme limit of communication.

During his career, he suffered from rejections from publishers, suppression by censors, attacks by critics, and misunderstanding by readers. And he suffered 11 eye operations to salvage his ever-worsening eyesight. He was also much troubled in later years by his daughter's mental illness. On January 13, 1941, he died of a stomach ulcer at the age of 58, and was buried in Zurich's Fluntern Cemetery.

Major Works

Dubliners

Dubliners, a collection of 15 short stories, has an artistic unity given to them by Joyce's intention "to write a chapter of the moral history of my country, and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the center of paralysis. I have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity, and public life."

The first three stories proceed roughly through childhood and adolescence in a kind of autobiography; the following seven are about people in their maturity; the next four deal with public life; and the last one "The Dead" is the generalisation and conclusion of all the stories. The stories progress from simple to complex, from the young, nameless boy through characters of intermediate ages to the adult. Each story presents, in a sense, an aspect of "dear dirty Dublin", an aspect of the city's paralysis — moral, political, or spiritual. Each story is an action, defining a frustration or defeat of the soul. And the sequence represents the whole course of moral deterioration, ending in the death of the soul.

Every one of the stories is set in the city of Dublin, which was seen as a city in decline. Joyce sees paralysis in every detail of Dublin's environment, from the people's faces to the dilapidated buildings, and many characters assume that the future will be worse than the present. Most of the stories focus on members of the lower or middle classes.

Ulysses

Ulysses was first published in Paris on Feburary 2, 1922, Joyce's 40th birthday, and established Joyce's position as a leading Modernist.

The novel charts the passage of one day (June 16, 1904) as depicted in the life of an Irish Jew named Loepold Bloom, who plays the role of a Ulysses by wandering through the streets of Dublin. By applying a mixture of multiple narrators, including many different third-person narrative voices, interior monologue, stream of consciousness, literary parodies, constant stylistic and technical changes, the novel examines the relationship between the modern man and his myth and history, focusing on contemporary questions of Irish political and cultural independence, the effects of organised religion on the soul, and the cultural and moral decay produced by economic development and heightened urbanisation.

Finnegans Wake

Finnegans Wake, Joyce's last novel published in 1939, takes experimentation to an extreme, providing a one-night study of a Dublin pub-owner and his family, told in a multilingual, multiple-punning, endlessly intertextual dream-speech.

Araby

"Araby" is the third story in *Dubliners*. The narrator, a young boy, tells the story of a childhood infatuation in urban Dublin. The boy lives in a world apart from adults, although he fantasises about a neighbour's sister. She asks if he is going to Araby[1], an upcoming local bazaar with an Arabian theme. The boy, full of romantic notions, promises to bring her a gift from the bazaar if he goes. The boy takes a deserted train to the bazaar just as it is closing. Only a few stalls are open. The goods are far too expensive for him. The lights are being shut off, and the boy despairs: "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger."

The story of the frustrated quest for beauty in the midst of drabness is both meticulously realistic in its handling of details of Dublin life and the Dublin scene, and highly symbolic in that almost every image and incident suggests some particular aspect of the theme.

1 Araby: a term used to express the romantic view of the east that had been popular since Napoleon's triumph over Egypt. And, of course, the story is about Romantic Irony, for the unnamed boy has a Romantic view of the world.

North Richmond Street, being blind,[1] was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School[2] set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in a square ground. The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: *The Abbot*, by Walter Scott, *The Devout Communicant*, and *The Memoirs of Vidocq*.[3] I liked the last best because its leaves were yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central apple-tree and a few straggling bushes, under one of which I found the late tenant's rusty bicycle-pump. He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came, dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street the houses had grown sombre[4]. The space of sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses, where we ran the gauntlet[5] of the rough tribes from the cottages, to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odours arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street, light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen turning the corner, we hid in the shadow until we had

1 being blind: referring to the street being dead end.
2 The Joyce family moved to North Richmond Street in 1894 when Joyce was 12. Joyce had earlier briefly attended the Christian Brothers' School a few doors away. The Christian Brothers is a Catholic religious community.
3 *The Abbot*, by Walter Scott: a historical novel dealing with Mary, Queen of Scots. *The Devout Communicant*: a Catholic religious manual. *The Memoirs of Vidocq*: a biography of Eugène François Vidocq (1775-1857), a French criminal who later became the chief of the French detective force, and one of the first modern private investigators.
4 somber: grave or even gloomy.
5 run the gauntlet: to have to deal with a lot of people who are attacking you.

seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister[1] came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea, we watched her from our shadow peer up and down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed, and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body, and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a *come-all-you* about O'Donovan Rossa[2], or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused

1 mangan's sister: here Joyce makes the connection with James Clarence Mangan (1803-1849), the popular, but sentimental and romantic Irish poet. James Joyce wrote a significant essay on Mangan, and also used his name in his works.

2 *come-all-you* about O'Donovan Rossa: street ballad, so called from its opening words. This one was about the 19th century Irish nationalist Jeremiah Donovan, popularly known as O'Donovan Rossa (1831-1915), an Irish Fenian leader. In 1858 Rossa established the Phoenix Society which would later evolve into the Irish Republican Brotherhood. He was jailed numerous times for connections with the Fenian movement, and was finally exiled in 1871, sailing to the United States.

adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing-room in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: *O love! O love!* many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to *Araby*[1]. I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar; she said she would love to go.

— And why can't you? I asked.

While she spoke she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat that week in her convent.[2] Her brother and two other boys were fighting for their caps, and I was alone at the railings. She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

It's well for you, she said.

If I go, I said, I will bring you something.

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word Araby were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised, and hoped it was not some

1 Araby: The bazaar, described by its "official catalogue" as a "Grand Oriental Fete", was actually held in Dublin on May 14-19, 1894.
2 a retreat: period of seclusion from ordinary activities devoted to religious exercises. her convent: her convent school.

Freemason affair[1]. I answered few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my wandering thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the serious work of life which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hallstand, looking for the hat-brush, and answered me curtly:

— Yes, boy, I know.

As he was in the hall I could not go into the front parlour and lie at the window. I felt the house in bad humour and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw and already my heart misgave me.

When I came home to dinner my uncle had not yet been home. Still it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time and, when its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high, cold, empty, gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress.

When I came downstairs again I found Mrs Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an old, garrulous woman, a pawnbroker's widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to endure the gossip of the tea-table. The meal was prolonged beyond an hour and still my uncle did not come. Mrs Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock and she did not like to be out late, as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

— I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord.

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latchkey in the hall door. I heard him talking to himself and heard the hallstand rocking when it had received the

1 Freemason affair: his aunt shares her church's distrust of the Freemasons, an old European secret society, reputedly anti-Catholic.

weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway through his dinner I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

— The people are in bed and after their first sleep now, he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

— Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is.

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: *All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.* He asked me where I was going and, when I told him a second time, he asked me did I know *The Arab's Farewell to His Steed*[1]. When I left the kitchen he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin[2] tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous houses and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girded at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognized a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the centre of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about

1 *The Arab's Farewell to His Steed*: a once popular sentimental poem by Caroline Elizabeth Sarah Norton (1808-1877), a famous British author in the early 19th century. The poem tells about an Arab boy who sells for gold coins the thing that he loves the most in the world, his horse. However, as the horse is being led away, the boy changes his mind, and rushes after the man to return to the money and reclaim his horse.

2 a florin: a former British coin worth two shillings, which can be a considerable amount of money for the boy.

the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over which the words *Cafe Chantant*[1] were written in coloured lamps, two men were counting money on a salver[2]. I listened to the fall of the coins.

Remembering with difficulty why I had come, I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

— O, I never said such a thing!

— O, but you did!

— O, but I didn't!

— Didn't she say that?

— Yes. I heard her.

— O, there's a... fib[3]!

Observing me, the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

— No, thank you.

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.

1 Cafe Chantant: (French) a café that provided musical entertainment popular early in the 20th century.
2 a salver: a tray, typically made of silver and used in formal circumstances for serving food.
3 a fib: a lie.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, a largely autobiographical work, was finished in Zurich, and published in serial form in 1914 to 1915. The novel draws on many details from Joyce's early life. The major conflict is that Stephen struggles to decide whether he should be loyal to his family, his church, his nation, or his vocation as an artist.

Plot Summary

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man tells the story of Stephen Dedalus, a boy growing up in Ireland in the late 19th century, from his infancy in the strongly Catholic, intensely nationalistic environment of Dublin in the 1880s to his departure from Ireland some 20 years later. The hero gradually decides to cast off all his social, familial and religious constraints, and live a life devoted to artistic pursuits.

Stephen undergoes several crucial transformations over the course of the novel. The first, which occurs during his first years at Clongowes, is from a sheltered little boy to a bright student who understands social interactions and can begin to make sense of the world around him. The second, which occurs when Stephen sleeps with the Dublin prostitute, is from innocence to debauchery. The third, which occurs when Stephen hears Father Arnall's speech on death and hell, is from an unrepentant sinner to a devout Catholic. Finally, Stephen's greatest transformation is from near fanatical religiousness to a new devotion to art and beauty. This transition takes place in Chapter 4, when he is offered entry to the Jesuit order but refuses it in order to attend university. Stephen's refusal and his subsequent epiphany on the beach mark his transition from belief in God to belief in aesthetic beauty. This transformation continues through his college years. By the end of his time in college, Stephen has become a fully formed artist, and his diary entries reflect the independent individual he has become.

Stephen, the hero of the novel, is Joyce's fictional recreation of himself. All the events are filtered through his consciousness. He is extremely sensitive and imaginative. Although he keeps the core traits of imaginativeness and sensitivity throughout his life, Stephen evolves from a shy, almost awkward boy to a brave and brilliant young man. He finally comes to realise that Ireland is a trap for him, and that he must escape the bonds of family, religion, and country.

Introduction to Chapter 4, Section 3

This passage, from Chapter 4, demonstrates Joyce's contention that becoming a true artist involves a calling, not a conscious decision the artist can make himself.

Stephen impatiently waits for his father and tutor to return with news about the possibility of his admission into the university. Stephen's mother is hostile to the idea, but Stephen feels that a great fate is in store for him. He sets off walking toward the sea, encountering a group of teacher friars on the way. He considers greeting them, but concludes that it is impossible to imagine them being generous toward him. He recites snatches of poetry and regards the light on the water. Stephen comes upon several of his schoolmates who are swimming, and they jokingly greet him as they say his name in Greek.

Reflecting on the myth of Daedalus that his name evokes, Stephen ponders his similarity to that "fabulous artificer" who constructed wings with which he flew out of imprisonment. Stephen is suddenly enraptured by this thought, and feels that he will soon begin building a new soul that will allow him to rise above current miseries. This vision is not simply an image of his future, but of his childhood and boyhood as well. Most important, Stephen realises that the art that he will forge is not merely a beautiful object, but an entire eternal existence. Through his art, Stephen creates an "imperishable being" very much like a soul — he will not just create literature, but will create himself.

At that moment, he sees a beautiful girl wading in the water, her skirts hiked up high. He and the girl make eye contact for a moment. Stephen perceives her as an angel of youth and beauty, and he swoons inwardly. The sight of the girl leads to one of the most important epiphanies in the novel. This moment is a classic example of Joyce's belief that an epiphany can dramatically alter the human spirit in a matter of just a few seconds. In the evening, he climbs a hill and watches the moon.

Chapter 4, Section 3

He passed from the trembling bridge on to firm land again. At that instant, as it seemed to him, the air was chilled and, looking askance towards the water, he saw a flying squall darkening and crisping suddenly the tide. A faint click at his heart, a faint throb in his throat told him once more of how his flesh dreaded the cold infrahuman odour of the sea; yet he did not strike across the downs on his left but held straight on along the spine of rocks that

pointed against the river's mouth.

A veiled sunlight lit up faintly the grey sheet of water where the river was embayed. In the distance along the course of the slowflowing Liffey slender masts flecked the sky and, more distant still, the dim fabric of the city lay prone in haze. Like a scene on some vague arras, old as man's wariness, the image of the seventh city of Christendom[1] was visible to him across the timeless air, no older nor more weary nor less patient of subjection than in the days of the thingmote[2].

Disheartened, he raised his eyes towards the slow-drifting clouds, dappled and seaborne. They were voyaging across the deserts of the sky, a host of nomads on the march, voyaging high over Ireland, westward bound. The Europe they had come from lay out there beyond the Irish Sea, Europe of strange tongues and valleyed and woodbegirt and citadelled and of entrenched and marshaled races. He heard a confused music within him as of memories and names which he was almost conscious of but could not capture even for an instant; then the music seemed to recede, to recede, to recede, and from each receding trail of nebulous music there fell always one longdrawn calling note, piercing like a star the dusk of silence. Again! Again! Again! A voice from beyond the world was calling.

— Hello, Stephanos!

— Here comes The Dedalus!

— Ao! ... Eh, give it over, Dwyer, I'm telling you or I'll give you a stuff in the kisser for yourself... Ao!

— Good man, Towser! Duck him!

— Come along, Dedalus! Bous Stephanoumens! Bous Stephaneforos!

— Duck him! Guzzle him now,[3] Towser!

— Help! Help... Ao!

He recognized their speech collectively before he distinguished their faces.

1 The seventh city of Christendom: here referring to Dublin. Christendom, in the widest sense, refers to Christianity as a territorial phenomenon; those countries where most people are Christians, or nominal Christians, are part of Christendom.
2 the thingmote: a large mound of earth raised by the Norsemen as their assembly place for settling disputes and passing laws in the 10th century, when they established states and settlements in Ireland. The meaning of Norsemen were "people from the North" and are all applied to the Scandinavian population of the period from the late eighth century to the 11th century.
3 Duck him! Guzzle him now: dip him into water! Make him drink greedily as if with great thirst.

The mere sight of that medley of wet nakedness chilled him to the bone. Their bodies, corpsewhite or suffused with a pallied golden light or rawly tanned by the sun, gleamed with the wet of the sea. Their diving-stone, poised on its rude supports and rocking under their plunges, and the roughhewn stones of the sloping breakwater over which they scrambled in their horseplay, gleamed with cold wet luster. The towels with which they smacked their bodies were heavy with cold seawater; and drenched with cold brine was their matted hair.

He stood still in deference to their calls and parried their banter with easy words. How characterless they looked: Shuley without his deep unbuttoned collar, Ennis without his scarlet belt with the snaky clasp, and Connolly without his Norfolk coat with the flapless sidepockets! It was a pain to see them and a sword-like pain to see the signs of adolescence that made repellent their pitiable nakedness. Perhaps they had taken refuge in number and noise from the secret dread in their souls. But he, apart from them and in silence, remembered in what dread he stood of the mystery of his own body.

— Stephanos Dedalos! Bous Stephanoumenos! Bous Stephaneforos!

Their banter was not new to him and now it flattered his mild proud sovereignty. Now, as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy. So timeless seemed the grey warm air, so fluid and impersonal his own mood, that all ages were as one to him. A moment before the ghost of the ancient kingdom of the Danes had looked forth through the vesture of the hazewrapped city. Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer,[1] he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly

1 The name of the fabulous artificer: here referring to Daedalus. In Greek mythology, he was a most skillful artificer. He is first mentioned in Homer, where he built for Ariadne, daughter of King Minos of Crete and his queen, a wide dancing-ground (Iliad xviii.591). Ovid, in his Metamorphoses, describes Daedalus as making the Labyrinth so cunningly that he himself could barely escape it after he built it. Among many anecdotes told of Daedalus, one told that Daedalus was shut up in a tower by Minos to prevent his knowledge of the labyrinth from spreading to the public. Daedalus set to work to fabricate wings for himself and his young son Icarus. When both were prepared for flight, Daedalus warned Icarus not to fly too high, because the heat of the sun would melt the wax, nor too low because the sea foam would make the wings wet and they would no longer fly. Thus the father and son flew away. When the boy began to soar upward as if to reach heaven, the blazing sun softened the wax which held the feathers together and they came off. Icarus fell into the sea. His father cried, and called the land near the place where Icarus fell into the ocean Icaria in memory of his child. Daedalus arrived safely in Sicily, in the care of King Cocalus, where he built a temple to Apollo, and hung up his wings, an offering to the god.

climbing the air. What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some medieval book of prophecies and symbols, a hawklike man flying sunward above the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being?

His heart trembled; his breath came faster and a wild spirit passed over his limbs as though he were soaring sunward. His heart trembled in an ecstasy of fear and his soul was in flight. His soul was soaring in an air beyond the world and the body he knew was purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude and made radiant and commingled with the element of the spirit. An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes and wild his breath and tremulous and wild and radiant his wondswept limbs.

— One! Two! ... Look out!

— O, cripes, I'm drownded!

— One! Two! Three and away!

— Me next! Me next!

— One! ... Uk!

— Stephaneforos!

His throat ached with a desire to cry aloud, the cry of a hawk or eagle on high, to cry piercingly of his deliverance to the winds. This was the call of life to his soul not the dull gross voice of the world of duties and despair, not the inhuman voice that had called him to the pale service of the altar. An instant of wild flight had delivered him and the cry of triumph which his lips withheld cleft his brain.

— Stephaneforos!

What were they now but cerements shaken from the body of death — the fear he had walked in night and day, the incertitude that had ringed him round, the shame that had abased him within and without — cerements, the linens of the grave?

His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her graveclothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore,[1] a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable.

1 He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore: the complete name of the hero is Stephen Dedalus, whose family name is exactly the same as the Greek artist artificer.

He started up nervously from the stoneblock for he could no longer quench the flame in his blood. He felt his cheeks aflame and his throat throbbing with song. There was a lust of wandering in his feet that burned to set out for the ends of the earth. On! On! His heart seemed to cry. Evening would deepen above the sea, night fall upon the plains, dawn glimmer before the wanderer and show him strange fields and hills and faces. Where?

He looked northward towards Howth. The sea had fallen below the line of seawrack[1] on the shallow side of the breakwater and already the tide was running out fast along the foreshore. Already one long oval bank of sand gleamed above the shallow tide, and about the isles and around the long bank and amid the shallow currents of the beach were lightclad gayclad figures, wading and delving.

In a few moments he was barefoot, his stockings folded in his pockets and his canvas shoes dangling by their knotted laces over his shoulders; and, picking a pointed salt-eaten stick out of the jetsam among the rocks, he clambered down the slope of the breakwater.

There was a long rivulet in the strand; and, as he waded slowly up its course, he wondered at the endless drift of seaweed. Emerald and black and russet and olive, it moved beneath the current, swaying and turning. The water of the rivulet was dark with endless drift and mirrored the highdrifting clouds. The clouds were drifting above him silently and silently the seatangle was drifting below him; and the grey warm air was still; and a new wild life was singing in his veins.

Where was his boyhood now? Where was the soul that had hung back from her destiny, to brood alone upon the shame of her wounds and in her house of squalor and subterfuge to queen it in faded cerements and in wreaths that withered at the touch? Or where was he?

He was alone. He was unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life. he was alone and young and willful and wildhearted, alone amid a waste of wild air and brackish waters and the seaharvest of shells and tangle and veiled grey sunlight and gayclad lightclad figures, of children and girls and voices childish and girlish in the air.

A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and

1 seawrack: bladder wrack, a seaweed found on the coasts of sea.

pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and softhued as ivory, were bared almost to the hips where the white fringes of her drawers were like featherings of soft white down. Her slateblue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some darkplumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face.

She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness. Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither. The first faint noise of gently moving water broke the silence, low and faint and whispering, faint as the bells of sleep; hither and thither, hither and thither; and a faint flame trembled on her cheek.

— Heavenly God! Cried Stephen's soul, in an outburst of profane[1] joy.

He turned away from her suddenly and set off across the strand. His cheeks were aflame; his body was aglow; his limbs were trembling. On and on and on and on he strode, far out over the sands, singing wildly to the sea, crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him.

Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on!

He halted suddenly and heard his heart in the silence. How far had he walked? What hour was it?

There was no human figure near him nor any sound borne to him over the air. But the tide was near the turn and already the day was on the wane. He turned landward and ran towards the shore and, running up the sloping beach, reckless of the sharp shingle, found a sandy nook amid a ring of tufted sand-knolls and lay down there that the peace and silence of the evening might still the riot of his blood.

He felt above him the vast indifferent dome and calm processes of the

1 profane: not respectful of religious practice.

heavenly bodies; and the earth beneath him, the earth that had born him, had taken him to her breast.

He closed his eyes in the languor of sleep. His eyelids trembled as if they felt the vast cyclic movement of the earth and her watchers, trembled as if they felt the strange light of some new world. His soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings. A world, a glimmer, or a flower? Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless succession to itself, breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than other.

Evening had fallen when he woke and the sand and arid grasses of his bed glowed no longer. He rose slowly and, recalling the rapture of his sleep, sighed at its joy.

He climbed to the crest of the sand-hill and gazed about him. Evening had fallen. A rim of the young moon cleft the pale waste of sky like the rim of a silver hoop embedded in grey sand; and the tide was flowing in fast to the land with a low whisper of her waves, islanding a few last figures in distant pools.

Critical Points

"Araby": Longing for adventure and frustration

This story deals with longing for adventure and escape, though this longing finds a focus in the object of the narrator's desire. The title itself, "Araby", also suggests escape. To the 19th-century European mind, the Islamic lands of North Africa, the Near East, and the Middle East symbolised decadence, exotic delights, escapism, and a luxurious sensuality. The boy's erotic desires for the girl become joined to his fantasies about the wonders that will be offered in the bazaar.

Frustration is another theme of the story. The protagonist has a series of romantic ideas, about the girl and the wondrous event that he will attend on her behalf. But on the night when he awaits his uncle's return so that he can go to the bazaar, the boy's frustration mounts. When he finally does arrive, the bazaar is more or less over. His fantasies about the bazaar and buying a great gift for the girl are revealed as ridiculous. The bazaar is a rather tawdry shadow of the boy's dreams. Though his anticipation of the event has provided him

with pleasant daydreams, reality is much harsher. He remains a prisoner of his modest means and his city.

Stephen Daedalus: Symbolic uses of the hero's name

Joyce borrows the name for the protagonist with double symbolic meanings: the mythic and the religious ones. Daedalus, the great pagan inventor, was a rebel who built himself wings to escape from the labyrinths and nets of authority. The rich connotation of this mythic name suggests that Stephen would, like the fabulous artificer, take artistic creation as his vocation, inventing artistic wings to fly away from the island prison — Ireland. The name of the hero is also embodied Joyce's use of religious symbolism to support his theme. Stephen, a name of the first Christian martyr St. Stephen, implies that Stephen would be a saint in literature.

In this novel, Stephen's view of himself changes when his friends address him with a Greek version of his name. He reflects on certain affinities between himself and that mythical "fabulous artificer", and no longer defines himself through Christian doctrine by relating himself to Christ and Mary. In this section, Stephen begins to shift his emphasis from his first name to his last name. He dwells on the idea of Daedalus's flight-giving wings, a piece of artisan handicraft that symbolises the individual's ability to create art and the possibility of transcending worldly woes. Much as Daedalus escaped prison, Stephen dreams of escaping the misery of his impoverished family and narrow, sad life.

Questions

Araby

1. The story is an initiation story, meaning that the boy experienced growth or a rite of passage, from one stage of his life (e.g. childhood) to another (young adulthood). What do you think the boy has learned?
2. What kind of "character" do you think Mangan's sister is? A round character, a flat character, a substitute for something else or a symbol with a certain meaning?
3. What do you think about the boy's love for Mangan's sister?
4. What do you think of the ending? How do you explain the word "vanity"?

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

1. Compare and contrast Stephen's perception of art with his perception

of religion, family, school, or nation. What makes art such an appealing escape for Stephen?

2. How do Stephen's parents affect his development throughout the novel? How does he react to his father's patriotic nostalgia and to his mother's solemn Catholicism? At the end of the novel, why does Stephen feel he needs to escape from his family?
3. Compare and contrast Stephen with some of the other boys and young men with whom he associates. How is he different from them? How does he feel about being different?

Class activities

1. Suppose that you were the boy in the story "Araby". After you were back from the bazaar, write a letter to the girl, explaining your trip and your feeling to her.
2. Have you experienced such moments as epiphanies, for example, all of a sudden, some truth revealed to you, or you came to realise the meaning of what has happened in your life? Discuss this kind of experience with your classmates.

QUOTATIONS

History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.

—James Joyce

Writing in English is the most ingenious torture ever devised for sins committed in previous lives.

—James Joyce

Unit 41

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

Virginia Woolf *was a British novelist and essayist. She was among the founders of the Modernist Movement, and is also considered one of the greatest innovators in the English language.*

Life and Writing

Virginia Woolf

Virginia was descended from one of Victorian England's most prestigious literary families. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, was the editor of *Dictionary of National Biography*. Henry James, George Eliot, George Henry Lewes, and James Russell Lowell, who was made Virginia's godfather, were among the frequent visitors to the house. Her mother Julia Stephen was equally well connected. She came from a family of renowned beauties who left their mark on Victorian society as models for Pre-Raphaelite artists and early photographers. Supplementing these influences was the immense library of the family, from which Virginia was taught the classics and English literature. She wrote that she found herself in "a position where it was easier on the whole to be eminent than obscure."

The sudden death of her mother from influenza in 1895 led to the first of Virginia's several breakdowns. The death of her father in 1904 provoked her most alarming collapse and she was briefly institutionalised. Throughout her life, Woolf was plagued by drastic mood swings. After the death of her father, Woolf moved to settle at Bloomsbury with her sister and two brothers.

She quickly found herself at the centre of England's most important literary community, known as the "Bloomsbury Group". The group included the painter Lytton Strachey, the novelist E. M. Foster, the composer Benjamen Britten, and the economist John Keynes. They emphasized nonconformity, aesthetic pleasure, and intellectual freedom.

In 1905 she began to write for *Times Literary Supplement*, a connection which lasted almost until her death. In 1912 she married Leonard Woolf, a writer and socialist political figure, also among the Bloomsbury circle, whose stabilising influence on Virginia is considered to have nurtured her literary career. In 1917, the couple founded the Hogarth Press, a business venture which was intended partly as a release from the anxiety she experienced when writing, which would publish all of Virginia's writings as well as the early works of writers such as Katherine Mansfield, T. S. Eliot, and Sigmund Freud.

During the period 1922 to 1941, Virginia immersed herself in writing fiction, completing the critically acclaimed novels *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *The Waves* (1931), which form the foundation of her literary reputation. In addition, her nonfiction works from this time, particularly *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938), established her as an important contributor to modern critical and feminist writing.

Despite the enormous successes in her writing, Woolf remained mentally unstable. On March 28, 1941, Woolf drowned herself in the River Ouse near her home. In a note to her husband she wrote:

"I feel certain that I am going mad again. I feel we can't go through another of those terrible times. And I shan't recover this time. I begin to hear voices, and I can't concentrate. So I am doing what seems the best thing to do. You have given me the greatest possible happiness. You have been in every way all that anyone could be. I don't think two people could have been happier till this terrible disease came. I can't fight any longer. I know that I am spoiling your life, that without me you could work. And you will I know. You see I can't even write this properly. I can't read. What I want to say is I owe all the happiness of my life to you. You have been entirely patient with me and incredibly good. I want to say that -- everybody knows it. If anybody could have saved me it would have been you. Everything has gone from me but the certainty of your goodness. I can't go on spoiling your life any longer."

After her death, Leonard set to the task of editing her vast collection of correspondence, journals, and unpublished works and also wrote an autobiography.

The Mark on the Wall

Like her novels, Woolf's stories, written in an elliptical and impressionistic style, are noted for their subjective explorations and detailed poetic narratives that capture ordinary experience while depicting the workings and perceptions of the human mind.

In "The Mark on the Wall" she employs interior monologue to impart the musings of a narrator who, in speculating about a small detail on a wall, ponders a variety of topics, including personal reminiscence, reality, society, art, writing, and life itself. It concludes with the identification of that mark as a snail.

On one level, "The Mark on the Wall" is a humorous record of one mildly eccentric woman's thoughts as she sits by the fire on a winter's day. Yet on another level, the thoughts this woman thinks and especially the way she thinks them can be much more significant. It may lead to the idea that Woolf is trying to propose that objective reality is less important than the world of perceptions internal to each individual, which is a manifesto for modern literature.

Perhaps it was the middle of January in the present year that I first looked up and saw the mark on the wall. In order to fix a date it is necessary to remember what one saw. So now I think of the fire; the steady film of yellow light upon the page of my book; the three chrysanthemums[1] in the round glass bowl on the mantelpiece. Yes, it must have been the winter time, and we had just finished our tea, for I remember that I was smoking a cigarette when I looked up and saw the mark on the wall for the first time. I looked up through the smoke of my cigarette and my eye lodged for a moment upon the burning coals, and that old fancy of the crimson flag flapping from the castle tower came into my mind, and I thought of the cavalcade[2] of red knights riding up the side of the black rock. Rather to my relief the sight of the mark interrupted the fancy, for it is an old fancy, an automatic fancy, made as a child perhaps. The mark was a small round mark, black upon the white wall, about six or seven inches above the mantelpiece.

How readily our thoughts swarm upon a new object, lifting it a little way,

1 chrysanthemums: a garden plant with brightly coloured flowers. 菊花
2 cavalcade: a procession of vehicles, riders, or people on foot.

as ants carry a blade of straw so feverishly, and then leave it... If that mark was made by a nail, it can't have been for a picture, it must have been for a miniature — the miniature of a lady with white powdered curls, powder-dusted cheeks, and lips like red carnations[1]. A fraud of course, for the people who had this house before us would have chosen pictures in that way — an old picture for an old room. That is the sort of people they were — very interesting people, and I think of them so often, in such queer places, because one will never see them again, never know what happened next. They wanted to leave this house because they wanted to change their style of furniture, so he said, and he was in process of saying that in his opinion art should have ideas behind it when we were torn asunder, as one is torn from the old lady about to pour out tea and the young man about to hit the tennis ball in the back garden of the suburban villa as one rushes past in the train.

But as for that mark, I'm not sure about it; I don't believe it was made by a nail after all; it's too big, too round, for that. I might get up, but if I got up and looked at it, ten to one I shouldn't be able to say for certain; because once a thing's done, no one ever knows how it happened. Oh! dear me, the mystery of life; The inaccuracy of thought! The ignorance of humanity! To show how very little control of our possessions we have — what an accidental affair this living is after all our civilization — let me just count over a few of the things lost in one lifetime, beginning, for that seems always the most mysterious of losses — what cat would gnaw, what rat would nibble — three pale blue canisters[2] of book-binding tools? Then there were the bird cages, the iron hoops, the steel skates, the Queen Anne coal-scuttle[3], the bagatelle[4] board, the hand organ — all gone, and jewels, too. Opals and emeralds, they lie about the roots of turnips. What a scraping paring affair it is to be sure! The wonder is that I've any clothes on my back, that I sit surrounded by solid furniture at this moment. Why, if one wants to compare life to anything, one must liken it to being blown through the Tube[5] at fifty miles an hour — landing at the other end without a single hairpin in one's hair! Shot out at the feet of God entirely naked!

1 carnation: a double-flowered cultivated variety of clove pink, with grey-green leaves and showy pink, white, or red flowers. 康乃馨
2 canisters: a round or cylindrical container.
3 coal-scuttle: a lidded metal container with a handle, used to store coal for a domestic fire.
4 bagatelle: a game in which small balls are hit into numbered holes on a board.
5 the Tube: London underground railway.

Tumbling head over heels in the asphodel meadows[1] like brown paper parcels pitched down a shoot in the post office! With one's hair flying back like the tail of a race-horse. Yes, that seems to express the rapidity of life, the perpetual waste and repair; all so casual, all so haphazard...

But after life. The slow pulling down of thick green stalks so that the cup of the flower, as it turns over, deluges one with purple and red light. Why, after all, should one not be born there as one is born here, helpless, speechless, unable to focus one's eyesight, groping at the roots of the grass, at the toes of the Giants? As for saying which are trees, and which are men and women, or whether there are such things, that one won't be in a condition to do for fifty years or so. There will be nothing but spaces of light and dark, intersected by thick stalks, and rather higher up perhaps, rose-shaped blots of an indistinct colour-dim pinks and blues — which will, as time goes on, become more definite, become — I don't know what...

And yet that mark on the wall is not a hole at all. It may even be caused by some round black substance, such as a small rose leaf, left over from the summer, and I, not being a very vigilant housekeeper — look at the dust on the mantelpiece, for example, the dust which, so they say, buried Troy three times over, only fragments of pots utterly refusing annihilation, as one can believe.

The tree outside the window taps very gently on the pane... I want to think quietly, calmly, spaciously, never to be interrupted, never to have to rise from my chair, to slip easily from one thing to another, without any sense of hostility, or obstacle. I want to sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts. To steady myself, let me catch hold of the first idea that passes... Shakespeare... Well, he will do as well as another. A man who sat himself solidly in an arm-chair, and looked into the fire, so — A shower of ideas fell perpetually from some very high Heaven down through his mind. He leant his forehead on his hand, and people, looking in through the open door, — for this scene is supposed to take place on a summer's evening — But how dull this is, this historical fiction! It doesn't interest me at all. I wish I could hit upon a pleasant track of thought, a track indirectly reflecting credit upon myself, for those are the pleasantest thoughts, and very frequent even in the minds of modest mouse-coloured people, who believe genuinely that they dislike to hear

1 asphodel meadows: here referring to heaven, the next world. asphodel: a plant of the lily family with long, slender leaves and flowers borne on a spike. (日光兰). In Greek mythology, asphodel flowers grow in the Elysian fields, the place in Greek mythology where heroes were conveyed after death; of or like paradise.

their own praises. They are not thoughts directly praising oneself; that is the beauty of them; they are thoughts like this:

"And then I came into the room. They were discussing botany. I said how I'd seen a flower growing on a dust heap on the site of an old house in Kingsway[1]. The seed, I said, must have been sown in the reign of Charles the First[2]. What flowers grew in the reign of Charles the First?" I asked — (but I don't remember the answer). Tall flowers with purple tassels[3] to them perhaps. And so it goes on. All the time I'm dressing up the figure of myself in my own mind, lovingly, stealthily, not openly adoring it, for if I did that, I should catch myself out, and stretch my hand at once for a book in self-protection. Indeed, it is curious how instinctively one protects the image of oneself from idolatry[4] or any other handling that could make it ridiculous, or too unlike the original to be believed in any longer. Or is it not so very curious after all? It is a matter of great importance. Suppose the looking glass smashes, the image disappears, and the romantic figure with the green of forest depths all about it is there no longer, but only that shell of a person which is seen by other people — what an airless, shallow, bald, prominent world it becomes! A world not to be lived in. As we face each other in omnibuses and underground railways we are looking into the mirror; that accounts for the vagueness, the gleam of glassiness, in our eyes. And the novelists in future will realize more and more the importance of these reflections, for of course there is not one reflection but an almost infinite number; those are the depths they will explore, those the phantoms they will pursue, leaving the description of reality more and more out of their stories, taking a knowledge of it for granted, as the Greeks did and Shakespeare perhaps — but these generalizations are very worthless. The military sound of the word is enough. It recalls leading articles, cabinet ministers — a whole class of things indeed which as a child one thought the thing itself, the standard thing, the real thing, from which one could not depart

1 Kingsway: a major road in central London.
2 Charles the First, Charles I (1600-1649), King of England, Scotland and Ireland from 1625 until his execution in 1649. He famously engaged in a struggle for power with the Parliament of England. As he was an advocate of the Divine Right of Kings, many in England feared that he was attempting to gain absolute power. There was widespread opposition to many of his actions, especially the levying of taxes without Parliament's consent. Religious conflicts permeated Charles' reign.
3 tassel: a tuft of hanging threads, knotted together at one end and used for decoration in soft furnishing and clothing.
4 idolatry: worship of idols.

save at the risk of nameless damnation. Generalizations bring back somehow Sunday in London, Sunday afternoon walks, Sunday luncheons, and also ways of speaking of the dead, clothes, and habits — like the habit of sitting all together in one room until a certain hour, although nobody liked it. There was a rule for everything. The rule for tablecloths at that particular period was that they should be made of tapestry with little yellow compartments marked upon them, such as you may see in photographs of the carpets in the corridors of the royal palaces. Tablecloths of a different kind were not real tablecloths. How shocking, and yet how wonderful it was to discover that these real things, Sunday luncheons, Sunday walks, country houses, and tablecloths were not entirely real, were indeed half phantoms, and the damnation which visited the disbeliever in them was only a sense of illegitimate freedom. What now takes the place of those things I wonder, those real standard things? Men perhaps, should you be a woman; the masculine point of view which governs our lives, which sets the standard, which establishes Whitaker's Table of Precedency[1], which has become, I suppose, since the war half a phantom to many men and women, which soon, one may hope, will be laughed into the dustbin where the phantoms go, the mahogany[2] sideboards and the Landseer[3] prints, Gods and Devils, Hell and so forth, leaving us all with an intoxicating sense of illegitimate freedom — if freedom exists...

In certain lights that mark on the wall seems actually to project from the wall. Nor is it entirely circular. I cannot be sure, but it seems to cast a perceptible shadow, suggesting that if I ran my finger down that strip of the wall it would, at a certain point, mount and descend a small tumulus, a

1 Whitaker's Table of Precedency: Whitaker's *Almanack* is a reference book, published annually in the United Kingdom. The book was originally published by J. Whitaker & Sons from 1868 to 1997, then by The Stationery Office. The Almanack consists of articles, lists and tables on a wide range of subjects including education, the peerage, government departments, health and social issues, and the environment. Whitaker's *Almanack* prints a "Table of Prededency", which shows the order in which the various ranks in public life and society on formal occasions.
2 mahogany: hard reddish-brown wood from a tropical tree, used for furniture.
3 Landseer: Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1802-1873), an English painter, well known for his paintings of animals, particularly horses, dogs and stags. The reproductions of his "Stag at Bay", "Monarch of the Glen", and similar paintings were often found in Victorian homes. The best known of Landseer's works, however, are sculptures—the lions in Trafalgar Square, London.

smooth tumulus like those barrows on the South Downs[1] which are, they say, either tombs or camps. Of the two I should prefer them to be tombs, desiring melancholy like most English people, and finding it natural at the end of a walk to think of the bones stretched beneath the turf... There must be some book about it. Some antiquary must have dug up those bones and given them a name... What sort of a man is an antiquary, I wonder? Retired Colonels for the most part, I daresay, leading parties of aged labourers to the top here, examining clods of earth and stone, and getting into correspondence with the neighbouring clergy, which, being opened at breakfast time, gives them a feeling of importance, and the comparison of arrow-heads necessitates cross-country journeys to the county towns, an agreeable necessity both to them and to their elderly wives, who wish to make plum jam or to clean out the study, and have every reason for keeping that great question of the camp or the tomb in perpetual suspension, while the Colonel himself feels agreeably philosophic in accumulating evidence on both sides of the question. It is true that he does finally incline to believe in the camp; and, being opposed, indites a pamphlet which he is about to read at the quarterly meeting of the local society when a stroke lays him low, and his last conscious thoughts are not of wife or child, but of the camp and that arrowhead there, which is now in the case at the local museum, together with the foot of a Chinese murderess, a handful of Elizabethan nails, a great many Tudor clay pipes, a piece of Roman pottery, and the wineglass that Nelson drank out of — proving I really don't know what.

No, no, nothing is proved, nothing is known. And if I were to get up at this very moment and ascertain that the mark on the wall is really — what shall we say? — the head of a gigantic old nail, driven in two hundred years ago, which has now, owing to the patient attrition of many generations of housemaids, revealed its head above the coat of paint, and is taking its first view of modern life in the sight of a white-walled fire-lit room, what should I gain? — Knowledge? Matter for further speculation? I can think sitting still as well as standing up. And what is knowledge? What are our learned men save the descendants of witches and hermits who crouched in caves and in woods brewing herbs, interrogating shrew-mice and writing down the language of the stars? And the less we honour them as our superstitions dwindle and our respect for beauty and health of mind increases... Yes, one could imagine a very

1 barrows on the South Downs: a range of low hills in southeastern England. barrow: mounds of earth or stones erected by prehistoric peoples, usually as burial places.

pleasant world. A quiet, spacious world, with the flowers so red and blue in the open fields. A world without professors or specialists or house-keepers with the profiles of policemen, a world which one could slice with one's thought as a fish slices the water with his fin, grazing the stems of the water-lilies, hanging suspended over nests of white sea eggs... How peaceful it is down here, rooted in the centre of the world and gazing up through the grey waters, with their sudden gleams of light, and their reflections — if it were not for Whitaker's Almanack—if it were not for the Table of Precedency!

I must jump up and see for myself what that mark on the wall really is — a nail, a rose-leaf, a crack in the wood?

Here is nature once more at her old game of self-preservation. This train of thought, she perceives, is threatening mere waste of energy, even some collision with reality, for who will ever be able to lift a finger against Whitaker's Table of Precedency? The Archbishop of Canterbury is followed by the Lord High Chancellor; the Lord High Chancellor is followed by the Archbishop of York. Everybody follows somebody, such is the philosophy of Whitaker; and the great thing is to know who follows whom. Whitaker knows, and let that, so Nature counsels, comfort you, instead of enraging you; and if you can't be comforted, if you must shatter this hour of peace, think of the mark on the wall.

I understand Nature's game — her prompting to take action as a way of ending any thought that threatens to excite or to pain. Hence, I suppose, comes our slight contempt for men of action — men, we assume, who don't think. Still, there's no harm in putting a full stop to one's disagreeable thoughts by looking at a mark on the wall.

Indeed, now that I have fixed my eyes upon it, I feel that I have grasped a plank in the sea; I feel a satisfying sense of reality which at once turns the two Archbishops and the Lord High Chancellor to the shadows of shades. Here is something definite, something real. Thus, waking from a midnight dream of horror, one hastily turns on the light and lies quiescent, worshipping the chest of drawers, worshipping solidity, worshipping reality, worshipping the impersonal world which is a proof of some existence other than ours. That is what one wants to be sure of... Wood is a pleasant thing to think about. It comes from a tree; and trees grow, and we don't know how they grow. For years and years they grow, without paying any attention to us, in meadows, in forests, and by the side of rivers — all things one likes to think about. The cows swish their tails beneath them on hot afternoons; they paint rivers so green that when a moorhen dives one expects to see its feathers all green when it comes up again. I like to think of the fish balanced against the stream like

flags blown out; and of water-beetles slowly raising domes of mud upon the bed of the river. I like to think of the tree itself: first the close dry sensation of being wood; then the grinding of the storm; then the slow, delicious ooze of sap. I like to think of it, too, on winter's nights standing in the empty field with all leaves close-furled, nothing tender exposed to the iron bullets of the moon, a naked mast upon an earth that goes tumbling, tumbling, all night long. The song of birds must sound very loud and strange in June; and how cold the feet of insects must feel upon it, as they make laborious progresses up the creases of the bark, or sun themselves upon the thin green awning of the leaves, and look straight in front of them with diamond-cut red eyes... One by one the fibres snap beneath the immense cold pressure of the earth, then the last storm comes and, falling, the highest branches drive deep into the ground again. Even so, life isn't done with; there are a million patient, watchful lives still for a tree, all over the world, in bedrooms, in ships, on the pavement, lining rooms, where men and women sit after tea, smoking cigarettes. It is full of peaceful thoughts, happy thoughts, this tree. I should like to take each one separately — but something is getting in the way... Where was I? What has it all been about? A tree? A river? The Downs? Whitaker's Almanack? The fields of asphodel? I can't remember a thing. Everything's moving, falling, slipping, vanishing... There is a vast upheaval of matter. Someone is standing over me and saying —

"I'm going out to buy a newspaper."

"Yes?"

"Though it's no good buying newspapers... Nothing ever happens. Curse this war; God damn this war! All the same, I don't see why we should have a snail on our wall."

Ah, the mark on the wall! It was a snail.

Critical Points

Virginia Woolf as a writer of Modernism

Themes in Virginia Woolf's works include gender relations, class hierarchy and the consequences of war. In her expression, she often moves away from the use of plot and structure to experiment with stream of consciousness, the underlying psychological as well as emotional motives of characters, and the various possibilities of fractured narrative and chronology to emphasise the psychological aspects of her characters. *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*

are brilliant examples of novels of modernism.

Woolf first introduced many of the formal experiments in short stories that often present "**moments of being**" — instances of intense sensibility during which disparate thoughts and events culminate in a flash of insight. Similar to Joyce's short stories, in which epiphany is frequently an essential element, Woolf's short fiction often depends on "moments of being" to delineate themes. Whereas Joyce's notion of epiphany focuses on the power of a single event to reveal truth, Woolf's "moments of being" encompass various incursions into time and place.

Virginia Woolf as a feminist

Woolf is regarded as a feminist mainly because of the ideas she expressed in her collection of lectures she had given at women's colleges at Cambridge University, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), which is now regarded as a classic feminist work.

Woolf said, "All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point — a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved." Using such female authors as Jane Austen, Emily and Charlotte Bronte, she examines women and their struggles as artists, their position in literary history and their needs for independence. She also invents a female counterpart of William Shakespeare, a sister named Judith to sarcastically get her point across at times. Feminists draw endless resources from her genius.

Questions

1. What do you learn about the narrator's past and her own feeling of the past?
2. The narrator says, "Everything's moving, falling, slipping, vanishing... There is a vast upheaval of matter." What does she refer to? How do you understand the idea?
3. What is the "moments of being" in this story? What does the mark on the wall turn out to be? Does it matter so much what it really is? Why or why not?
4. How is the story different from a traditional one? How is your reading experience different from before?

Class Activity

Students are required to list as many as possible artistic techniques concerning Modernism, and write them on the blackboard. The teacher chooses some of the significant aspects to explain, or ask students who write the items to explain them to the class.

QUOTATIONS

The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself.

—Virginia Woolf

Novels so often provide an anodyne and not an antidote, glide one into torpid slumbers instead of rousing one with a burning brand.

—Virginia Woolf

Unit 42

David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930)

David Herbert Lawrence *is regarded as one of the few 20th-century figures who have altered the quality of human life and thought. He is traditional in narrative form but poetic and emotional in his style and daring in his subject matter.*

Life and Writing

Lawrence, age 21 (1906)

Lawrence was born in Midland mining village of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, one of the five children of a miner's family. He was often ill in his childhood and grew up in considerable poverty. His ill-suited parents quarrelled continually. His mother, better educated than her husband and self-consciously genteel, fought all her married life to lift her children out of the mines and encouraged him at school. Lawrence was aware from an early age of the struggle between his parents. He was very much on his mother's side during his childhood, resenting his father's coarse and sometimes drunken behaviour. After the death of an elder brother, he became the centre of his mother's emotional life and played in his own relation to her a loving and protective role. His mother's claims on him kept frustrating his relationships with women, and the personal problems and conflicts that resulted are presented in his first really distinguished novel, *Sons and Lovers* (1913).

Lawrence escaped from the mining world of his father through education. With the help of a scholarship, he attended Nottingham High School for three

years, but he was forced to give up his education at 15 and took a job for a short time as a clerk in a surgical goods factory and then became a pupil-teacher. Having worked to save the necessary fee, he took up a scholarship at Nottingham University College for two years, and obtained his teacher's certificate in 1908. He taught for two years at an elementary school in Croydon, but after the death of his mother he became seriously ill and was advised to give up teaching. Meanwhile he was working on his first novel, and published a group of poems in November 1909 and a short story the following February. He was regarded as a promising young writer.

In 1912 he met Frieda Weekley, wife of his old professor at Nottingham. She was six years older than Lawrence and mother of three children. They fell in love and eloped to Germany, the native land of Frieda. They travelled widely in Italy, Australia, Mexico, and finally in the south of France. All through the years, Lawrence lived in constant anxiety about money, struggling to publish a few stories and articles in various periodicals. His novel, *The Rainbow* (1915), was seized by the police and declared obscene. In 1916, he finished his novel *Women in Love* but was unable to find a publisher until 1920, in New York, and 1921 in London. In 1920, *The Lost Girl* won the only official honour he was to receive during his lifetime. *Aaron's Rod* followed in 1922. While in Australia he wrote *Kangaroo*, which appeared in 1923. While in Mexico he began to work on *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) and wrote many short stories and poems. He became seriously interested in painting when they returned to Italy. In 1928 at the Villa Mirenda near Florence, Italy, he finished *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

During the long period of unsettled life, Lawrence was often desperately ill. He died of tuberculosis in France, at the early age of 44. During the 20 years or so of his writing career, Lawrence turned his hand to virtually every available literary form. His short stories appeared in a complete edition in three volumes in 1955. His *Complete Poems*, also in three volumes, appeared in 1957. His non-fiction works include a critical book, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923).

Sons and Lovers

Sons and Lovers was perhaps the first English novel with a truly working-class background.

During the second half of the 19th century, Gertrude Coppard, a proud serious girl of civilised background but with no wealth, marries a young miner Walter Morel, and lives with him in Bestwood, a midland mining village. The marriage is not a success, as the difference of background proves an insurmountable barrier to communication and mutual trust. As Walter becomes increasingly bitter and rejected, Gertrude seeks consolation in her sons. William, her eldest son, moves to London and seems destined to achieve success, but dies tragically young from an illness brought on by stress and overwork.

Mrs. Morel focuses all her love and moral energy on Paul, her second son. In his spare time, Paul is a promising designer and an artist. However, such professional and social emancipation is not matched by any corresponding psychological growth to maturity, for Paul feels bound by ties of love and loyalty to his mother in a way that inhibits full relationships with other women. His intense friendship with Miriam, the daughter of a local farmer, and later a passionate affair with Clara, a woman separated from her husband, both fail to bring enduring satisfaction while his mother lives and needs him. He rejects them both. Finally, his mother dies after a prolonged and painful illness, leaving Paul alone, uncertain whether he has the will to go on living.

By using such a title, Lawrence intends to explore two sets of relationships: one (sons) within the family and another (lovers) outside the family. The plural form of the title reminds that the novel is a story of a family and not just Paul's story. Part 1 of the novel is family-oriented and ends with the death of William. In Part 2 Paul's concerns become dominant.

Introduction to Chapter 9

The selection is from Chapter 9 of the novel, presenting a vivid and subtle description of the inner world and conflicts between the two young lovers, Paul and Miriam.

In this part, Miriam and Paul's relation and their different attitudes toward love are revealed. In the eyes of Paul, Miriam is too eager when she expresses her love. "You wanted to pull the heart out of them? Why don't you have a bit more restraint, or reserve, or something?" "You wheedle the soul out of things", "You're always begging things to love you, as if you were a beggar

for love." He views her love as "eternal and abnormal craving." "You absorb, absorb, as if you must fill yourself up with love, because you've got a shortage somewhere." All these words show Paul's failure in understanding Miriam as an independent girl and as a passionate lover. Miriam, in fact, has too much restraint, or always reserves. It is rare for her to pour her feelings out in this way.

Compared with her strong affection, Paul's attitude to her is indifferent, cold and even cruel. When she turned up to him the faces of the yellow, bursten flowers appealingly, "He stood aside, with his hands in his pockets, watching her." He behaves like an outsider or spectator, unaware that he is the very object of her love and the cause of her abnormal action. Instead, "He scarcely knew what he was saying." Therefore, Miriam is "hurt", "full of pain", and their scent "almost made her cry." "She was stunned by his cruelty." she only sat crouched beneath his cruelty and his hatred of her.

This is an example of Paul's failed relationships, describing a series of intimate scenes where Paul is forced to confront and finally learn to acknowledge his inadequacies as a lover. Owing to the possessive love of the mother, he has grave problems in finding a satisfying relationship with Miriam. Paul is torn between his conflicting needs and loyalties. Paul's insistent criticism that she is some kind of spiritual vampire and even, finally a nun, is consistently contradicted by her healthy vitality. She knows more and expresses more of love than Paul.

This is the failed love between two inadequate lovers. Although the title suggests that Miriam is defeated in the love affair by the mother, no one is the winner.

Chapter 9 Defeat of Miriam

Paul was dissatisfied with himself and with everything. The deepest of his love belonged to his mother. When he felt he had hurt her, or wounded his love for her, he could not bear it.[1] Now it was spring and there was battle between him and Miriam. This year he had a good deal against her. She was vaguely aware of it. The old feeling that she was to be a sacrifice to this love, which

1 The mother is an overwhelming power existing everywhere to influence Paul's choice and decision. Paul is in the dilemma between his love for his mother and his love for Miriam. Of the two loves, the former is dominating and prohibiting him from loving the latter.

she had had when she prayed, was mingled in all her emotions. She did not at the bottom believe she ever would have him. She did not believe in herself primarily: doubted whether she could ever be what he would demand of her. Certainly she never saw herself living happily through a lifetime with him. She saw tragedy, sorrow, and sacrifice ahead. And in sacrifice she was proud, in renunciation she was strong, for she did not trust herself to support everyday life. She was prepared for the big things and the deep things, like tragedy. It was the sufficiency of the small day-life she could not trust.[1]

The Easter holidays[2] began happily. Paul was his own frank self. Yet she felt it would go wrong. On the Sunday afternoon she stood at her bedroom window, looking across at the oak-trees of the wood, in whose branches a twilight was tangled, below the bright sky of the afternoon. Grey-green rosettes of honeysuckle leaves hung before the window, some already, she fancied, showing bud. It was spring, which she loved and dreaded.[3]

Hearing the clack of the gate she stood in suspense. It was a bright grey day.[4] Paul came into the yard with his bicycle, which glittered as he walked. Usually he rang his bell and laughed towards the house. Today he walked with shut lips and cold, cruel bearing, that had something of a slouch and a sneer in it. She knew him well by now, and could tell from keen-looking, aloof young body of his what was happening inside him. There was a cold correctness in the way he put his bicycle in its place, that made her heart sink.

She came downstairs nervously. She was wearing a new net blouse that she thought became her. It had a high collar with a tiny ruff, reminding her

1 Miriam feels uncertain and even frustrated in her love with Paul. In one way, she, as a grown-up young girl, loves Paul; in another, she fears this love because of her religious belief, according to which, love is something "small". Therefore, she'd rather regard her love more like a sacrifice in spirit.

2 The Easter holidays: a Christian holy day in March or April when Christians remember the death of Christ and his return to life.

3 This is a vivid description of Miriam's feeling for Paul. Like spring, which unavoidably comes as a natural phenomenon, this explains her love as a young girl for a young man like Paul, which is spontaneous and normal. However, when she is in love, her feeling of fear results from Paul's uncertain attitude toward her, and her own religious sense. Therefore, she enjoys her love and at the same time she fears it.

4 "in suspense" expresses both Miriam's uncertain feeling at the clack of the gate and her feeling for Paul's love. The next sentence "It was a bright and grey day" means the same: glad and gloomy, cheerful and somewhat fearful.

of Mary, Queen of Scots,[1] and making her, she thought, look wonderfully a woman, and dignified. At twenty she was full-breasted and luxuriously formed. Her face was still like a soft rich mask, unchangeable. But her eyes, once lifted, were wonderful. She was afraid of him. He would notice her new blouse.[2]

He, being in a hard, ironical mood, was entertaining the family to a description of a service given in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, conducted by one of the well-known preachers of the sect.[3] He sat at the head of the table, his mobile face, with the eyes that could be so beautiful, shining with tenderness or dancing with laughter, now taking on one expression and then another, in imitation of various people he was mocking. His mockery always hurt her; it was too near the reality. He was too clever and cruel. She felt that when his eyes were like this, hard with mocking hate, he would spare neither himself nor anybody else. But Mrs. Leivers was wiping her eyes with laughter, and Mr. Leivers,[4] just awake from his Sunday nap, was rubbing his head in amusement. The three brothers sat with ruffled, sleepy appearance in their shirt-sleeves, giving a guffaw from time to time. The whole family loved a "take-off"[5] more than anything.

He took no notice of Miriam. Later, she saw him remark her new blouse, saw that the artist approved, but it won from him not a spark of warmth.[6] She was nervous, could hardly reach the teacups from the shelves.

When the men went out to milk[7], she ventured to address him personally.

"You were late," she said.

1 Mary, Queen of Scots: (1542-1587) the daughter of the Scottish King James V. She became Queen of Scotland when she was one week old, but in 1568 she was forced to give up her position, and she escaped to England.

2 This is a wonderful description of a girl in love. She dresses herself carefully, and is aware of her beauty and charm as a young lady, expecting her lover's praise and admiration.

3 Paul was low-spirited but he amused the family well with his imitation of a serious service. Methodist: someone who belongs to a Christian religious group that follows the ideas of John Wesley.

4 Mrs. Leivers, and Mr. Leivers: the Parents of Miriam. "The three brothers": sons of Mr. and Mrs. Leivers. They all are kind and generous to Paul and welcome him on their farm.

5 "take-off": exaggerated imitation.

6 Paul praised Miriam's new blouse as an artist appreciating a fine piece of art without any warmth of a lover. Miriam is disappointed with his indifference. The novel is a story of Paul as a lover involved in affection contradiction and that of Paul as an artist keeping himself from life in a distance.

7 milk: *v.* to take milk.

"Was I?" he answered.

There was silence for a while.

"Was it rough riding?" she asked.

"I didn't notice it."

She continued quickly to lay the table. When she had finished —

"Tea won't be for a few minutes. Will you come and look at the daffodils?" she said.

He rose without answering. They went out into their back garden under the budding damson-trees. The hills and the sky were clean and cold. Everything looked washed, rather hard. Miriam glanced at Paul. He was pale and impassive. It seemed cruel to her that his eyes and brows, which she loved, could look so hurting.

"Has the wind made you tired?" she asked. She detected an underneath feeling of weariness about him.

"No, I think not," he answered.

"It must be rough on the road — the wood moans so."

"You can see by the clouds it's a south-west wind; that helps me here."

"You see, I don't cycle, so I don't understand," she murmured.

"Is there need to cycle to know that?" he said.

She thought his sarcasms were unnecessary. They went forward in silence. Round the wild, tussocky lawn at the back of the house was a thorn hedge, under which daffodils were craning forward from among their sheaves of grey-green blades. The cheeks of the flowers were greenish with cold. But still some had burst, and their gold ruffled and glowed. Miriam went on her knees before one cluster, took a wild-looking daffodil between her hands, turned up its face of gold to her, and bowed down, caressing it with her mouth and cheeks and brow. He stood aside, with his hands in his pocket, watching her. One after another she turned up to him the faces of the yellow, bursten flowers appealingly, fondling them lavishly all the while.[1]

1 Here is a suggestion that Miriam could restrain her love no more, she poured out her inner passion to daffodils. In the view of psychological analysis, "she turned up to him the faces of the yellow, bursten flowers appealingly" is showing her love to Paul, and her behaviour of "fondling" the flower suggests that her love is repressed too deeply and receives no response, that she transfers her love to Daffodil and expresses her feeling in a different way. Daffodil is a kind of beautiful flower with long green leaves, usually symbolising love, life and nature.

"Aren't they magnificent?" she murmured.

"Magnificent? It's a bit thick — they're pretty!"

She bowed again to her flowers at his censure of her praise. He watched her crouching, sipping the flowers with fervid kisses.

"Why must you always be fondling things!" he said irritably.

"But I love to touch them," she replied, hurt.

"Can you never like things without clutching them as if you wanted to pull the heart out of them? Why don't you have a bit more restraint, or reserve, or something?"[1]

She looked up at him full of pain, then continued slowly to stroke her lips against a ruffled flower. Their scent, as she smelled it, was so much kinder than he; it almost made her cry.

"You wheedle the soul out of things," he said. "I would never wheedle — at any rate, I'd go straight."

He scarcely knew what he was saying. These things came from him mechanically. She looked at him. His body seemed one weapon, firm and hard against her.

"You're always begging things to love you," he said, "as if you were a beggar for love. Even the flowers, you have to fawn on them — "

Rhythmically, Miriam was swaying and stroking the flower with her mouth, inhaling the scent which ever after made her shudder as it came to her nostrils.

"You don't want to love — your eternal and abnormal craving is to be loved. You aren't positive, you're negative. You absorb, absorb, as if you must fill yourself up with love, because you've got a shortage somewhere."

She was stunned by his cruelty, and did not hear. He had not the faintest notion of what he was saying. It was as if his fretted, tortured soul, run hot by thwarted passion, jetted off these sayings like sparks from electricity. She did not grasp anything he said. She only sat crouched beneath his cruelty and his hatred of her. She never realized in a flash. Over everything she brooded and brooded.

After tea he stayed with Edgar and the brothers, taking no notice of Miriam. She, extremely unhappy on this looked-for holiday, waited for him. And at last he yielded and came to her. She was determined to track this mood of his to its origin. She counted it not much more than a mood.

1 In the eyes of Paul, Miriam is too eager when she expresses her love and asks for love.

"Shall we go through the wood a little way?" she asked him, knowing he never refused a direct request.

They went down to the warren. On the middle path they passed a trap, a narrow horseshoe hedge of small fir-boughs, baited with the guts of a rabbit. Paul glanced at it frowning. She caught his eye.

"Isn't it dreadful?" she asked.

"I don't know! Is it worse than a weasel with its teeth in a rabbit's throat? One weasel or many rabbits? One or the other must go!"

He was taking the bitterness of life badly. She was rather sorry for him.

"We will go back to the house," he said. "I don't want to walk out."

They went past the lilac-tree, whose bronze leaf-buds were coming unfastened. Just a fragment remained of the haystack, a monument squared and brown, like a pillar of stone. There was a little bed of hay from the last cutting.

"Let us sit here a minute," said Miriam.

He sat down against his will, resting his back against the hard wall of hey. They faced the amphitheatre of round hills that glowed with sunset, tiny white farms standing out, the meadows golden, the woods dark and yet luminous, tree-tops folded over tree-tops, distinct in the distance. The evening had cleared, and the east was tender with a magenta flush under which the land lay still and rich.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she pleaded.

But he only scowled. He would rather have had it ugly just then.

At that moment a big bull-terrier came rushing up, open-mouthed, pranced his two paws on the youth's shoulders, licking his face. Paul drew back, laughing. Bill was a great relief to him. He pushed the dog aside, but it came leaping back.

"Get out," said the lad, "or I'll dot thee one."

But the dog was not to be pushed away. So Paul had a little battle with the creature, pitching poor Bill away from him, who, however, only floundered tumultuously back again, wild with joy. The two fought together, the man laughing grudgingly, the dog grinning all over. Miriam watched them. There was something pathetic about the man. He wanted so badly to love, to be tender. The rough way he bowled the dog over was really loving. Bill got up, panting with happiness, his brown eyes rolling in his white face, and lumbered back again. He adored Paul. The lad frowned.

"Bill, I've had enough o'thee," he said.

But the dog only stood with two heavy paws, that quivered with love, upon his thigh, and flickered a red tongue at him. He drew back.

"No," he said — "no — I've had enough."

And in a minute the dog trotted off happily, to vary the fun.

He remained staring miserably across at the hills, whose still beauty he begrudged. He wanted to go and cycle with Edgar. Yet he had not the courage to leave Miriam.

"Why are you sad?" she asked humbly.

"I'm not sad; why should I be," he answered. "I'm only normal."

She wondered why he always claimed to be normal when he was disagreeable.

"But what is the matter?" she pleaded, coaxing him soothingly.

"Nothing!"

"Nay!" she murmured.

He picked up a stick and began to stab the earth with it.

"You'd far better not talk," he said.

"But I wish to know — " she replied.

He laughed resentfully.

"You always do," he said.

"It's not fair to me," she murmured.

He thrust, thrust, thrust at the ground with the pointed stick, digging up little clods of earth as if he were in a fever of irritation. She gently and firmly laid her hand on his wrist.

"Don't!" she said. "Put it away."

He flung the stick into the currant-bushes, and leaned back. Now he was bottled up.

"What is it?" she pleaded softly.

He lay perfectly still, only his eyes alive, and they full of torment.

"You know," he said at length, rather wearily — "you know — we'd better break off."

It was what she dreaded. Swiftly everything seemed to darken before her eyes.

"Why!" she murmured. "What has happened?"

"Nothing has happened. We only realize where we are. It's no good — "

She waited in silence, sadly, patiently. It was no good being impatient with him. At any rate, he would tell her now what ailed him.

"We agreed on friendship," he went on in a dull, monotonous voice. "How often have we agreed for friendship! And yet — it neither stops there, nor gets anywhere else."

He was silent again. She brooded. What did he mean? He was so wearying.

There was something he would not yield. Yet she must be patient with him.

"I can only give friendship — it's all I'm capable of — it's a flaw in my make-up. The thing overbalances to one side — I hate a toppling balance. Let us have done."

There was warmth of fury in his last phrases. He meant she loved him more than he her. Perhaps he could not love her. Perhaps she had not in herself that which he wanted. It was the deepest motive of her soul, this self-mistrust. It was so deep she dared neither realize nor acknowledge. Perhaps she was deficient. Like an infinitely subtle shame, it kept her always back. If it were so, she would do without him. She would never let herself want him. She would merely see.

"But what has happened?" she said.

"Nothing — it's all in myself — it only comes out just now. We're always like this towards Easter-time."

He groveled so helplessly, she pitied him. At least she never floundered in such a pitiable way. After all, it was he who was chiefly humiliated.

"What do you want?" she asked him.

"Why — I mustn't come often — that's all. Why should I monopolise you when I'm not — You see, I'm deficient in something with regard to you — "[1]

He was telling her he did not love her, and so ought to leave her a chance with another man. How foolish and blind and shamefully clumsy he was! What were other men to her! What were men to her at all! But he, ah! She loved his soul. Was he deficient in something? Perhaps he was.

"But I don't understand," she said huskily. "Yesterday — "

The night was turning jangled and hateful to him as the twilight faded. And she bowed under her suffering.

"I know," he cried, "you never will! You'll never believe that I can't — can't physically, any more than I can fly up like a skylark — "

"What?" she murmured. Now she dreaded.

"Love you."

He hated her bitterly at that moment because he made her suffer. Love her! She knew he loved her. He really belonged to her. This about not loving her,

1 I'm deficient in something with regard to you: Paul, embraced by the maternal love, admitted that he could not love Miriam with all his heart and soul. That "He fought against his mother almost as he fought against Miriam", "it's a flaw in my make-up", "I can't—can't physically... love you", all express Paul's dilemma and incoherence in his heart and soul.

physically, bodily, was a mere perversity on his part,[1] because he knew she loved him. He was stupid like a child. He belonged to her. His soul wanted her. She guessed somebody had been influencing him. She felt upon him the hardness, the foreignness of another influence.[2]

"What have they been saying at home?" she asked.

"It's not that," he answered.

And then she knew it was. She despised them for their commonness, his people. They did not know what things were really worth.

He and she talked very little more that night. After all he left her to cycle with Edgar.

He had come back to his mother. Hers was the strongest tie in his life. When he thought round, Miriam shrank away. There was a vague, unreal feel about her, and nobody else mattered. There was one place in the world that stood solid and did not melt into unreality: the place where his mother was. Everybody else could grow shadowy, almost non-existent to him, but she could not. It was as if the pivot and pole of his life, from which he could not escape, was his mother.

And in the same way she waited for him. In him was established her life now. After all, the life beyond offered very little to Mrs. Morel. She saw that our chance for *doing* is here, and doing counted with her. Paul was going to prove that she had been right; he was going to make a man whom nothing should shift off his feet; he was going to alter the face of the earth in some way which mattered. Wherever he went she felt her soul went with him. Whatever he did she felt her soul stood by him, ready, as it were, to hand him his tools. She could not bear it when he was with Miriam. William[3] was dead. She would

1 This about not loving her, physically, bodily, was a mere perversity on his part: It is abnormal for him not able to love her physically and bodily.

2 She felt upon him the hardness, the foreignness of another influence: This indicates Miriam felt the mother's influence upon Paul.

3 William: Paul's elder brother, who died in the first part of the novel. Feeling disappointed with her husband, Mrs. Morel initially pours all her energy into giving William expectations and ambition. She refuses to allow him down the pit and sets him on the road that leads from the local co-op to a responsible job in London. William fulfills part of Mrs. Morel's expectations. William's brief life has double meanings: its wider social significance is that it emphasises the danger, pain and cost of upward mobility and social emancipation; the personal significance is that his life is a prefiguration of Paul's, an anticipatory illustration of the dangers as well as the triumphs of ambitious mother-love.

fight to keep Paul.[1]

And he came back to her. And in his soul was a feeling of the satisfaction of self-sacrifice because he was faithful to her. She loved him first; he loved her first. And yet it was not enough. His new young life, so strong and imperious, was urged towards something else.[2] It made him mad with restlessness. She saw this, and wished bitterly that Miriam had been a woman who could take this new life of his, and leave her the roots. He fought against his mother almost as he fought against Miriam.[3]

It was a week before he went again to Willey Farm. Miriam had suffered a great deal, and was afraid to see him again. Was she now to endure the ignominy of his abandoning her? That would only be superficial and temporary. He would come back. She held the keys to his soul. But meanwhile, how he would torture her with his battle against her. She shrank from it.

...

She fretted him to the bottom of his soul. There she remained — sad, pensive, a worshipper. And he caused her sorrow. Half the time he grieved for her, half the time he hated her. She was his conscience; and he felt, somehow, he had got a conscience that was too much for him. He could not leave her, because in one way she did hold the best of him. He could not stay with her because she did not take the rest of him, which was three-quarters. So he chafed himself into rawness over her.

When she was twenty-one he wrote her a letter which could only have been written to her.

"May I speak of our old, worn love, this last time. It, too, is changing, is it not? Say, has not the body of that love died, and left you its invulnerable soul? You see, I can give you a spirit love, I have given it you this long, long time;

1 She would fight to keep Paul: this is a sentence to show the mother's possessive love of the son. Compare the following sentences: "She loved him first; he loved her first." There are many sentences to express the abnormal love of the mother and the son.
2 His new young life, so strong and imperious, was urged towards something else: As a young man, mere maternal love is not sufficient, it is natural for Paul to love a woman of his own age.
3 He fought against his mother almost as he fought against Miriam: Paul's dilemma in the two inadequate loves of the mother and Miriam, neither gives him a full feeling. The mother's is too possessive while Miriam's too spiritual, when he falls in love with one, he spontaneously feels the demanding of the other. He wants to escape from both and finds a new experience but cannot.

but not embodied passion. See, you are a nun.[1] I have given you what I would give a holy nun — as a mystic monk to a mystic nun.Surely you esteem it best. Yet you regret — no, have regretted — the other. In all our relations no body enters. I do not talk to you through the senses — rather through the spirit. That is why we cannot love in the common sense. Ours is not an everyday affection. As yet we are mortal, and to live side by side with one another would be dreadful, for somehow with you I cannot long be trivial, and, you know, to be always beyond this mortal state would be to lose it. If people marry, they must live together as affectionate humans, who may be commonplace with each other without feeling awkward — not as two souls. So I feel it.

"Ought I to send this letter? — I doubt it. But there — it is best to understand. *Au revoir.*[2]"

Miriam read this letter twice, after which she sealed it up. A year later she broke the seal to show her mother the letter.

"You are a nun—you are a nun." The words went into her heart again and again. Nothing he ever had said had gone into her so deeply, fixedly, like a mortal wound.

She answered him two days after the party.

"'Our intimacy would have been all-beautiful but for one little mistake,'" she quoted. "Was the mistake mine?"

Almost immediately he replied to her from Nottingham, sending her at the same time a little "Omar Khayyám."[3]

"I am glad you answered; you are so calm and natural you put me to shame. What a ranter I am! We are often out of sympathy. But in fundamentals we may always be together I think."

"I must thank you for your sympathy with my painting and drawing. Many a sketch is dedicated to you. I do look forward to your criticisms, which, to my shame

1 You're a nun: Paul's comments mean their love remains only in spiritual sense, but lack of physical attraction. This made Miriam very sad and confused, she felt greatly hurt. In fact, her physical presence is fully realised in a warm, sensuous, even exuberant manner. Her hair is free and unrestrained, her lips open, and her complexion glows with healthy vitality. She yearns for Paul openly while he retracts in fear. Compare the previous description of her: "At twenty she was full-breasted and luxuriously formed." The novel describes the image of Miriam totally from Paul's view, thus fails to reveals the root of Miriam's problem and loveliness.

2 *Au revoir:* (French interjection) goodbye.

3 Omar Khayyám: a collection of poems by the poet Omar Khayyám.

and glory, are always grand appreciations. It is a lovely joke, that. *Au revoir.*"

This was the end of the first phase of Paul's love affair...

Critical Points

Sons and Lovers, "Bildungsroman" and the "Oedipus complex"

This is a novel of growing up. It is evident that the central character is Paul Morel. It follows his growth and development from infancy to young manhood. It is his emotional, intellectual, social and, above all, psychic development that the novel portrays. *Sons and Lovers* is an unusual version of a common form of novel, namely, the education novel, or a **"Bildungsroman"**[1], where the focus is on the growth to maturity of a young person.

The relation between the mother and son is always central, while the earlier part of the novel is that of Paul's progressive succumbing to his mother's power, the later part is that of Paul's all but futile attempt to break free of the mother and find a fulfilling relationship with another woman. Obviously, Paul's mother influenced his life immeasurably. The novel describes Paul's unnatural devotion to his mother, he hates his father and dreams of living exclusively with his mother. In this sense, the novel is considered a classic example of **the Oedipus complex**[2], but Lawrence himself claimed not to have read Freud before writing the novel, and dismissed the theory of complexes as "vicious half-statements of Freudians".

1 Bildungsroman is a term applied to novels of "education" in the widest sense, of which many of the best examples are German. Wieland's *Agathon* (1765-1766) is usually thought of as the first example of the genre, but the best and most imitated was Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, 1795-1796). Wilhelm provides the model of the innocent, inexperienced, well-meaning, but often foolish and erring, young man who sets out in life with either no aim in mind or the wrong one. By a series of false starts and mistakes and with help from well-disposed friends he makes in the course of his experiences, he finally reaches maturity and finds his proper profession. The famous English novels of this genre include *Jane Eyre*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Sons and Lovers*.

2 The Oedipus complex is the repressed but continuing presence in the adult's unconscious of the male infant's desire to possess his mother and to have his viral, the father, out of the way. Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, derived the term from Sophocle's Greek tragedy *Oedipus the King*, whose protagonist has unknowingly killed his father and married his mother.

Questions

1. Why does Lawrence use the plural form in the title of *Sons and Lovers*? What wider significance does the author want to achieve?
2. Analyse the different expectations for love by Paul, Miriam, and Mrs. Morel, and explain respectively their problems.
3. How to interpret Paul's failure in his relationship with Miriam? Or why should Miriam fail in getting her lover? List the reasons for their failure in love.

Class Activities

Team Work

Step 1: Divide the class into three groups A, B and C with each group focusing on one target: Paul, Miriam and the writing style;

Step 2: Students in Group A read through all paragraphs about Paul, underline important sentences, summarise the main points, and analyse Paul's character and psychological movement; Students in Group B read through all the paragraphs about Miriam, underline important sentences, summarise the main points, and analyse Miriam character and psychological movement; Students in Group C read through all the paragraphs about the features of writing style, underline important sentences, and point out symbolic and poetic expressions;

Step 3: Each student reports his or her findings to the group, and choose one representative to give the presentation to the class;
(*Suggestion*: The representative should listen to all group members' report attentively and make notes in detail so as to give a full summary of all the reports of the group.

Step 4: Class presentation
Representatives from the three groups give presentations on different contents;

Step 5: Teacher's comments on the presentation
(*Suggestion*: This is a review and summary of the major points having been discussed in class, also a discovery of students' new interests and fresh ideas.)

QUOTATIONS

The novel is the one bright book of life. Books are not life. They are only tremulations on the ether. But the novel as a tremulation can make the whole man alive tremble. Which is more than poetry, philosophy, science, or any other book-tremulation can do.

—D. H. Lawrence

The novel is a perfect medium for revealing to us the changing rainbow of our living relationships.

—D. H. Lawrence

Unit 43

Samuel Beckett (1906-1989)

Samuel Barclay Beckett *was an Irish dramatist, novelist and poet. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1969 "for his writing, which — in new forms for the novel and drama — in the destitution of modern man acquires its elevation".*

Life and Writing

Samuel Beckett

Samuel Beckett was born in Dublin in 1906. After earning a degree in foreign languages at Trinity College in Dublin, he spent two years in France (1928-1930) and then came back and taught French at Trinity College in 1931. He befriended the famous Irish novelist James Joyce, and his first published work was an essay on Joyce. Returned to France in 1937, he became a French citizen, and joined the French Resistance during World War II. He completed his first novel in 1945, then began writing novels and plays in French. In 1951 and 1953, Beckett wrote his most famous novels, the trilogy *Molloy, Malone Dies*, and *The Unnameable*. He died in 1989 in Paris.

Beckett's work is deeply pessimistic about the human condition, but the perceived pessimism is mitigated by a great and often wicked sense of humour, and by the sense, Beckett's portrayal of life's obstacles serves to demonstrate that the journey, while difficult, is ultimately worth the effort.

Waiting for Godot

Waiting for Godot (French: En attendant Godot), subtitled "A Tragicomedy in Two Acts", was Beckett's first play. It was written originally in French in 1948 and first published in 1952. It premiered at a tiny theatre in Paris in 1953. Beckett translated the play into English himself in 1954. This play began Beckett's association with **the Theatre of the Absurd**, which influenced later playwrights, and several derived works have also been written.

Plot Summary

Vladimir and Estragon, two main characters, meet near a tree. They converse on various topics and reveal that they are waiting there for a man named Godot. While they are waiting, two other men enter. Pozzo is on his way to the market to sell his slave, Lucky. He pauses for a while to converse with Vladimir and Estragon. Lucky entertains them by dancing and thinking. After Pozzo and Lucky leave, a boy enters and tells Vladimir that he is a messenger from Godot. He tells Vladimir that Godot will not be coming tonight, but that he will surely come tomorrow. After his departure, Vladimir and Estragon decide to leave, but they do not move as the curtain falls.

The second act follows a similar pattern to the first. The next night, Vladimir and Estragon again meet near the tree to wait for Godot. Lucky and Pozzo enter again, but this time Pozzo is blind and Lucky is dumb. Pozzo does not remember meeting the two men the night before. They leave and Vladimir and Estragon continue to wait. Again the boy arrives to announce that Godot will not appear. He insists that he did not speak to Vladimir yesterday. After he leaves, Estragon and Vladimir decide to leave, but again they do not move as the curtain falls.

The presentation of essentially the same action twice in the two acts is the most important form of repetition in the play. This inability to act renders Vladimir and Estragon unable to determine their own fates. Instead of acting, they can only wait for someone or something to act upon them. Godot, the man for whom Vladimir and Estragon wait unendingly, never appears in the play.

Act I

A country road. A tree.
Evening.

Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again. As before. Enter Vladimir.

ESTRAGON: [*giving up again*]. Nothing to be done.

VLADIMIR: [*advancing with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart*]. I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. [*He broods, musing on the struggle. Turning to Estragon.*] So there you are again.

ESTRAGON: Am I?

VLADIMIR: I'm glad to see you back. I thought you were gone forever.

ESTRAGON: Me too.

VLADIMIR: Together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this. But how? [*He reflects.*] Get up till I embrace you.

ESTRAGON: [*irritably*]. Not now, not now.

VLADIMIR: [*hurt, coldly*]. May one inquire where His Highness spent the night?

ESTRAGON: In a ditch.

VLADIMIR: [*admiringly*]. A ditch! Where?

ESTRAGON: [*without gesture*]. Over there.

VLADIMIR: And they didn't beat you?

ESTRAGON: Beat me? Certainly they beat me.

VLADIMIR: The same lot as usual?

ESTRAGON: The same? I don't know.

VLADIMIR: When I think of it... all these years... but for me... where would you be... [*Decisively.*] You'd be nothing more than a little heap of bones at the present minute, no doubt about it.

ESTRAGON: And what of it?

VLADIMIR: [*gloomily*]. It's too much for one man. [*Pause. Cheerfully.*] On the other hand what's the good of losing heart now, that's what I say. We should have thought of it a million years ago, in the nineties.[1]

ESTRAGON: Ah stop blathering and help me off with this bloody thing.

VLADIMIR: Hand in hand from the top of the Eiffel Tower, among the first.

1 We should have thought of it a million years ago, in the nineties: according to the context, Vladimir is saying the they should have committed suicide long ago.

We were respectable in those days. Now it's too late. They wouldn't even let us up. [*Estragon tears at his boot.*] What are you doing?

ESTRAGON: Taking off my boot. Did that never happen to you?

VLADIMIR: Boots must be taken off every day, I'm tired telling you that. Why don't you listen to me?

ESTRAGON: [*feebly*]. Help me!

VLADIMIR: It hurts?

ESTRAGON: [*angrily*]. Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!

VLADIMIR: [*angrily*]. No one ever suffers but you. I don't count. I'd like to hear what you'd say if you had what I have.

ESTRAGON: It hurts?

VLADIMIR: [*angrily*]. Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!

ESTRAGON: [*pointing*]. You might button it all the same.

VLADIMIR: [*stooping*]. True. [*He buttons his fly.*] Never neglect the little things of life.

ESTRAGON: What do you expect, you always wait till the last moment.

VLADIMIR: [*musingly*]. The last moment... [*He meditates.*] Hope deferred[1] maketh the something sick, who said that?

ESTRAGON: Why don't you help me?

VLADIMIR: Sometimes I feel it coming all the same. Then I go all queer. [*He takes off his hat, peers inside it, feels about inside it, shakes it, puts it on again.*] How shall I say? Relieved and at the same time... [*he searches for the word*]... appalled. [*With emphasis.*] AP-PALLED. [*He takes off his hat again, peers inside it.*] Funny. [*He knocks on the crown as though to dislodge a foreign body, peers into it again, puts it on again.*] Nothing to be done. [*Estragon with a supreme effort succeeds in pulling off his boot. He peers inside it, feels about inside it, turns it upside down, shakes it, looks on the ground to see if anything has fallen out, finds nothing, feels inside it again, staring sightlessly before him.*] Well?

ESTRAGON: Nothing.

VLADIMIR: Show me.

ESTRAGON: There's nothing to show.

VLADIMIR: Try and put it on again.

ESTRAGON: [*examining his foot*]. I'll air it for a bit.

VLADIMIR: There's man all over for you, blaming on his boots the faults of his

1 Hope deferred: hope delayed.

feet. [*He takes off his hat again, peers inside it, feels about inside it, knocks on the crown, blows into it, puts it on again.*] This is getting alarming. [*Silence. Vladimir deep in thought, Estragon pulling at his toes.*] One of the thieves was saved. [*Pause.*] It's a reasonable percentage. [*Pause.*] Gogo.

ESTRAGON: What?

VLADIMIR: Suppose we repented.

ESTRAGON: Repented what?

VLADIMIR: Oh... [*He reflects.*] We wouldn't have to go into the details.

ESTRAGON: Our being born?

Vladimir breaks into a hearty laugh which he immediately stifles, his hand pressed to his pubis, his face contorted.

VLADIMIR: One daren't even laugh any more.

ESTRAGON: Dreadful privation.

VLADIMIR: Merely smile. [*He smiles suddenly from ear to ear, keeps smiling, ceases as suddenly.*] It's not the same thing. Nothing to be done. [*Pause.*] Gogo.

ESTRAGON: [*irritably*]. What is it?

VLADIMIR: Did you ever read the Bible?

ESTRAGON: The Bible... [*He reflects.*] I must have taken a look at it.

VLADIMIR: Do you remember the Gospels?

ESTRAGON: I remember the maps of the Holy Land. Coloured they were. Very pretty. The Dead Sea was pale blue. The very look of it made me thirsty. That's where we'll go, I used to say, that's where we'll go for our honeymoon. We'll swim. We'll be happy.

VLADIMIR: You should have been a poet.

ESTRAGON: I was. [*Gesture towards his rags.*] Isn't that obvious?

Silence.

VLADIMIR: Where was I... How's your foot?

ESTRAGON: Swelling visibly.

VLADIMIR: Ah yes, the two thieves. Do you remember the story?

ESTRAGON: No.

VLADIMIR: Shall I tell it to you?

ESTRAGON: No.

VLADIMIR: It'll pass the time. [*Pause.*] Two thieves, crucified at the same time as our Saviour. One?

ESTRAGON: Our what?

VLADIMIR: Our Saviour. Two thieves. One is supposed to have been saved and the other... [*he searches for the contrary of saved*]... damned.

ESTRAGON: Saved from what?

VLADIMIR: Hell.

ESTRAGON: I'm going.

He does not move.

VLADIMIR: And yet... [*pause*]... how is it — this is not boring you I hope? how is it that of the four Evangelists[1] only one speaks of a thief being saved. The four of them were there — or thereabouts — and only one speaks of a thief being saved. [*Pause.*] Come on, Gogo, return the ball,[2] can't you, once in a while?

ESTRAGON: [*with exaggerated enthusiasm*]. I find this really most extraordinarily interesting.

VLADIMIR: One out of four. Of the other three, two don't mention any thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him.

ESTRAGON: Who?

VLADIMIR: What?

ESTRAGON: What's all this about? Abused who?

VLADIMIR: The Saviour.

ESTRAGON: Why?

VLADIMIR: Because he wouldn't save them.

ESTRAGON: From hell?

VLADIMIR: Imbecile! From death.

ESTRAGON: I thought you said hell.

VLADIMIR: From death, from death.

ESTRAGON: Well what of it?

VLADIMIR: Then the two of them must have been damned.

ESTRAGON: And why not?

VLADIMIR: But one of the four says that one of the two was saved.

ESTRAGON: Well? They don't agree and that's all there is to it.

VLADIMIR: But all four were there. And only one speaks of a thief being saved. Why believe him rather than the others?

ESTRAGON: Who believes him?

VLADIMIR: Everybody. It's the only version they know.

ESTRAGON: People are bloody ignorant apes.

1 the four Evangelists: the authors of the four Gospels, traditionally known as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
2 return the ball: answer me.

He rises painfully, goes limping to extreme left, halts, gazes into distance off with his hand screening his eyes, turns, goes to extreme right, gazes into distance. Vladimir watches him, then goes and picks up the boot, peers into it, drops it hastily.

VLADIMIR: Pah!

He spits. Estragon moves to center, halts with his back to auditorium.

ESTRAGON: Charming spot. [*He turns, advances to front, halts facing auditorium.*] Inspiring prospects. [*He turns to Vladimir.*] Let's go.

VLADIMIR: We can't.

ESTRAGON: Why not?

VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.

ESTRAGON: [*despairingly*]. Ah! [*Pause.*] You're sure it was here?

VLADIMIR: What?

ESTRAGON: That we were to wait.

VLADIMIR: He said by the tree. [*They look at the tree.*] Do you see any others?

ESTRAGON: What is it?

VLADIMIR: I don't know. A willow.

ESTRAGON: Where are the leaves?

VLADIMIR: It must be dead.

ESTRAGON: No more weeping.

VLADIMIR: Or perhaps it's not the season.

ESTRAGON: Looks to me more like a bush.

VLADIMIR: A shrub.

ESTRAGON: A bush.

VLADIMIR: A? What are you insinuating? That we've come to the wrong place?

ESTRAGON: He should be here.

VLADIMIR: He didn't say for sure he'd come.

ESTRAGON: And if he doesn't come?

VLADIMIR: We'll come back tomorrow.

ESTRAGON: And then the day after tomorrow.

VLADIMIR: Possibly.

ESTRAGON: And so on.

VLADIMIR: The point is?

ESTRAGON: Until he comes.

VLADIMIR: You're merciless.

ESTRAGON: We came here yesterday.
VLADIMIR: Ah no, there you're mistaken.
ESTRAGON: What did we do yesterday?
VLADIMIR: What did we do yesterday?
ESTRAGON: Yes.
VLADIMIR: Why... [*Angrily.*] Nothing is certain when you're about.
ESTRAGON: In my opinion we were here.
VLADIMIR: [*looking round*]. You recognize the place?
ESTRAGON: I didn't say that.
VLADIMIR: Well?
ESTRAGON: That makes no difference.
VLADIMIR: All the same... that tree... [*turning towards auditorium*] that bog...
ESTRAGON: You're sure it was this evening?
VLADIMIR: What?
ESTRAGON: That we were to wait.
VLADIMIR: He said Saturday. [*Pause.*] I think.
ESTRAGON: You think.
VLADIMIR: I must have made a note of it. [*He fumbles in his pockets, bursting with miscellaneous rubbish.*]
ESTRAGON: [*very insidious*]. But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday? [*Pause.*] Or Monday? [*Pause.*] Or Friday?
VLADIMIR: [*looking wildly about him, as though the date was inscribed in the landscape*]. It's not possible!
ESTRAGON: Or Thursday?
VLADIMIR: What'll we do?
ESTRAGON: If he came yesterday and we weren't here you may be sure he won't come again today.
VLADIMIR: But you say we were here yesterday.
ESTRAGON: I may be mistaken. [*Pause.*] Let's stop talking for a minute, do you mind?
VLADIMIR: [*feebly*]. All right. [*Estragon sits down on the mound. Vladimir paces agitatedly to and fro, halting from time to time to gaze into distance off. Estragon falls asleep. Vladimir halts finally before Estragon.*] Gogo!... Gogo!... GOGO!
Estragon wakes with a start.
ESTRAGON: [*restored to the horror of his situation*]. I was asleep! [*Despairingly.*] Why will you never let me sleep?

VLADIMIR: I felt lonely.

ESTRAGON: I had a dream.

VLADIMIR: Don't tell me!

ESTRAGON: I dreamt that?

VLADIMIR: DON'T TELL ME!

ESTRAGON: [*gesture toward the universe*]. This one is enough for you? [*Silence.*] It's not nice of you, Didi. Who am I to tell my private nightmares to if I can't tell them to you?

VLADIMIR: Let them remain private. You know I can't bear that.

ESTRAGON: [*coldly.*] There are times when I wonder if it wouldn't be better for us to part.

VLADIMIR: You wouldn't go far.

ESTRAGON: That would be too bad, really too bad. [*Pause.*] Wouldn't it, Didi, be really too bad? [*Pause.*] When you think of the beauty of the way. [*Pause.*] And the goodness of the wayfarers. [*Pause. Wheedling.*] Wouldn't it, Didi?

VLADIMIR: Calm yourself.

ESTRAGON: [*voluptuously.*] Calm ... calm ... The English say cawm. [*Pause.*] You know the story of the Englishman in the brothel?

VLADIMIR: Yes.

ESTRAGON: Tell it to me.

VLADIMIR: Ah stop it!

ESTRAGON: An Englishman having drunk a little more than usual proceeds to a brothel. The bawd asks him if he wants a fair one, a dark one or a red-haired one. Go on.

VLADIMIR: STOP IT!

Exit Vladimir hurriedly. Estragon gets up and follows him as far as the limit of the stage. Gestures of Estragon like those of a spectator encouraging a pugilist. Enter Vladimir. He brushes past Estragon, crosses the stage with bowed head. Estragon takes a step towards him, halts.

ESTRAGON: [*gently.*] You wanted to speak to me? [*Silence. Estragon takes a step forward.*] You had something to say to me? [*Silence. Another step forward.*] Didi ...

VLADIMIR: [*without turning*]. I've nothing to say to you.

ESTRAGON: [*step forward*]. You're angry? [*Silence. Step forward*]. Forgive me. [*Silence. Step forward. Estragon lays his hand on Vladimir's shoulder.*]

Come, Didi. [*Silence.*] Give me your hand. [*Vladimir half turns.*] Embrace me! [*Vladimir stiffens.*] Don't be stubborn! [*Vladimir softens. They embrace. Estragon recoils.*] You stink of garlic!

VLADIMIR: It's for the kidneys. [*Silence. Estragon looks attentively at the tree.*] What do we do now?

ESTRAGON: Wait.

VLADIMIR: Yes, but while waiting.

ESTRAGON: What about hanging ourselves?

VLADIMIR: Hmm. It'd give us an erection.

ESTRAGON: [*highly excited*]. An erection!

VLADIMIR: With all that follows. Where it falls mandrakes grow. That's why they shriek when you pull them up. Did you not know that?

ESTRAGON: Let's hang ourselves immediately!

VLADIMIR: From a bough? [*They go towards the tree.*] I wouldn't trust it.

ESTRAGON: We can always try.

VLADIMIR: Go ahead.

ESTRAGON: After you.

VLADIMIR: No no, you first.

ESTRAGON: Why me?

VLADIMIR: You're lighter than I am.

ESTRAGON: Just so!

VLADIMIR: I don't understand.

ESTRAGON: Use your intelligence, can't you?

Vladimir uses his intelligence.

VLADIMIR: [*finally*]. I remain in the dark.

ESTRAGON: This is how it is. [*He reflects.*] The bough... the bough... [*Angrily.*] Use your head, can't you?

VLADIMIR: You're my only hope.

ESTRAGON: [*with effort*]. Gogo light — bough not break — Gogo dead. Didi heavy — bough break — Didi alone. Whereas?

VLADIMIR: I hadn't thought of that.

ESTRAGON: If it hangs you it'll hang anything.

VLADIMIR: But am I heavier than you?

ESTRAGON: So you tell me. I don't know. There's an even chance. Or nearly.

VLADIMIR: Well? What do we do?

ESTRAGON: Don't let's do anything. It's safer.

VLADIMIR: Let's wait and see what he says.

ESTRAGON: Who?
VLADIMIR: Godot.
ESTRAGON: Good idea.

Critical Points

Waiting for Godot: Meaninglessness of existence or hope for life?

Waiting for Godot is capable of sustaining a wide range of interpretation. Initially, critics were very unsure how to respond to the rule-breaking play. Some summed up the two-act play with a line from the play: "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!"

The intentionally uneventful and repetitive plot of *Waiting for Godot* can be seen as symbolising the tedium and meaninglessness of human life, which loosely connects the play to one of the themes of existentialist philosophy. The audience never learns who Godot is or the nature of his business with Vladimir and Estragon.

The evidence of the hope of the waiting can be illustrated as follows: The tree is bare when Vladimir and Estragon meet near it on the first day. However, on the second day, author Becket says in his stage directions, it has "four or five leaves." And also, were the play about existential despair or meaninglessness, Beckett would have probably allowed Estragon and Vladimir to hang themselves.

Many readers have understood the character "Godot" as a symbolic representation of God. They see Godot's persistent failure to appear and Vladimir and Estragon's aimless waiting as representations of the masses hoping for a being who will never appear. On the last page of the play (in most texts), Estragon asks what will happen if Godot comes. Vladimir answers, "We'll be saved." But Beckett himself vehemently denied this interpretation, saying "If by Godot I had meant God I would have said God, and not Godot."

Questions

1. Describe the relationship between Vladimir and Estragon. Why do you think they stay together, despite their frequent suggestions of parting?
2. Who and what is Godot? How do you understand his failure to appear?

3. Beckett calls his play a "tragicomedy", while critics tend to call it an absurd play. How would you classify the play? Do you think the play contains more elements of tragedy, comedy or absurdity?
4. What is the overall tone of the play? Is the reader left with a feeling of resignation that Godot will never come, and Vladimir and Estragon will continue to wait in vain, or is there some hope behind the desperation?

Class Activities

Group Discussion

1 Divide the class into six groups, each group respectively focuses its discussion on the setting, mode, characters, philosophy, words, symbols of the play. Choose one student from each group to give a summary of their group discussion to the class, so that all the students could benefit from the class activity and get an overall view of the play.

2 Choose several pairs of volunteers to act out the play in front of the class and select the best performer.

QUOTATIONS

But I do not think even Sisyphus is required to scratch himself, or to groan, or to rejoice, as the fashion is now, always at the same appointed places. And it may even be they are not too particular about the route he takes provided it gets him to his destination safely and on time. And perhaps he thinks each journey is his first. This would keep hope alive, would it not, hellish hope. Whereas to see yourself doing the same thing endlessly over and over again fills you with satisfaction.

—Samuel Beckett

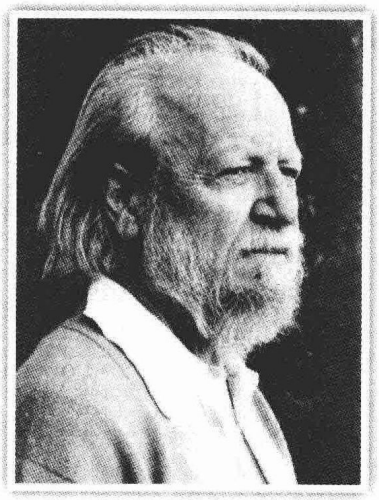
Unit 44

William Golding (1911-1993)

Sir William Gerald Golding *was a British novelist, poet, and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983 "for his novels which, with the perspicuity of realistic narrative art and the diversity and universality of myth, illuminate the human condition in the world of today." He was also awarded the Booker Prize for literature in 1980, for his novel* Rites of Passage, *the first book of the trilogy* To the Ends of the Earth. *Golding was also a member of the Royal Society of Literature. His best-known novel is* Lord of the Flies.

Life and Writing

Golding was born in a small village in Cornwall, and educated at Marlborough Grammar School and Oxford. Golding followed his parents' wishes to study natural sciences until his second year at Oxford, when he changed his focus to English literature. After graduation, he worked briefly as a theatre actor and director, and producer with small theatre companies, and then as a teacher of English. He published his first work as a volume, *Poems* in 1935. During World War II, he served in the Royal Navy in command of a rocket ship and participated in the battle of Normandy.



Golding Photo Portrait ca. 1975, photo credit Jerry Bauer

After the war, Golding resumed teaching and started to write novels. His experience in World War II had a profound influence on his view of life, and he felt doubted about human innocence, and revealed the dark side of human heart in many

of his works. His first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, appeared in 1954 after it had been rejected by 21 publishers. It was an immediate success, the sales of which enabled Golding to retire from teaching and devote himself fully to writing. His other works include *The Inheritors* (1955), *Pincher Martin* (1956), *The Brass Butterfly* (a play, 1958), *Free Fall* (1959), *The Pyramid* (1967), *Darkness Visible* (1979), and *Rites of Passage* (1980).

His work is characterised by the the exploration of the darkness of human being and spiritual and ethical questions. A recurrent theme of his works is the conflict between humanity's intrinsic cruelty and the civilised "superego". His novels tend to reveal the dark side of human nature, especially in the face of difficulty and being left alone. Even children are not innocent.

Golding is good at making use of allusions, mythology, and Christian symbolism, making his fiction allegorical. The symbolism of his novels is often more important than action. His characters, images, and settings go beyond the merely literal surface to interpret universal truths about human nature.

Although he never matched the popular and critical success he enjoyed with *Lord of the Flies,* he remained a respected and distinguished author for the rest of his life. Golding died in 1993 as one of the most acclaimed writers of the second half of the 20th century.

Lord of the Flies

Lord of the Flies is an allegorical novel about a group of young boys who are stranded on a desert island and subsequently attempt to govern themselves but fail disastrously. The title is a reference to the Hebrew name Beelzebub, "god of the fly" or "host of the fly", a name sometimes used as a synonym for Satan.

Plot Summary

During an unnamed time of war, an aeroplane carrying a party of schoolboys, about six to twelve years old, crashes on a desert island, but many of the boys survive the crash. Ralph and Piggy obtain a conch and use it to call the other boys from across the island. Ralph is chosen to be their leader by vote. Jack acts as leader of the other castaway members of his choir, and covets the leadership position. Ralph and Piggy lead the boys with the attempt to set up a democratic society. Jack leads his choir to hunt for food. The youngest of the boys, generally known as "littluns", spend most of the day searching for

fruit to eat. One day a ship passes by the island, but does not stop because the fire has burned out. Piggy blames Jack for letting the fire die, Jack punches Piggy, and breaks one lens of his glasses. A little boy named Phil tells how he had a nightmare and when he awoke saw something moving among the trees. Simon admits that Phil probably saw him, for he was walking in the jungle that night. They begin to worry about the supposed beast.

A pilot parachutes down the island, and dies. The next morning the twins Sam and Eric see the pilot and assume that the pilot is the Beastie. Jack leaves the group to create a new tribe. Most of the older boys eventually join him. Jack and the hunters kill a pig, they cut off the head and leave it on a stick as an offering for the beast. Simon finds the pig's head, and he dubs it the Lord of the Flies because of the insects swarming around it. When he sees the dead pilot he realises this is what other boys perceived to be the beast. He rushes down the mountain to alert others his finding. The boys take him as the beast, and kill him. Ralph and Piggy took part in the murder, but try to justify their behaviour as acting out of fear and instinct. Ralph, Piggy, and the twins, Sam and Eric do not join Jack's tribe, but work on keeping the fire going by themselves.

The four boys go to appeal Jack as civilised people. Jack took Sam and Eric as prisoners and orders them to be tied up. Piggy is killed by a rolling rock tipped by a hunter boy. Jack declares himself chief. Ralph runs away, and hides himself near the castle rock. The next day, his tribe tries to hunt him down, and set a forest fire, which is seen by a passing naval vessel, and one of the ship's officers comes ashore and rescues the boys. For the first time on the island, Ralph cries, weeping for the "end of innocence", "darkness of man's heart", and his dead friend, Piggy.

Introduction to Chapter 9

Simon awakens and finds the air dark and humid with an approaching storm. He crawls up the hill and sees the dead pilot with his flapping parachute. Simon realises that the boys have mistaken this harmless object for the deadly beast.

Simon stumbles toward the distant light of the fire at Jack's feast to tell the other boys what he has seen. In their wild state, the boys shout that he is the beast, and they kill him. The wind and waves wash Simon's mangled corpse into the ocean, and the wind blows the body of the parachutist off the side of the mountain and onto the beach, sending the boys screaming into the darkness.

Chapter 9 A View to a Death

Over the island the build-up of clouds continued. A steady current of heated air rose all day from the mountain and was thrust to ten thousand feet; revolving masses of gas piled up the static until the air was ready to explode. By early evening the sun had gone and a brassy glare had taken the place of clear daylight. Even the air that pushed in from the sea was hot and held no refreshment. Colors drained from water and trees and pink surfaces of rock, and the white and brown clouds brooded. Nothing prospered but the flies who blackened their lord and made the spilt guts look like a heap of glistening coal. Even when the vessel broke in Simon's nose and the blood gushed out they left him alone, preferring the pig's high flavor.

With the running of the blood Simon's fit passed into the weariness of sleep. He lay in the mat of creepers while the evening advanced and the cannon continued to play. At last he woke and saw dimly the dark earth close by his cheek. Still he did not move but lay there, his face side-ways on the earth, his eyes looking dully before him. Then he turned over, drew his feet under him and laid hold of the creepers to pull himself up. When the creepers shook the flies exploded from the guts with a vicious[1] note and clamped back on again. Simon got to his feet. The light was unearthly[2]. The Lord of the Flies hung on his stick like a black ball.

Simon spoke aloud to the clearing.

"What else is there to do?"

Nothing replied. Simon turned away from the open space and crawled through the creepers till he was in the dusk of the forest. He walked drearily between the trunks, his face empty of expression, and the blood was dry round his mouth and chin. Only sometimes as he lifted the ropes of creeper aside and chose his direction from the trend of the land, he mouthed words that did not reach the air.

Presently the creepers festooned the trees less frequently and there was a scatter of pearly light from the sky down through the trees. This was the backbone of the island, the slightly higher land that lay beneath the mountain where the forest was no longer deep Jungle. Here there were wide spaces

1 vicious: cruel or violent.
2 unearthly: unnatural or mysterious.

interspersed with thickets[1] and huge trees and the trend of the ground led him up as the forest opened. He pushed on, staggering sometimes with his weariness but never stopping. The usual brightness was gone from his eyes and he walked with a sort of glum[2] determination like an old man.

A buffet of wind made him stagger and he saw that he was out in the open, on rock, under a brassy sky. He found his legs were weak and his tongue gave him pain all the time. When the wind reached the mountain-top he could see something happen, a flicker of blue stuff against brown clouds. He pushed himself forward and the wind came again, stronger now, cuffing[3] the forest heads till they ducked and roared. Simon saw a humped thing suddenly sit up on the top and look down at him. He hid his face, and toiled on.

The flies had found the figure too. The life-like movement would scare them off for a moment so that they made a dark cloud round the head. Then as the blue material of the parachute collapsed the corpulent[4] figure would bow forward, sighing, and the flies settle once more.

Simon felt his knees smack the rock. He crawled forward and soon he understood. The tangle of lines showed him the mechanics of this parody; he examined the white nasal bones, the teeth, the colors of corruption. He saw how pitilessly the layers of rubber and canvas[5] held together the poor body that should be rotting away. Then the wind blew again and the figure lifted, bowed, and breathed foully at him. Simon knelt on all fours and was sick till his stomach was empty. Then he took the lines in his hands; he freed them from the rocks and the figure from the wind's indignity.

At last he turned away and looked down at the beaches. The fire by the platform appeared to be out, or at least making no smoke. Further along the beach, beyond the little river and near a great slab of rock, a thin trickle of smoke was climbing into the sky. Simon, forgetful of the flies, shaded his eyes with both hands and peered at the smoke. Even at that distance it was possible to see most of the boys — perhaps all the boys — were there. So they had shifted camp then, away from the beast. As Simon thought this, he turned to the poor broken thing that sat stinking by his side. The beast was harmless and

1 interspersed with thickets: scatterd among or between other things. thickets: a dense group of bushes or trees.
2 glum: sad; dejected; morose.
3 cuffing: striking with an open hand, especially on the head.
4 corpulent: very fat.
5 canvas: a strong, coarse unbleached cloth used to make sails, tents, etc.

horrible; and the news must reach the others as soon as possible. He started down the mountain and his legs gave beneath him. Even with great care the best he could do was a stagger.

"Bathing," said Ralph, "that's the only thing to do."

Piggy was inspecting the looming sky through his glass.

"I don't like them clouds. Remember how it rained just after we landed?"

"Going to rain again."

Ralph dived into the pool. A couple of littluns were playing at the edge, trying to extract comfort from a wetness warmer than blood. Piggy took off his glasses, stepped primly into the water and then put them on again. Ralph came to the surface and squirted a jet of water[1] at him.

"Mind my specs," said Piggy. "If I get water on the glass I got to get out and clean' em."

Ralph squirted again and missed. He laughed at Piggy, expecting him to retire meekly as usual and in pained silence. Instead, Piggy beat the water with his hands.

"Stop it!" he shouted. "D'you hear?"

Furiously he drove the water into Ralph's face.

"All right, all right," said Ralph. "Keep your hair on."

Piggy stopped beating the water.

"I got a pain in my head. I wish the air was cooler."

"I wish the rain would come."

"I wish we could go home."

Piggy lay back against the sloping sand side of the pool. His stomach protruded and the water dried on it. Ralph squirted up at the sky. One could guess at the movement of the sun by the progress of a light patch among the clouds. He knelt in the water and looked round.

"Where's everybody?"

Piggy sat up.

"P'raps they're lying in the shelter."

"Where's Samneric?"

"And Bill?"

Piggy pointed beyond the platform.

"That's where they've gone. Jack's party."

1 squirted a jet of water: covered with a jet of water.

"Let them go," said Ralph, uneasily, "I don't care."

"Just for some meat—"

"And for hunting," said Ralph, wisely, "and for pretending to be a tribe, and putting on war-paint."

Piggy stirred the sand under water and did not look at Ralph.

"P'raps we ought to go too." Ralph looked at him quickly and Piggy blushed, "I mean — to make sure nothing happens." Ralph squirted water again.

Long before Ralph and Piggy came up with Jack's lot, they could hear the party. There was a stretch of grass in a place where the palms left a wide band of turf[1] between the forest and the snore. Just one step down from the edge of the turf was the white, blown sand of above high water, warm, dry, trodden. Below that again was a rock that stretched away toward the lagoon. Beyond was a short stretch of sand and then the edge of the water. A fire burned on the rock and fat dripped from the roasting pig-meat into the invisible flames. All the boys of the island, except Piggy, Ralph, Simon, and the two tending the pig, were grouped on the turf. They were laughing, singing, lying, squatting, or standing on the grass, holding food in their hands. But to judge by the greasy faces, the meat eating was almost done; and some held coconut shells in their hands and were drinking from them. Before the party had started a great log had been dragged into the center of the lawn and Jack, painted and garlanded[2], sat there like an idol. There were piles of meat on green leaves near him, and fruit, and coconut shells full of drink.

Piggy and Ralph came to the edge of the grassy platform; and the boys, as they noticed them, fell silent one by one till only the boy next to Jack was talking. Then the silence intruded even there and Jack turned where he sat. For a time he looked at them and the crackle of the fire was the loudest noise over the droning of the reef, Ralph looked away; and Sam, thinking that Ralph had turned to him accusingly, put down his gnawed bone with a nervous giggle. Ralph took an uncertain step, pointed to a palm tree, and whispered something inaudible to Piggy; and they both giggled like Sam. Lifting his feet high out of the sand, Ralph started to stroll past. Piggy tried to whistle.

At this moment the boys who were cooking at the fire suddenly hauled off

1 turf: grass and the surface layer of earth held together by its roots.
2 garlanded: adorn or crown with a garland, a wreath of flowers and leaves, worn on the head or hung as a decoration.

a great chunk of meat and ran with it toward the grass. They bumped Piggy, who was burnt, and yelled and danced. Immediately, Ralph and the crowd of boys were united and relieved by a storm of laughter. Piggy once more was the center of social derision so that everyone felt cheerful and normal.

Jack stood up and waved his spear.

"Take them some meat."

The boys with the spit gave Ralph and Piggy each a succulent[1] chunk. They took the gift, dribbling. So they stood and ate beneath a sky of thunderous brass that rang with the storm-coming.

Jack waved his spear again.

"Has everybody eaten as much as they want?"

There was still food left, sizzling on the wooden spits, heaped on the green platters. Betrayed by his stomach, Piggy threw a picked bone down on the beach and stooped for more.

Jack spoke again, impatiently.

"Has everybody eaten as much as they want?"

His tone conveyed a warning, given out of the pride of ownership, and the boys ate faster while there was still time. Seeing there was no immediate likelihood of a pause. Jack rose from the log that was his throne and sauntered to the edge of the grass. He looked down from behind his paint at Ralph and Piggy. They moved a little farther off over the sand and Ralph watched the fire as he ate. He noticed, without understanding, how the flames were visible now against the dull light. Evening was come, not with calm beauty but with the threat of violence.

Jack spoke.

"Give me a drink."

Henry brought him a shell and he drank, watching Piggy and Ralph over the jagged rim. Power lay in the brown swell of his forearms: authority sat on his shoulder and chattered in his ear like an ape.

"All sit down."

The boys ranged themselves in rows on the grass before him but Ralph and Piggy stayed a foot lower, standing on the soft sand. Jack ignored them for the moment, turned his mask down to the seated boys and pointed at them with the spear.

"Who is going to join my tribe?"

1 succulent: thick and fleshly.

Ralph made a sudden movement that became a stumble. Some of the boys turned toward him.

"I gave you food," said Jack, "and my hunters will protect you from the beast. Who will join my tribe?"

"I'm chief," said Ralph, "because you chose me. And we were going to keep the fire going. Now you run after food—"

"You ran yourself!" shouted Jack. "Look at that bone in your hands!"

Ralph went crimson.

"I said you were hunters. That was your job."

Jack ignored him again.

"Who'll join my tribe and have fun?"

"I'm chief," said Ralph tremulously. "And what about the fire? And I've got the conch—"

"You haven't got it with you," said Jack, sneering. "You left it behind. See, clever? And the conch doesn't count at this end of the island—"

All at once the thunder struck. Instead of the dull boom there was a point of impact in the explosion.

"The conch counts here too," said Ralph, "and all over the island."

"What are you going to do about it then?"

Ralph examined the ranks of boys. There was no help in them and he looked away, confused and sweating. Piggy whispered.

"The fire-rescue."

"Who'll join my tribe?"

"I will."

"Me."

"I will."

"I'll blow the conch," said Ralph breathlessly, "and call an assembly."

"We shan't hear it."

"Come away. There's going to be trouble. And we've had our meat."

There was a blink of bright light beyond the forest and the thunder exploded again so that a littlun started to whine[1]. Big drops of rain fell among them making individual sounds when they struck.

"Going to be a storm," said Ralph, "and you'll have rain like when we dropped here. Who's clever now? Where are your shelters? What are you going to do about that?"

1 whine: complain in a feeble or petulant way.

The hunters were looking uneasily at the sky, flinching from the stroke of the drops. A wave of restlessness set the boys swaying and moving aimlessly. The flickering light became brighter and the blows of the thunder were only just bearable. The littluns began to run about, screaming.

Jack leapt on to the sand.

"Do our dance! Come on! Dance!"

He ran stumbling through the thick sand to the open space of rock beyond the fire. Between the flashes of lightning the air was dark and terrible; and the boys followed him, clamorously. Roger became the pig, grunting and charging at Jack, who side-stepped. The hunters took their spears, the cooks took spits, and the rest clubs of firewood. A circling movement developed and a chant. While Roger mimed the terror of the pig, the littluns ran and jumped on the outside of the circle. Piggy and Ralph, under the threat of the sky, found themselves eager to take a place in this demented[1] but partly secure society. They were glad to touch the brown backs of the fence that hemmed in the terror and made it governable.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!"

The movement became regular while the chant lost its first superficial excitement and began to beat like a steady pulse. Roger ceased to be a pig and became a hunter, so that the center of the ring yawned emptily. Some of the littluns started a ring on their own; and the complementary circles went round and round as though repetition would achieve safety of itself. There was tie throb and stamp of a single organism.

The dark sky was shattered by a blue-white scar. An instant later the noise was on them like the blow of a gigantic whip. The chant rose a tone in agony.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!

Now out of the terror rose another desire, thick, urgent, blind.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!"

Again the blue-white scar jagged above them and the sulphurous explosion beat down. The littluns screamed and blundered about, fleeing from the edge of the forest, and one of them broke the ring of biguns in his terror.

"Him! Him!"

The circle became a horseshoe. A thing was crawling out of the forest. It came darkly, uncertainly. The shrill screaming that rose before the beast was like a pain. The beast stumbled into the horseshoe.

1 demented: mad; of unbalanced mind.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!"

The blue-white scar was constant, the noise unendurable. Simon was crying out something about a dead man on a hill.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood! Do him in!"

The sticks fell and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed. The beast was on its knees in the center, it's arms folded over its face. It was crying out against the abominable noise something about a body on the hill. The beast struggled forward, broke the ring and fell over the steep edge of the rock to the sand by the water. At once the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws.

Then the clouds opened and let down the rain like a waterfall. The water bounded from the mountain-top, tore leaves and branches from the trees, poured like a cold shower over the straggling heap on the sand. Presently the heap broke up and figures staggered away. Only the beast lay still, a few yards from the sea. Even in the rain they could see how small a beast it was; and already its blood was stain-log the sand.

Now a great wind blew the rain sideways, cascading the water from the forest trees. On the mountain-top the parachute filled and moved; the figure slid, rose to its feet, spun, swayed down through a vastness of wet air and trod with ungainly[1] feet the tops of the high trees; falling, still falling, it sank toward the beach and the boys rushed screaming into the darkness. The parachute took the figure forward, furrowing the lagoon, and bumped it over the reef and out to sea.

Toward midnight the rain ceased and the clouds drifted away, so that the sky was scattered once more with the incredible lamps of stars. Then the breeze died too and there was no noise save the drip and trickle of water that ran out of clefts[2] and spilled down, leaf by leaf, to the brown earth of the island. The air was cool, moist, and clear; and presently even the sound of the water was still. The beast lay huddled on the pale beach and the stains spread, inch by inch.

The edge of the lagoon became a streak of phosphorescence[3] which advanced minutely, as the great wave of the tide flowed. The clear water

1 ungainly: clumsy; awkward.
2 clefts: fissures or splits in rock or the ground; space.
3 phosphorescence: light emitted by a substance without combustion or perceptible heat.

mirrored the clear sky and the angular bright constellations. The line of phosphorescence bulged about the sand grains and little pebbles; it held them each in a dimple of tension, then suddenly accepted them with an inaudible syllable and moved on.

Along the shoreward edge of the shallows the advancing clearness was full of strange, moonbeam-bodied creatures with fiery eyes. Here and there a larger pebble clung to its own air and was covered with a coat of pearls. The tide swelled in over the rain-pitted sand and smoothed everything with a layer of silver. Now it touched the first of the stains that seeped from the broken body and the creatures made a moving patch of light as they gathered at the edge. The water rose farther and dressed Simon's coarse hair with brightness. The line of his cheek silvered and the turn of his shoulder became sculptured marble. The strange attendant creatures, with their fiery eyes and trailing vapors, busied themselves round his head. The body lifted a fraction of an inch from the sand and a bubble of air escaped from the mouth with a wet plop. Then it turned gently in the water.

Somewhere over the darkened curve of the world the sun and moon were pulling, and the film of water on the earth planet was held, bulging slightly on one side while the solid core turned. The great wave of the tide moved farther along the island and the water lifted. Softly, surrounded by a fringe of inquisitive bright creatures, itself a silver shape beneath the steadfast constellations, Simon's dead body moved out toward the open sea.

Critical Points

Lord of the Flies: Themes and major characters

Lord of the Flies has been interpreted in varying ways over the years since its publication. During the 1950s and 1960s, many readings of the novel claimed that *Lord of the Flies* dramatises the history of civilisation. Some believe that the novel explores fundamental religious issues. Others approach *Lord of the Flies* through the theories of the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, who advocates that the human mind was the site of a constant battle among different impulses — the id (instinctual needs and desires), the ego (the conscious, rational mind) and the superego (the sense of conscience and morality). Still others maintain that Golding writes the novel as a criticism of the political and social institutions of the West.

First of all, *Lord of the Flies* is an allegorical novel, and the characters and objects in the novel are infused with symbolic significance that conveys the novel's central themes and ideas.

Ralph represents order, leadership, and civilisation. Piggy represents the scientific and intellectual aspects of civilisation. Jack represents unbridled savagery and the desire for power. Simon represents natural human goodness. Roger represents brutality and bloodlust at the most extreme. Sam and Eric are a pair of twins closely allied with Ralph. They fall victim to Jack's manipulation and coercion.

To the extent that the boys' society resembles a political state, the littluns might be seen as the common people, while the older boys represent the ruling classes and political leaders. The relationships that develop between the older boys and the younger ones emphasise the older boys' connection to either the civilised or the savage instinct: civilised boys like Ralph and Simon use their power to protect the younger boys and advance the good of the group; savage boys like Jack and Roger use their power to gratify their own desires, treating the littler boys as objects for their own amusement.

Questions

1. Why does Simon want so badly to talk to the boys?
2. In which ways are there parallels between Simon and Jesus? In what ways does Simon's death differ from Jesus' death?
3. What is the significance of the figure of the beast in the fiction?
4. Compare the difference between Jack and Ralph in their personality and leadership.

Class Activities

Script explanation

Suppose this chapter is a script of a film, each student explains to the other group members which actor he would like to cast, and what special effects he would use for Simon's death.

Class discussion

First, divide the class into different groups and discuss the suggestions within each group on how to prevent the children's loss of innocence.

At the end of the discussion, one representative is required from each group to give a presentation to the class on the result of the discussion.

QUOTATIONS

The theme is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable. The whole book is symbolic in nature except the rescue in the end where adult life appears, dignified and capable, but in reality enmeshed in the same evil as the symbolic life of the children on the island. The officer, having interrupted a man-hunt, prepares to take the children off the island in a cruiser which will presently be hunting its enemy in the same implacable way. And who will rescue the adult and his cruiser?

—William Golding

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