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TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE – I

M.A. English
Semester -I Paper-V

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FOREWORD

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

The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education in2003-04 with the aim of taking higher education to the door step of all the sectors of the society. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even to housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. Acharya Nagarjuna Universityhas started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004 onwards.

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

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

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

TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE – I
SYLLABUS

UNIT – I

Modernism, Symbolism, Imagism, Poetry of the Thirties, Movement Poetry, the Problem Play, Naturalism, Psychological Novel, Stream of Consciousness Technique

UNIT – II

W.H. Auden : In Memory of W.B. Yeats, "The Shield of Achilles"

UNIT – III

George Orwell : Animal Farm
Bertrand Russell : Conquest of Happiness

UNIT – IV

T.S. Eliot : The Cocktail Party
G.B. Shaw : Saint Joan

UNIT – V

E.M. Forster : A Passage to India
Virginia Wolf : Mrs. Dalloway.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

1. Lewis, Bary, "Post Modernism and Literature" 2002
2. Marian Banny Davis, "The Blooms bury guide to English Literature" Prentis Hall, New York, 1990
3. Margaret Drabble, "The Oxford Companion to English Literature"

TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE – I

CONTENTS

LESSON -1
TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE

Objectives of the Lesson

After going through this lesson you will get an idea on

1. the characteristic features of Twentieth Century Literature,
2. Some schools and 'isms' which became popular, and
3. The contribution made by the writers to Twentieth Century Poetry, Twentieth Century Novel, and Twentieth Century Drama.

Structure of the Lesson

1.1. Introduction

Twentieth Century Literature

Literature of the twentieth century refers to 'World Literature' produced during the twentieth century. Sometimes it is loosely called 'Modern Literature' or 'Modernism.' It is seen as a literary movement spanning from the last quarter of the nineteenth century in France and from 1890 in Great Britain and Germany to the start of the Second World War. As an artistic and cultural movement, it may be said to have begun in the last decades of the nineteenth century in parts of Europe. In the early decades of the twentieth century, it spread to the USA. In fact, it cannot be studied in one continent alone since writers were influenced by and corresponded with their fellow artists in other places.

Modern literature may also be viewed as a collective term for the remarkable variety of contending groups, movements, and schools in literature, art and music. It is a complex one, accommodating many 'isms' and movements like Symbolism, Structuralism, New Criticism, Impressionism, Deconstruction, Naturalism, Structuralism, Magic Realism, Expressionism, Theatre of Ideas or Dramas of Ideas, Poetic Drama, Kitchen-sink Drama, Angry Drama, Absurd Drama and so on. .

Twentieth century literature is marked with experimentation, particularly in the manipulation of form. It has broken some of the traditional bases of Western Art and Western Culture, particularly with the contributions made by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf in fiction, Thomas Stearns Eliot in poetry, and Samuel Beckett as well as Henrik Ibsen, Johan August Strindberg, and George Bernard Shaw in theatre.

In the realm of novel, one may boldly say that James Joyce's *Ulysses* may be taken as a typical example of the modernist novel. A notoriously complex novel, it employs the stream-of-consciousness technique as a remarkable means of character portrayal, combining with the mimicry of ordinary speech the parody of earlier literary styles. Using experimental techniques to convey the essential nature of realistic situations, Joyce merged the literary traditions of Realism, Naturalism, and Symbolism. He scrutinized every detail, transforming the trivial into the significant and symbolic, and made intricate connections between his characters and literary and historical figures.

Taking a cue from James Joyce, Virginia Woolf too used the same technique in her novels. Her novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is considered one of the best examples of this kind of technique. It is an impressive work and shows a brilliance and fitness in execution that no critic can forbear to admire. It follows Clarissa Dalloway throughout a single day in post-Great War England in a stream of consciousness narrative. It carries all the traits of Woolf's novels – stream of consciousness, interior monologue, a poetic style, suppression of plot, suppression of objective character descriptions and camera-eye-technique.

Modernist poetry is evident from Georgian poets just prior to the First World War. Even the Soldier poets are considered to be the most important figures in modernist poetry. In fact, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land,* with its sweeping through time and space and its direction and ambiguity, has captured the largest audience of the twentieth century. Its despairing mood, gallows humour, and seemingly hopeful ending appealed to many readers after the First World War. So, one can possibly accept T.S. Eliot as the most representative poet of the modern poetry. But in British drama, one sees a few perceptible trends and experiments.

The twentieth century heralded the birth of the new drama, and gave it a refreshing vitality which had almost reached the nadir of its fame as a powerful literary force. In the age of modernism it has reached a standard stage which has never been surpassed except, perhaps, by the Elizabethan Age. The swiftness of this transformation is astounding. As the time passed ,new trends were introduced in drama and every effort was made by dramatists to make drama life-like, realistic, and appealing to the common man. As a result, drama gradually began to appeal to the audience. There was no opposition to the production of drama by the public, for the

air of severity that marred Victorian theatre was dissolved; and a more refreshing atmosphere suitable for the production of social plays and social comedies came to take its place. The modern dramatist took his task seriously and made drama as an instrument of social propaganda and reform.

1.2. Techniques in Modern Fiction

1.2.1. Stream of Consciousness Technique

The term 'stream of consciousness' was coined by William James in his book entitled *Principles of Psychology* (1890). The phrase refers to the unbroken flow of thought processes in a waking mind. In the words of H.J. Muller,

> It is a withdrawal from external phenomena into the flickering half-shades of the author's private world i.e. consciousness is a stream that flows and cannot be seen as a static metaphor.

The stream of consciousness novel took its birth between 1913 and 1915 with three novelists namely Marcel Proust, James Joyce, and Dorothy Richardson. Proust published the two volumes of *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913) just when Dorothy Richardson was half way through her *Pilgrimage* and James Joyce was beginning to publish in serial form his *A Portrait*. That is, these writers were experimenting with the new mode of stream of consciousness novel or the modern analytic novel (as in French) which caught the very atmosphere of the mind. Thus three writers of different talents and temperament turned fiction away from external to internal reality. This journey of exploration into the realm of feelings and sensations relegated the importance of the traditional story to the background. The opening lines of Joyce's *A Portrait* clearly demonstrate a departure from the traditional method of narration. *Pilgrimage* insists upon immediate consciousness as reality. These writers asserted that the presentation of inner reality was the primary job of a novelist. They felt that a story involves certain amount of conscious or unconscious falsification of our experience of life. Life is incomplete, chaotic, and confusion and does not fall into a pattern or a shape like a story. Hence these writers demanded that the story must die in order to enable the novel to gain a new lease of life. In the words of Virginia Woolf,

In this novel, the story might wobble, the plot might crumble, and ruin might seize upon the character.

The stream of consciousness novel presents character as a process on a state. It depicts life at the free-speech level of consciousness, incoherent and disorderly. To Virginia Woolf,

> Life is not a series of Giglands, symmetrically arranged, life is a luminous hallow, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of the consciousness to the end.

Hence the novelists, through their art, aim at capturing the uncertainty, complexity, and the indefinite and unknown aspects of life, in the novels. In order to achieve this and to make their novels intelligible, these writers provide explanatory clues in the

form of symbols and figurative language to portray the flux and privacy of human consciousness.

The stream of consciousness fiction is free from rigid notions of space and time. The time sequence is disrupted because memories and flashbacks mingle the past with the present. The mind also swings away in space to different settings and scenes. This concurrence of the past or present and scenes widely apart in space within the consciousness is known as time or space montage (thinking of one place, the very next moment thinking of some other place).

For instance, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* opens with the interior monologue of a middle-aged woman, Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway, who walks through a London street early in the morning. She thinks of the preparations for the party in the evening and admires the fine morning. Then there is a memory and she thinks of her life twenty years ago away from London and recalls Peter Walsh, her one-time lover. This is an incident of space-montage where the past, present, and future and two different settings intermingle in her consciousness.

Thus, the stream of consciousness technique became very popular in the modern fiction.

1.2.2. Interior Monologue

Interior Monologue is a technique of recording the continuum of impressions, thoughts and impulses prompted by conscious experience. It is, in dramatic and nondramatic fiction, a narrative technique that exhibits the thoughts passing through the minds of the protagonists. These ideas may be loosely related impressions approaching free associations or more rationally structured sequences of thought and emotions.

The phrase originates in an essay on James Joyce by Valery Larbaud and is often regarded as synonymous with 'stream of consciousness'. There is, however, some dispute as to which of the two is the larger term. Some critics argue that stream of consciousness includes all imitations of interiority. According to this view, the interior monologue is one method among many. To other critics, interior monologue is the larger category and stands for all methods of self-revelation, including for instance some kinds of dramatic monologue. According to this view, the stream of consciousness refers to an uninterrupted flow, in which logic, conventional syntax and even at time punctuation is abandoned.

Closely related to the soliloquy and dramatic monologue, the interior monologue was used extensively in literature which later became a characteristic device of 20th century psychological novels.

1.3. Characteristic Features of Modern Poetry

The term 'modern' specifically applied to the literature written since the beginning of I World War in 1914. The period has been marked by persistent and multi-dimensioned experiments in subject matter, form, and style and has produced major

achievements in all the literary genres. In other words, it is a period full of complexity and contradiction. According to A.C. Ward, "The poetry of modern times shows distinction in genius and breadth of range." Among the notable poets of the modern period are W.B. Yeats, Stephen Spender, Wilfred Owen, T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, and Seamus Heaney.

The chief characteristic feature of the 20th century literary scene is a breakdown of values. The outlook of the rising generation was scientific rather than pure intellectual or romantic. It is economical rather than moral and sentimental. The attitude of the new movement is one of challenge, challenge of the old moral social values, challenge of earlier literary forms; it is an age of experimentalizing.

The following are some of the characteristic features of modern poetry.

1. The modern poets, identified in the popular consciousness with the Depression and social upheaval of the 1930s, made use at first of so much private or esoteric symbolism as to render the poetry barely intelligible to any but a small coterie of readers. The best known of these – W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and C. Day Lewis
2. Modern poets usually do not use high and ornate style but write in a simple and easy language.
3. The modern poet cannot fix upon a single or suitable theme. So he can write on almost any topic or subject he likes. In fact, a pin also becomes a subject of the poem. He can draw inspiration from trains, the telephone, the aeroplane, and others. Here one is reminded of Stephen Spender's poem *The Express* where he says thus:

   But gliding like a queen she leaves the station
   Without bowing and with restrained unconcerned
   She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside

   These lines show the beauty of the 'express train' which marches like a queen as she marches past industrial sectors.
4. The modern poetry is known for its note on realism. The grim reality of modern life finds a place in modern poetry. T.S. Eliot's *The Preludes* and also his *The Hollow Men* come before us as the most realistic presentations of the modern society. In his *The Hollow Men* he says,

   We are the stuffed men
   We are the hollow men
   Leaning together
   Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!

   Even in his *The Preludes* he observes thus:

   Wipe your head and hand across your mouth and laugh …
   Gatherings feel in vacant lands.

   These lines show that the modern poetry represents the grim realities of life.

1.4. Trends in Modern Drama

In the history of English literature, Modern English Drama has occupied a prominent place. Ambitiously it has broken some of the traditional forms of soliloquies, asides, and other old conventions, particularly with the contribution made by representative dramatists like Henrik Ibsen, Samuel Beckett, T.S. Eliot, John Osborne, Harold Pinter

and others. They have attempted and achieved success with their new kinds of dramas such as 'drama of ideas', 'poetic drama', 'angry drama', and 'absurd drama'.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Henrik Ibsen, a Norwegian playwright, entered the literary scene with a popular dramatic form known as '*Problem Play*.' He not only provided his audience with realistic situations in his plays but also made the audience ponder over the problems encountered by the community. M.H. Abrams rightly observes,

> In problem plays, the situation faced by the protagonist is put forward by the author as a representative instance of a contemporary social problem.

In his powerful play *A Doll's House*, playgoers imagine that they see people like themselves or their neighbours, sufferings troubles which might be their own, moving in a stage setting which looked like a room in a real house, speaking words which sound like the talk of ordinary people. Besides Ibsen, the writers who practiced this form are Sir Arthur W. Pinero, Galsworthy, and Granville Barker.

Next to appear on the literary scene is 'Poetic Drama.' The term 'poetic drama' became popular during the 1930s/40s. It was T.S. Eliot who revived this drama/term as a reaction to the 'drama of ideas.' His *Murder in the Cathedral* is the best example of this kind of drama. As a critic, he has written essays like *Poetry and Drama* and *Possibility of Poetic Drama* and so on. In *Poetry and Drama*, he points out that poetry and drama are inseparable from each other. Poetry mirrors the heart of the person which the reader cannot conceal. Poetic Drama, according to T.S. Eliot, "has far reaching effects as it affects the emotions of a person directly."

Among the practitioners of Poetic drama in the twentieth century may be included Stephen Phillips, John Drinkwater, Stephen Spender, and Christopher Fry. These playwrights never hesitated to exhibit deep emotional feelings of characters thereby exhibiting an intensified view of life. To clothe this vision of the intensity of life, to intensify emotions, the dramatist has to employ verse as the medium of expression.

With the end of the Second World War, the Great Britain witnessed continued shortages in health care, housing, and social insurance. This disenchanted many young men and women of the country. One would perceive class distinctions and middle class morality and also a loss of faith in society.

In Literature the new generation of writers like Kingsley Amis, John Osborne, Sillitoe, and Wilson described various forms of social alienation. In a short time, all such vocal protestors were classified as 'angry young man', or as 'the young angries.' The works of these writers represented as 'Angry Dramas,' – a literature of protest, often articulated through provincial characters with a working class background. These characters were generally disturbed, anguished, angry, desperate and at times funny, pouring out invectives against the society, its codes and institutions. Jimmy Porter in Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* is one such significant character who comes before us as an angry young man.

Another New Wave that appeared in the realm of theatre in the late 1950s is 'Kitchen Sink Drama.' It is applied to the plays of writers such as Arnold Wesker, and Shelagh Delaney. These playwrights portray working class or middle class life with an emphasis on domestic realism. These plays were written in part as a reaction against the drawing room comedies and middle class dramas of Coward and Rattigan. Tynan primarily championed this new group of writers. Arnold Wesker's play *Chicken Soup with Barley* is a typical example of kitchen sink drama.

The Kitchen Sink drama was soon replaced by the 'theatre of the Absurd.' The term 'theatre of the Absurd' is used to characterize the works of a number of European dramatists – Arthur Adamov, Edward Albee, Samuel Beckett, Albert Camus, Jean Genet, Eugene Ionesco, Harold Pinter, and others – of the 1950s and early 1960s. These plays present the sufferings of man and the metaphysical anguish to which modern consciousness is subjected. They violate all traditional dramatic conventions and concentrate on the anguished vision of universal reality. In spite of its lack of coherent plot, recognizable character and conflict ,it creates an inexplicable restlessness in the spectator or the reader. It provokes our thoughts in several directions. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, Albee's *Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* are some of the well-known absurd plays. Thus, one perceives different forms of dramas which stirred the imagination of the modern writers.

1.5. Other Literary Forms of the 20th Century Literature

1.5.1. Symbolism

Just as characterization and dialogue and plot work on the surface to move the story along, symbolism works under the surface to tie the story's external action to the theme. Roughly speaking, anything that 'stands for' something else is a symbol, but the process operates in many different ways. For instance, a cross is a symbol of Christianity in one context, and a road intersection by diagrammatical description in another context. Similarly 'rose' is a symbol of beauty in one context and violence in some other context.

Symbolism, a literary movement,was started by a group of French poets in the late 19th century including Laforgue, Mallarme, Valery and Verlaine influenced by Baudelaire, Swedenborg, and Wagner. The symbolists aimed to create poetic images or symbols which would be apprehended by the sense and reach the preconscious world of the spirit. Though short lived as a movement, symbolism influenced great writers such as James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Rilke, and W.B. Yeats.

Literary symbol is one such symbol in which a writer uses a symbol in his work of art. During the Romantic period, poets like Keats and others made use of this symbolist technique to make their poems very powerful.

In English literature, though many writers adopted this technique, it is only W.B. Yeats who profoundly made use of symbols in his poems only to draw the attention of the poetry lovers. His powerful poems *Byzantium*, *Sailing to Byzantium* and *Second Coming* are some of the best examples where symbols are profusely used.

Second Coming is a powerful poem that deals with the rebirth of Jesus Christ. It is highly symbolic. 'The falconer' becomes the symbol of Christ. Even in his another typical poem entitled *Sailing to Byzantium*, the Byzantium represents 'a place for intellectuals.' Besides this, we come across many other symbols. Thus, symbolism gained momentum in the poetry of W.B. Yeats.

1.5.2. Drama of Ideas

Up to the 19th century, the creative writers thought that they should entertain and enlighten the audience. But with the contribution of Henrik Ibsen, a Norwegian playwright, there entered the literary scene a popular dramatic form known as 'Problem Play.' Ibsen not only provided his audience with realistic situations in his plays but also made the audience ponder over the problems encountered by the community. M.H. Abrams rightly observes,

> In problem plays, the situation faced by the protagonist is put forward by the author as a representative instance of a contemporary social problem.

He created new attitudes to drama and is credited with being the first major dramatist to write tragedies about ordinary people in prose. Bernard Shaw, having taken a cue from Ibsen, became a member of the Fabian society. He thought that a play must make the audience think. He wrote plays which raised the social and moral consciousness of the people of his times. In his book entitled *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, Shaw remarks thus:

> Shakespeare had put ourselves on the stage but not our situations. Our uncles seldom murder our fathers, and cannot legally marry our mothers ... When we raise money by bills we do not promise to pay pounds of flesh ... Ibsen supplies the want left by Shakespeare. He gives us not only ourselves, but ourselves in our situations.

For instance, we may come across Shylocks in our society but we may not find Shylocks asking for a pound of flesh. This want was supplied by Ibsen.

Shaw, in his plays, exposes social evils like dowry, prostitution, and economic exploitation and offers a solution to the problems. He felt that the function of the artist or theatre is not simply to instruct but to reveal the truth that lies in the heart of man; and in the heart of the universe.

Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is about a woman's yearning for freedom and assertion of her rights. *Arms and the Man* by Shaw deals with the problem of marriage and that of war. Another powerful play *The Doctor's Dilemma* delineates the exploitation of doctors and his pungent attack on drudgery of scientific discoveries. John Galsworthy's play *Justice* presents a moving picture of the sufferings inflicted on prisoners in the name of justice.

1.5.3. Angry Drama

The term or phrase 'Angry Young Man' seems to have been first used as the title of an autobiography by Leslie Paul published in 1951. It became a catch-phrase in Britain in the middle and late 1950s, and by 1960 ,at the least, was a much used cliché. In fact the term 'Angry Young Man'

> Is a journalistic catchphrase loosely applied to a number of foolish playwrights and novelists from the mid-1950s, including K. Amis, J. Osborne, Sillitoe, and Wilson whose political views were radical or anarchic and who described various forms of social alienation.

Apart from journalists, the writer who was mainly but indirectly responsible for its popularity ,was John Osborne. His play *Look Back in Anger* (1957) spoke for a generation of disillusioned and discontented young men who were strongly opposed to the establishment; to its social and political attitudes and mores, and indeed to the whole 'bourgeois society.' Jimmy Porter, the anti-hero of Osborne's play, was really the prototypal modern 'angry young man.' In a short time all such vocal protestors were classified as 'angry young man', or as 'the young angries.'

Angry dramas usually represent a literature of protest, often articulated through provincial characters with a working class background. These characters are generally disturbed, anguished, angry, desperate and at times funny, pouring out invectives against the society, its codes and institutions in seething and vitriolic rhetoric. The language that is employed by the angry dramatists is always pungent and attacking. They use certain images and symbols to convey their feelings and emotions.

1.5.4. Theatre of the Absurd

The term 'theatre of the absurd' is applied to a group of European dramatists whose works emerged during the 1950s and early 1960s. It was coined by Martin Esslin and was applied to dramatists such as Arthur Adamov, Edward Albee, Samuel Beckett, Albert Camus, Jean Genet, Eugene Ionesco, Harold Pinter, and others. According to Margaret Drabble,

> The theatre of the Absurd drew significantly on popular traditions of entertainment, mime, acrobatics, and circus clowning and by seeking to redefine the legitimate source of serious theatre, played an important role in extending the range of post war drama.

Absurd plays present the sufferings of man and the metaphysical anguish to which modern consciousness is subjected. They violate all traditional dramatic conventions and concentrate on the anguished vision of universal reality. In spite of its lack of coherent plot, recognizable character and conflict it creates an inexplicable restlessness in the spectator or the reader. It provokes our thoughts in several directions.

The predicament of modern man is the subject of the absurd play. It depicts a barren world where communication is impossible, action is impossible, and even rational thinking is impossible. Since these plays represent the futility of human relationships,

there is no rational dialogue in them. Strange symbols are used to suggest man's precarious existence. Martin Esslin remarks thus:

> If a good play must have a clearly constructed story, these have no story or plot to speak of; if a good play is judged by subtlety of characterization and motivation, these are often without recognizable characters and present the audience with almost mechanical puppets; if a good play has to have a fully explained theme, which is neatly exposed and finally solved, these often have neither a good beginning nor a middle or an end; if a good play is to hold the mirror up to and portray the manners and mannerisms of the age in finely observed sketches, these seem often to be reflections of dreams and nightmares; if a good play relies on witty, repartee and pointed dialogue, these often consist of incoherent babblings.

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, Albee's *Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and others are some of the well-known absurd plays.

1.6. Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write a note on Symbolism in poetry
2. What are the characteristic features of the twentieth century poetry?
3. Explain the stream of consciousness technique.
4. Comment on the theatre of ideas.
5. What is Poetic drama?
6. Examine the features of Absurd drama.
7. What are the salient features of 'Angry' drama?
8. Discuss the trends in modern British drama.

1.7. Summing Up

After reading this lesson you must have got an idea about the characteristic features of twentieth century literature and the contributions made by the writers. You know about the trends, movements, isms, etc. and their salient features. You also learnt what is symbolism, stream of consciousness technique, problem play, poetic drama, angry drama, absurd drama, and other literary forms of the twentieth century literature.

1.8. Reference Books

1. Margaret Drabble, *Oxford Companion to Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
2. V. Tomar, *20th Century English Literature: A Survey of Poetry, Drama, Fiction and Criticism*, New Delhi: Swastic Publications, 2012.
3. Bamber Gascoigne, *Twentieth Century Drama*, London: Hutchinson University Library, 1974.

LESSON - 2

W. H. AUDEN'S "IN MEMORY OF W.B. YEATS"

Objectives of the Lesson

You will understand and be able

a) to define an elegy, a pastoral elegy, and their characteristic features
b) to learn the summary of "In Memory of W.B. Yeats"
c) to learn how one can express grief when someone dies
d) to analyse a poem

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

2.1. Introduction

W(ystan) H (ugh) Auden (1907-1973) is the chief poet among the 'Pylon Poets'. He is the youngest son of a doctor. He was brought up in Birmingham and educated at Gresham's school. He began to be taken seriously as a poet while still at Christ Church, Oxford, where he was much influenced by Anglo-Saxon and Middle English poetry. He is the most representative of the poets who wrote with pronounced Marxist affinities during the 1930s. He became a member of the Communist Party in 1932. As a poet, Auden is concerned primarily about the social and psychological maladies that have contaminated the modern world. Probably out of his desire for popular appeal, he resorted to plain, simple language, and a bitterly ironic style. His drift away from Marxism gradually brought him nearer to religion and some of his poems show a marked proneness to Christian motifs and

parallels. Auden's poetical works include *Poems* (1930), *The Orator* (1932), *Look Stranger* (1936), *Journey to a War* (1939), *In Memory of W.B. Yeats* (1939), *Another Time* (1940), *For the Time Being* (1945), *The Age of Anxiety* (1947), *A Baroque Eclogue* (1948), *The Shield of Achilles* (1955), *Epistle to a Godson and Other Poems* (1972), etc.

Auden was profoundly fascinated by W.B. Yeats in spite of the latter's romantic, mythical vision of life and poetry. He regarded him as one of the greatest poets of the century. "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" is an elegy on the death of the poet. Auden gives poetic expression to the emotional complex he has built around the poet and person of Yeats. The poem fairly outlines what Yeats is to Auden and indicates Auden's mature but gloomy observations on the reality of poetry. Poetry, as Auden rightly felt, is no more an instrument to effect desirable changes in society but a happening that modifies the psychic reality of a few leaders. Again, a poem once composed and released by the poet is no more under his control but lives its own life continually formed and re-formed in the minds of the people. An important feature of the present poem is the way in which Auden combines the poet and the man and fits these dissimilar aspects into the pattern of his concepts of time and history.

2.2. Background

2.2.1. Elegy

In Classical literature elegy is a poem composed of elegiac distiches, also known as elegiacs. The subjects are various like death, war, love, and similar themes. The elegy is also used for epitaphs and commemorative verses, and very often there is a mourning strain in them. However, it is only since the 16th century that an elegy has come to mean a poem of mourning for an individual, or a lament for some tragic event.

Many elegies have been songs of lament for specific people. Well-known examples are: Thomas Carew's elegy on John Donne, John Cleveland's on Ben Jonson, Henry King's *Exequy*, Pope's *Verses to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*, Dr. Johnson's *On the Death of Mr. Robert Levet*, Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, and more recently, Auden's *In Memory of W.B. Yeats*.

2.2.2. Pastoral Elegy

The major elegies belong to a sub-species known as 'pastoral elegy', the origins of which are to be found in the pastoral laments of three Sicilian poets. The conventions of pastoral elegy are approximately as follows: (a) The scene is pastoral. (b) The poet and the person he mourns are represented as shepherds. (c) The poet begins with an invocation to the Muses and refers to diverse mythological characters during the poem. (d) Nature is involved in mourning the shepherd's death. It feels the wound, so to speak. (e) The poet inquires of the guardians of the dead shepherd as to where they were when death came. (f) There is a procession of mourners. (g) The poet reflects on divine justice and contemporary evils. (h) There is a 'flower' passage, describing the decoration of the bier, etc. (i) At the end there is a renewal of hope and joy, with the idea expressed that death is the beginning of life.

2.3. Summary and Analysis

Auden's poem was first published in *New Republic* in 1939. It is an elegy to mourn the death of W.B. Yeats, the great Irish poet and the contemporary of Auden. W.B. Yeats died in January 1939. This poem is different from the conventional elegy. It is divided into three sections of varying lengths from separate poetic units within the poem. The relationship among these units is not very close and organic. Each section is based on somewhat independent strains of thought.

Section I of the poem describes, in the dramatic setting, the death of Yeats. Yeats died when it was the dead of winter and brooks were frozen. He says thus:

He disappeared in the dead of winter:
The brooks were frozen, the airports almost deserted,
The snow disfigured the public statues;
The mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day.

These lines show that Yeats died on a day when it was bitter cold, brooks were frozen, airports were deserted, and statues were covered in snow. He further says that the thermometer and other instruments told us the day he died on a dark cold day. Look at the lines:

What instruments we have agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

Significantly, Auden merges a series of bleak images at the outset of the poem. He underscores the indifference of Nature to the event, i.e., the death of Yeats. Such a device establishes the mood of the poem and determines the attitude of the poet.

Auden views the death of Yeats as an ordinary occurrence. His death did not affect the order of things.

Far from his illness
The wolves ran on through the evergreen forests,
The peasant river was untempted by the fashionable quays;
By mourning tongues
The death of the poet was kept from his poems.

So, Auden introduces, in the poem, an idea which is central to the theme of the poem.

Now he is scattered among a hundred cities
And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections,
To find his happiness in another kind of wood …
The words of a dead man
Are modified in the guts of the living.

In these lines, it is clear that Auden is talking about the work of a poet. According to him, a poet ultimately becomes independent from his own work. He dies physically, but his poetry lives after him. He becomes what his readers make him.

Yeats died of sudden illness. In the above lines, his death figures as a revolt in the city of his body almost like a violent eruption receding gradually into the pale silence of eternal

darkness. When his body breaks down, he resurrects in his admirers and is like the ruins of a city scattered among other cities. By the end of the stanza, the city that symbolised the poet's body incorporates his soul also into it. It becomes an enveloping image of the man in his wholeness.

The nature imagery in the first stanza gives way to the imagery of a modern and urban civilization. Section I takes the poem further from the conventions of a pastoral elegy. In this section, the central image is that of 'a hundred cities,' of brokers 'roaring like beasts on the floor of the Bourse.' We are brought to confront the beatings of a modern world and also the sensibilities of Auden as a modern poet. Section I ends with the refrain thus:

> What instruments we have agree
> The day of his death was a dark cold day.

Section II analyses another strand of thought. He remarks thus:

> Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
> For poetry makes nothing happen.

Despite the great poetry of Yeats, Ireland has remained the same. Poetry fails to produce any revolutions or to make changes in the society. What lives after a poet is his style, his manner of saying rather than the subject or the content of his poetry. The style, manner, and language of a poet come to dwell in the subliminal depths of the human psyche, 'where executives would never want to temper' it. The uniqueness of poetry lies in the manner in which it objectifies the human condition:

> It survives,
> A way of happening, a mouth.

In these lines Auden's expression becomes charged with psychological overtones. From the description of the mere physical death of Yeats, Auden proceeds to examine the psychological implications of the work of a poet and assesses the worth of poetry in terms of modern psychology.

While Sections I and II are relaxed in structure, Section III is compact and formal. Taking as the spring-board the thought of the preceding section, Auden expands it further in this section. Here the poet universalizes the tragedy of Yeats by relating it to the wider theme of the artist in society. He asks the Earth to receive Yeats as "an honoured guest". Look at the following lines:

> Earth, receive an honoured guest:
> William Yeats is laid to rest.
> Let the Irish vessel lie
> Emptied of its poetry.

In the above lines, Auden expands the idea. He says that with the death of Yeats, the Irish vessel is emptied of its poetry.

Then Auden comments on the 'Time' which is indifferent to the faults of character or physical charm. Time does not care for what the poet said but for something about the way he said it. The language of a poet redeems his views, oddities of character.

The second half of Section III deals with imminence of World War II, the year of Yeats' death being 1939. The time of Yeats' death was a terrible one. The mystery and drama of Yeats' death is set against a world overhung with the clouds of war. Auden says thus:

In the nightmare of the dark
All the dogs of Europe bark,
And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate;

He, then says, Yeats' death was a time of intellectual disgrace without pity and compassion. The eve-of-war hatred and political malaise is effectively redeemed by art because the poet or the poet's language can explore every such situation to the depth.

Auden says that all men are actually trapped in a prison of limitations. But the poet has accomplished one thing and that is, he has made it conceivable so that men might freely choose to praise or eulogise the life that they have. Poets can make us happy. They can turn the curse into a vineyard, and tart fountains in deserts. Read the following lines:

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress.

From the above lines, we learn that the poet can sing about 'human unsuccess'. The poets can teach the essentially free spirit of man to praise, to rejoice even in the face of the curse of war. He concludes the poem thus:

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountains start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

Through these concluding lines, we learn the fact that one's poetry is a 'healing fountain' that can 'teach the free man how to praise' life anyway. Thus, the poem embodies some important views of Auden about the destiny of a poet and the value of poetry as art. The poem comes before the readers as a modern poem with its imagery, concept, and versification.

2.4. Critical Appreciation

Traditionally, in an elegy all nature is represented as mourning the death. Here, in the poem, nature is represented as a course going on with its routine, indifferent and unaffected. The great poet's death goes unnoticed both by man and nature. Human life goes on as usual, and so does nature. Secondly, in the traditional elegy the dead is glorified and his death is said to be a great loss for mankind at large. But Auden doesn't glorify Yeats. He goes to the extent of calling him 'silly.' He further says that his poetry

could make nothing happen. "Ireland has her madness and her weather still." Thus, Auden reverses the traditional elegiac values and treats them ironically. Although apparently the poem is an elegy, Auden reverses and departs from the known traditions of elegy. He does not idealise Yeats as a poet or sentimentalise his fate. He proceeds to embody certain general reflections on the art of a poet and the place of poetry is the flux of events which constitute human history. So, the death of Yeats remains in the focus of the poem only to support the peripheral reflections in the poem.

Along with his piece on the death of Sigmund Freud, Auden's tribute to the poet William Butler Yeats is a most memorable elegy on the death of a public figure. Written in 1940, it commemorates the death of the poet in 1939, a critical year for Auden personally as well as for the world at large. This was the year he moved to New York and the year the world catapulted itself into the Second World War.

Yeats was born in Ireland 1856 and embraced poetry very early in his life. He never abandoned the traditional verse format of English poetry but embraced some of the tenets of modernism, especially the modernism practiced by Ezra Pound. He was politically active, mystical, and often deeply pessimistic, but his work also evinces intense lyrical beauty and fervent exaltation in Nature. He is easily considered one of the most important poets of the 20th century, and Auden recognized it at the time.

The poem is organized into three sections. It is a commentary on the nature of a great poet's art and its role during a time of great calamity. The first, mournful section describes the coldness of death, repeating that "The day of his death was a dark cold day." The environment reflects the coldness of death: rivers are too frozen to run; hardly anyone travels by air; statues of public figures are desecrated by snow. These conditions symbolize the loss of activity and energy in Yeats' death. At the same time, far away, wolves run and "the peasant river" flows outside of the rest of civilization ("untempted by the fashionable quays"), keeping the poetry alive. The implication is that the poems live even though the man may be dead. The difficulty with this situation, however, is that the man can no longer speak for himself; "he became his admirers." His poems, like ashes, are "scattered" everywhere and are misinterpreted ("unfamiliar affections" are brought into the poems). The ugly fact of bad digestion modifies the poems as "The words of a dead man / Are modified in the guts of the living."

Furthermore, as in "Funeral Blues" and "Musée des Beaux Arts," the events of the average day go on – a trader yells on the floor, the poor suffer – for most people, the day goes unmarked. It takes a special soul to mark the importance of the day of the death of a great poet, and only "a few thousand" have such a soul. As scholar James Persoon writes, "These two elements – the poet's death as national and natural crisis and the poet's death as almost completely insignificant – describe a tension within which Auden explores the life of the work after the death of the author." Thus, in addition to the thermometer telling us so, the speaker of the poem tells us that it is" a dark cold day" with respect to the popular reception of Yeats' poetry.

In the second section the speaker briefly reflects on the generative power behind Yeats' poetry. It was "Mad Ireland" that "hurt" him and inspired his poetry as a form of survival. For Yeats, "silly" like other poets or, more broadly, like other Irishmen or humans, poetry was a "gift" that survived everything other than itself—even Yeats' own physical

degeneration, the misinterpretations of "rich women," and Yeats' own failings. Poetry itself, from this perspective, survives in the midst of everything, not causing anything, but flowing out from isolated safety (perhaps the Freudian subconscious) and providing voice (metaphorically a "mouth") to that deep level of raw and unassailable humanity.

The third and final part brings the reader back into more familiar territory, with six stanzas of AABB verse, every line in seven-syllable trochaic verse (three long-short feet followed by a seventh stressed syllable).

The body of Yeats ("the Irish vessel") rests in the ground, the warring nations fight (metaphorically, the "dogs of Europe bark"), people misinterpret his work ("intellectual disgraces"), yet somehow, his poetry retains a place somewhere. The true poet, like Yeats himself, will "follow right / To the bottom of the night" (to the primordial humanity expressed in Yeats' poetry), to that fundamental human freedom where an "unconstraining voice" can "persuade us to rejoice" in our existence.

True enough, the human "curse" (evoking the Fall of Man in *Genesis*) remains; death awaits. This is all too true in a time of war. But the poet can turn the curse into a "vineyard" where sweet poetic drink can form. On the one hand there are "deserts of the heart" and human distress, yet on the other hand, with this wine a "healing fountain" can release a man from "the prison of his [mortal] days." A poet like Yeats, despite everything, can "teach the free man how to praise" that fundamental spark of existence that survives in one's poetry.

2.5. Themes and Techniques

2.5.1. Historical Poem

"In Memory of W.B. Yeats" is a historical poem, a point that Auden asserted by dating it'd Jan. 1930'. Its subject is the relation between art and history. What shall we do, those of us who are poets, as the dark night of Europe descends? Auden deals with this question specifically in the last section of the poem, where he brings together the makers of the poetry and world's disastrous happenings. It is the actual history of 1939 that presses in these lines:

> In the nightmare of the dark
> All the dogs of Europe bark,
> And the living nations wait,
> Each sequestered in its hate.

But poetry survives, to perform a role in this apocalyptic time that Yeats had understood and that Auden expresses in very Yeatsian terms:

> Follow, poet, follow right,
> To the bottom of the night,
> With your unconstraining voice
> Still persuade us to rejoice.

Here, rejoice is a Yeatsian word and the theme, as it is stated, is Yeats' tragic verse. He says that by rejoicing man creates something. Even by affirming life in the face of the evidence, man is testifying to human greatness.

2.5.2. Form in the Poem

"In Memory of W.B. Yeats" is a modern poem with its imagery, concept, and versification. Auden shows considerable ingenuity in employing blank verse, iambic lines of unequal length, half-rhymes and feminine endings. The first section was in iambic lines of unequal length, divided into verse blocks of unequal length, not giving the effect of free verse. There are equivalences of feminine ending, like 'forests' and 'poems'. There are half-rhymes like 'rumours' and 'admirers'. Yet the total effect is apparently loose and free, a formal and deliberately contrived casualness. One line ends with the carefully chosen, ostentatiously unemotive world 'unusual'. The blank verse of the second section is very conventional. The seven syllable lines of the last section seem by contrast to move formally, like a funeral march, with a balance in each line between two major and minor stresses.

2.6. Summing Up

After reading this lesson we will be able to learn what is an elegy and a pastoral elegy. We learn the importance of poetry and how it may have an impact on the society. We learn the fact of how the greatness of some poets in the world is ignored by the then society. We will be able to write a piece of literature when we lose a person who loves us most.

2.7. Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write a note on Elegy.
2. What are the characteristic features of a pastoral elegy?
3. What is the rhyme scheme employed in the poem?
4. Consider "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" as an elegy.
5. Write a critical appreciation on the poem "In Memory of W.B. Yeats.

2.8. Reference Books

1. Margaret Drabble, *Oxford Companion to Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
2. J.A. Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, London: Penguin Books, 1998.
3. S.C. Mundra, *A Critical Study of Selected Poems*, Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 2001.
4. Poem can be downloaded from the link given below: http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/in-memory-of-w-b-yeats-2/

LESSON - 3
W. H. AUDEN'S "THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES"

Objectives of the Lesson

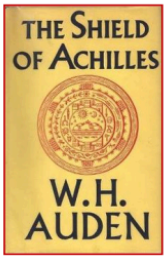
The objectives of this lesson are

a) to define a lyric and its salient features
b) to learn the summary of "The Shield of Achilles"
c) to learn the significance of the images
d) to learn how to appreciate a piece of art or a piece of writing

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

3.1. Introduction



W(ystan) H(ugh) Auden's "The Shield of Achilles" is a lyric published in 1952. *The Shield of Achilles* is also the title poem of a collection of poems by Auden that was published in 1955. It is a response to the detailed description of the shield borne by Achilles, the hero who appears in Homer's *Iliad*, an epic poem concerning a key part of the Trojan War. Thematically it is quite similar to Eliot's *The Waste Land* and represents the world which is devoid of principles and ethics. It is frequently cited as an antiwar poem. It also provides a chilling confrontation between love and war. It marches for success that has lost the true meaning of life. An analysis exemplifies how the Homeric myth is rendered into an allegory of the contemporary times. It is Auden's disgust at the totalitarian regime of the modern world where the individual is relegated. The Achillean world serves as his mouthpiece to comment on the stagnation of the modern world. The poem is

written in alternating seven-line stanzas of rime royal (ABABBCC) and eight-line stanzas in a ballad format (ABCBDEFE).

It is divided into three parts and each part consists of three stanzas. Thus there are nine stanzas in all. It is a fine lyrical poem in which Auden puts the classical myth of Achilles and his shield to the service of his art as a modern poet to bring out the contrast between the heroic past and the unheroic present. Auden's handling of the myth is dexterous. The poem portrays the insignificance of a life devoid of conviction along with the cruelty, and uninspiring barrenness of the contemporary scene.

3.2. Background

3.2.1. Lyric

The Greeks defined a lyric as a song to be sung to the accomplishment of a lyre. A song is still called a lyric but we also use the term loosely to describe a particular kind of poem in order to distinguish it from narrative or dramatic verse of any kind.

A lyric is usually fairly short, not often longer than fifty or sixty lines, and often only between a dozen and thirty lines. It usually expresses the feelings and thoughts of a single speaker in a personal and subjective fashion. The range and variety of lyric verse is immense. Lyric poetry is found in most literatures and comprises the bulk of all poetry.

The Renaissance period was the great age of the lyric. The principal lyric poets in this period were Sidney, Daniel, Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, Ben Jonson, Marvell, Herbert, Vaughan, and Milton.

Towards the end of the 18th century and during the Romantic period there was a major revival of lyric poetry throughout Europe. In the British Isles the most accomplished lyricists were Burns, Wordsworth, Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, etc. Throughout the 19th century many poets used the lyric form. The principal English poets were Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Arnold, and Hopkins. Since the end of the 19th century almost every major European and American poet has attempted and enriched the lyric form. One should mention especially W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, W.H. Auden, Allen Tate, etc.

3.2.2. Auden as a Lyric Poet

Auden's lyrics have been a continuous feature of his poetry from the mid-thirties to sixties. They form a substantial and the most distinguished part of his poetic output. "O who can ever praise enough," "Deftly, Admiral," "The Shield of Achilles" are his most admirable lyrics. Auden had an extraordinary gift for lyrics and F.W. Dupee and John Bradbury are quite right in describing him as essentially a lyrical talent "which is at its best in sustaining poetic effects within a relatively short space."

During the period under review, Auden also wrote songs of all kinds which form his greatest accomplishment. They are also his most popular verse. It is in the songs that he was able to achieve the two things he had been constantly striving for: (1) an intimate contact with the audience and (2) the quality of lightness in verse. He wrote

lyrics, carols, ballads, nursery rhymes, etc. His plays also contain a large number of songs.

Monroe K. Spears divides Auden's songs into two types, namely Popular Songs and Art Songs. Popular Songs are those written to fit an existing tune or to suggest a specific kind of music. Art Songs are written with the intention of being suitable for musical setting of whatever sort the composer chooses, or produce the impression of special suitability for musical setting. Art Songs are often like lyrics and sometimes it becomes difficult to distinguish between the two.

3.3. Summary

Achilles is the celebrated Greek warrior of the Trojan War. Thetis, the mother of Achilles looks at the shield of Achilles that was hanging over his shoulder. The shield at once acts as an emblem of art and reflects the civilization of a certain time. The shield was specially made for Achilles by Hephaestos, the blacksmith of the Gods. Thetis expected olive trees and vines and marble cities and ships on windy seas, and felt that Hephaestos has forged "an artificial wilderness" under a leaden sky. The plain is bare and brown without any features. It has no individuality. There is no blade of grass, no vegetation and therefore, it is barren. There is no sign of neighborhood and no communion. What foregrounds the background to Thetis is a great multitude of soldiers standing ready for war. The soldiers wait for the command of their leader. They are an 'unintelligible multitude', just like a herd of cattle with no ability to think or speculate. They are 'without expression'. They are without the power to communicate. A faceless voice dryly explains with statistics why war is required for justice, so they march forth.

Thetis also expected scenes of religious piety, but that is not what Hephaestos has been making. Barbed wire encloses a military camp in "an arbitrary spot," and civilians observe from a distance while the camp punishes three pale prisoners by binding them to upright posts. No hope comes from outside. The prisoners and the citizens are too "small," and the prisoners (perhaps also the other characters) "lost their pride / And died as men before their bodies died."

Thetis has looked a third time over the shoulder of Hephaestos while he works. She looks for athletes and dancers enjoying games and music, but on the shield there was a "weed-choked field" instead of a dancing floor. One poor child wanders about alone, throwing a stone at a bird that flies away to escape. To him rape and murder seem normal. The child has never heard of a place with kept promises or even human sympathy.

Hephaestos limps away, revealing the whole shield to Thetis, who cries out in horror at its imagery. This is what the armorer decided to put on the shield of Achilles, son of Thetis, Achilles the man-slayer doomed to soon die.

3.4. Analysis

W.H. Auden's "The Shield of Achilles" was first published in *Poetry* in 1952. Later it was included in the anthologies of poems entitled *The Shield of Achilles* and in the *Collected Shorter Poems.*

It is a fine lyrical poem in which Auden puts the classical myth of Achilles and his shield to the service of his art as a modern poet to bring out the contrast between the heroic past and the unheroic present. Auden's handling of myth is dexterous and highly appropriate in showing the underlying desolation, cruelty and uninspiring barrenness of the contemporary scene. In order that the parallelism be effective, Auden alternates the reminiscences of the glorious past of the classical world and its legendary beauty with the contemporary scene which cuts into this past and produces an antithetical and negative effect. The contemporary scene is rendered in terms of military operations and senseless violence with implications of religion and art. Thus, Auden's poem is a carefully balanced and well-integrated whole in which we find more than one level of meaning. The myth has been worked to a deep significance.

Thetis, the mother of Achilles, the warrior of classical antiquity, looks for the familiar scenes of adventure, art, sea faring and well-governed cities on the shield of Achilles. But instead of those things, she finds a landscape punctuated with the sights of a bare field filled with a multitude of soldiers waiting for the command of their general on the loudspeaker in a dry, passionless voice. The line "No one was cheered and nothing was discussed" echoes Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade." The soldiers followed the command and

> Column by column in a cloud of dust
> They marched away enduring a belief
> Whose logic brought them, somewhere else, to grief.

Instead of finding the scenes of 'ritual pieties / white flower garlanded heifers, she finds a scene of a concentration camp in an unknown place where

> Three pale figures were led forth and bound
> To three posts driven upright in the ground.

It is a travestied reproduction of the crucifixion scene and remarkably conveys the impression of the utter futility of violence in the modern world. The soldiers who are shot tied to the posts suddenly become aware of the hollowness of the ideals they fought for. Thetis looks for

> athletes at their games,
> Men and women in a dance
> Moving their sweet limbs
> Quick, quick, to music,

but finds 'a weed-choked field' where a 'ragged urchin' loiters about, where girls are raped and violence is committed aimlessly, and where old values and promises are absent.

The concluding stanza of the poem stresses the despair of Thetis and the inevitability of the death of her warrior son. Hephaestos, the 'thin-lipped armour' who forged such a shield, hobbles away. Auden seems to imply that making a shield like that of the classical myth, the one which Thetis had

expected, was unnecessary in view of the inevitable death of man, though he may be as brave and strong and iron-hearted as slaying Achilles himself. After all even Achilles would not live long.

3.5. Juxtaposition of Myth and Modernity

Achilles is the celebrated Greek warrior of the Trojan War. Thetis, his mother, looks at the shield of Achilles that was hanging over his shoulder. The shield at once serves as an emblem of art and a historian. It reflects the civilization of a certain time. It was specially made for Achilles by Haphaestos. The mother searches the shield:

> For vines and olive trees,
> Marble well-governed cities
> And ships upon untamed seas,
> But there on the shining metal
> His hands had put instead
> An artificial wilderness
> And a sky like lead.

Through these lines, we learn that the shield reflects the hollowness and futility of a life that verges on nothingness. The word 'artificial' points to the superficiality of this sort of life. The sky like 'lead' echoes the metallic, frigid, and cold human behaviour.

The plain is without any feature. It is bare and brown. There is no blade of grass. There is no vegetation. Therefore, it is barren. There is no sign of neighbourhood and no communion. There is nothing to eat. There is no place to sit. Look at the following lines:

> A plain without a feature, bare and brown,
> No blade of grass, no sign of neighborhood,
> Nothing to eat and nowhere to sit down, …
> An unintelligible multitude,
> A million eyes, a million boots in line,
> Without expression, waiting for a sign.

These lines show that in an era of competition, people have a shortage of the basic amenities to live their own life. Thetis sees in the background a multitude of soldiers who are waiting for the command of their leader. They are an 'unintelligible multitude', just as a herd of cattle with no ability to think or speculate. There isn't any expression on their faces. They don't have any power to communicate something to their leader.

The modern life is one that is based on logic and reasoning. It is characterized by a lack of sentiment. The issue for war was not discussed with the multitudes. It was an authoritarian assessment. Statistics were enough to prove that the cause was just. The face ordering the same is not visible in the poem. He has no identity, and is therefore, a construct by himself. The line:

"No one was cheered and nothing was discussed,"

echoes Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade" where the lines run thus:

Theirs not to make a reply
Theirs not to reason why
Theirs but to do and die.

Thetis searched the shield for scenes pertaining to Greek life (as depicted on Keats' Grecian Urn). The phrase 'white flower garlanded heifer' echoes the same. The term 'ritual pities' also reflects the same. The 'libation' refers to the pouring forth or serving of wine or other liquid in honour of a God.

Thetis observes yet another scene in the dim lit workshop of a modern blacksmith. The scene is of a concentration camp where prisoners of war are kept. Officers cracked jokes to while away their time. The enemy soldiers amidst such callousness are captured and tied to three stakes and killed. The irreverence of the picture is a reminder of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ filled with overwhelming reverence. The modern society with the loss of religious conviction is juxtaposed against an act that is emblematic of the redemption of mankind. The image depicted here is a travesty of Christ's ordeal. The claustrophobia of confinement and enslavement is referred to in the lines:

Barbed wire enclosed an arbitrary spot
Where bored officials lounged (one cracked a joke)
And sentries sweated for the day was hot:

The people of the world are cheated by the so-called commander into the logic of their reason. Little did the common people comprehend that though they were small in comparison, nothing could be done without their acceptance. They could not hope for help, and therefore, no help came. Nevertheless, redemption lay in their own hands. They die before their bodies as their self-respect is crushed under the totalitarian forces.

Thetis looks for athletes at their games, and men and women in dance rhythmically swaying their limbs to the beat of the music. However, in the reflective shield that she held, there were no such 'healthy' images but only those of decay and decomposition. Look at the following lines:

For athletes at their games,
Men and women in a dance
Moving their sweet limbs
Quick, quick, to music,
But there on the shining shield
His hands had set no dancing-floor
But a weed-choked field.

In these lines, Auden presents a contrast between the ancient Greek world and the modern world. Thetis looks for pictures of athletes busy in their games, and men and women dancing rhythmically in accompaniment to music. On the modern shield, on the other hand, there are no dancing floors or playgrounds but only a 'weed-choked field,' symbolizing the spiritual desolation of the modern age.

What one is finally left with are aimless, impulsive people out to hurt each other for no reason at all just as the 'ragged urchin' mentioned. People regress into primitivism and develop animal-instincts. Unwarranted violence, rape, broken promises and lack of humanity was the order of the day. Auden writes thus:

> A ragged urchin, aimless and alone,
> Loitered about that vacancy; …
> That girls are raped, that two boys knife a third, …
> Of any world where promises were kept,
> Or one could weep because another wept.

These lines emphasize the emptiness of the modern life. Children are loitering about the weed-choked field and are uncared for, and are scaring away birds with their slings. Rape, violence, false promises, and lack of sympathy for fellow beings is the order of the day.

Hephaestos is the God of fire and the metal smith who made the shield of Achilles. Thetis, the mother of Achilles cries out in despair at the thought of the inevitability of death and at the idea of the death of her son. "The strong/ Iron-hearted man" referred to in the poem is Achilles. War, in such an instance, poses as a metaphor of life where people are caught in the rat race of survival of the fittest. One eventually succumbs to the same.

3.6. Technique and Style

In "The Shield of Achilles," Auden employs the technique of applying a classical myth to the presentation of the contemporary scene. The myth serves to enhance the contrast between the past, rich with its values, order and artistic achievements and the present, characterized by spiritual and artistic barrenness and aimless violence.

Auden uses stanzas of longer lines with Iambic pentameter and stanzas of shorter lines which are lyrical and lilting. The style remains by and large laconic. The imagery employed to depict the richness of the past and the destitution of the present is effective. It serves to underline the contrast which is an important impact of the poem. In its technique and concern the poem is typically modern.

The conclusion of the poem resounds with religious implications. The gods themselves seem to share the dismay of Thetis. There is a design and motive in the god creating such a landscape on the shield. There is a suggestion of fatalism, of the doom being spelt providentially, of the inevitable expiry of the old world order and the emergence of the new world order. It also carries the suggestion of history moving in its cycle and completing it. Auden compresses two worlds far apart in time and outlook in the cosmos of his poem.

3.7. Summing Up

After reading this lesson we will be able to learn what is a lyric, its historical background, and its characteristic features. We learn the importance of art to describe an image. We will also know about the Greek mythology, images, and important Greek personalities like Achilles, Thetis, etc.

3.8. Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is a lyric?
2. Write a note on the rhyme scheme that is used in the poem?
3. Consider "The Shield of Achilles" as a lyric poem.
4. Critically analyze W.H. Auden's "The Shield of Achilles."
5. How does the poet contrast the past and the present?

3.9. Reference Books

1. Margaret Drabble, *Oxford Companion to Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
2. J.A. Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, London: Penguin Books, 1998.
3. S.C. Mundra, *A Critical Study of Selected Poems*, Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 2001.
4. R.N. Srivastava, *W.H. Auden: The Poet*, New Delhi: Doaba House, 2000.
5. Poem can be download from the link given below: www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/shield-achilles

LESSON - 4

W. H. AUDEN'S "IN PRAISE OF LIME STONE"

Objectives of the Lesson

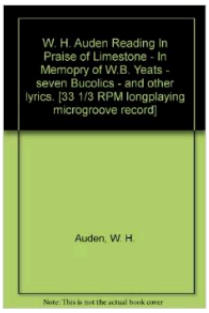
The objectives are

a) to learn the summary of "In Praise of Lime Stone"
b) to know how landscape is described in the poem
c) to identify the techniques Auden employed in the poem

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

4.1. Introduction



W(ystan) H(ugh) Auden's "In Praise of Limestone" is a complex poem written in Italy in May 1948 and published in *Horizon* in July 1948. Later it appeared in his important 1951 collection *Nones*. A revised version was published beginning in 1958 and is prominently placed in the last chronological section of Auden's *Collected Shorter Poems, 1922-1957* (1966). It is one of Auden's finest, most difficult, striking, and rewarding poems. It has been the subject of diverse scholarly interpretations. Auden's limestone landscape has been interpreted as an allegory of Mediterranean civilization and of the human body. The poem is not easily classified into any categories like lyric, elegy, etc. As a topographical, it describes a landscape and infuses it with meaning. It has been called the first postmodern pastoral. In a letter, Auden wrote of limestone and the poem's theme that 'rock creates the only human landscape.'

4.2. Summary

Auden's "In Praise of Limestone" is one of his most difficult, striking, and rewarding poems. It is often considered one of his best poems that garnered a great deal of

critical attention. It was written in May 1948 after a visit to Italy, a few years after the end of the Second World War. It is written in loose syllabic lines in three long stanzas. The critical consensus about the poem centers on it being inspired by the Mediterranean, although some discussion of its locations representing the human body and soul permeates the discussion. It does not fall into one particular genre of poetry. In a broad, loose way it might be categorized as a topographic-reflective poem.

The poem begins with reference to the young city boys in the present world. They don't have any faith in love or friendship. They often change their mind. In the first stanza of the poem, they are consistently feeling homesick for the landscape that is made of limestone, the one that dissolves in water. The stone slopes are rounded by the landscape. Below them are caverns and conduits and laughing springs which empty into little pools for fish and chisel out ravines for butterflies and lizards. Here, the landscape is of short distances and definite places. Such an area is like Mother Earth and her son. She has lot of concern on him. But he arrogantly lounges against a sun-warmed rock and is content that he is loved and to bask in his power to charm. Here, the son takes only short steps from outcrop to temple, from flowing waters to fountains, from wild to formal vineyards. He wishes that his small efforts will gain him more attention from the mother. But the point is we do not know whether the Mother Earth loves his son in spite of his faults. Even we do not get any information that he, through his little attempts, ultimately gets more from Mother Nature than death.

The second stanza takes us to the city. There is a lot more commotion in the city. But the primary tension is between the blithe, uncaring, amoral lifestyle of the young men. The city boys have no patience. They walk arm-in-arm but not in step. They are engaged in friendly but animated conversation in the square. They know each other well enough not to keep secrets. They do not believe that there is a god who judges them morally. They feel that they are born lucky and take their easy city life for granted. They have not experienced any jungle or desert. Their eyes have never peered through "the lattice-work of a nomad's comb" to worry about the infinite.

When such a city boy ventures into evil, his mind sees no moral problem. Only "the best and the worst of us" realize what is at stake. The best and the worst do not linger in the mad camp of the city but venture to immoderate soils where the granite waste reminds one of morality and humility. The clays and gravels of the plains offer room for cultivation and contemplation. The most reckless people are willing to cast civilization aside to focus on the reality of the wilderness by the older colder voice, the oceanic whisper of the vast deep. This abyss of mortality, endless natural death, says that it asks nothing and promises nothing. The blithe amorality of the city boys is quite different from this solemn, sad freedom where Mother Nature offers no love.

The third stanza opens by claiming that "all those voices were right" drawing people to acknowledge the cold, that kisses are accidental and death is permanent. The wilderness "disturbs our rights," everything we have tries to build through civilization to avoid the uncomfortable, unsettling realities of the wilderness. This the poet sees. The poet habitually sees and describes reality calling the sun, although the reality of the human mind is that it remains a 'puzzle.' The city's statues represent the rest of civilization trying to hold things fast in spite of the unfettered freedom of Nature. The

poet is made uneasy by civilization's obvious efforts to ignore Nature's cold voices. The poet is not sure after all. The mind is a puzzle and the poet's view of reality is anti-mythological. There is something about being human that deeply seeks to matter, to be more than scientific nature or animals of mere habit: to be creative.

The poem seems to offer irony toward civilization but sincerity toward nature. The poet's praise of limestone is sincere. Limestone represents reality, sad or cold as it may be, but the poet sees sun as sun and death as death and limestone as limestone. The limestone wilderness is where the poet can puzzle over what is most real, and it is where the critically interesting tension arises between cold reality and the creative human mind.

4.3. Analysis

"In Praise of Limestone" was published in *Horizon*, July 1948 and later included in *Nones*. It is one of the best known and most popular poems of Auden. The poem is distinguished by a variety of moods which Auden ingeniously strikes and projects. It is difficult to agree with the critics who seek to make the poem out to be an example purely and strictly of Auden's comic verse and find it an ingenious jumble of incongruities supported by a choice of serious words which conceal the comic element. Undoubtedly the poem has a tone of gentle humour but it is subservient to the other moods which mark the poem. James Persoon writes about the poem thus "It is about the beauty of mutable, imperfect human nature." Another critic by name Anthony Hecht argues that "the poem represents to us a climate, and, by extension, its characteristic landscape, which corresponds to, or even induces, certain moral qualities of human behaviour, personality, or character traits." The critic Rebecca Price adds that "the door of the poem is open to the unplanned, the unpredictable – life as it is lived." She sees it as "a lovers' colloquy, which 'both intensified the emotional impact of the poem and confirms its basic argument." There is a "relaxed but intimate and knowing contact with reality." Finally, she writes of the poet's use of everyday speech reinforcing the informal, friendly tone. A less flowery reading of the poem, however, suggests a rather different stark, distressing tension, between stone-cold nature and human efforts to do something more than live and die.

Auden chooses an idyllic setting for his poem. The limestone-dotted pastoral surroundings become a hallowed land resounding with mysterious voices. The poet invites us to

> Mark these rounded slopes
> With their surface fragrance of thyme and, beneath,
> A secret system of caves and conduits; hear the springs
> That spurt out everywhere with a chuckle …

The scene sketched before us is simple but it takes on an air of mystery and secrecy. There is 'a secret system of caves and conduits' where the springs chuckle as though to tease man into knowing their secret. It is a romantic setting too, conducive to 'the flirtatious male who lounges against a rock in the sunlight.' It is a land about which lovers have always dreamed where their secrets can be known only by the springs which chuckle.

In such a land are planted the massive human figures carved in the limestone. They stand 'Arm in arm', but not 'in step.' They are engaged 'n the shady side of a square' in a discourse about the moral and ethical nature of their god who cannot be pacified by 'a clever line or a good lay.' They do not worship a god whose volcanic fury they have to fear. Unlike man, they are perfectly adjusted to the local surroundings and the needs of their world. They know their minds and understand each other even if one of them has to take to evil ways. They are in perfect accord with each other and their surroundings.

Auden's concept of the limestone landscape is his concept of art. The limestone figures have the fixity and volatility of a work of art. The limestone landscape with its figures is an artistic creation conceived in close proximity to nature. It is an art standing in intimate relationship with Nature.

Auden has introduced certain metaphysical considerations into this artistic and natural landscape. He talks of a religion free from the fear of vengeance, freedom from guilt and shame and an understanding and possibility of human failure.

Auden's idyllic world is suffused with its own norms of good and evil and is very different from the human world bound by an artificial, doctrinaire religion and a rigid code of morality. Auden upholds an honest assertion and expression of the natural instincts and desires of man.

The deceptive, idyllic world of the poem also holds out temptations from which 'Saints-to-be' have to slip away:

> Come!' cried the granite wastes,
> `How evasive is your humour, how accidental
> Your kindest kiss, how permanent is death.'

The clays and gravels cry out to man to deploy armies to drill, to tame the rivers and to construct gigantic monuments. It points to man's wish to impose man-made art on the art of Nature. The cold voice of the ocean draws the reckless, saying:

> `I am the solitude that asks and promises nothing;
> That is how I shall set you free. There is no love;
> There are only the various envies, all of them sad.'

Hope trembles on despair. The poet projects himself into the poem to make a direct assertion:

> They were right, my dear, all those voices were right
> And still are; this land is not the sweet home that it looks …

The picture of the modern world that we get is of a

> dilapidated province, connected
> To the big busy world by a tunnel, with a certain
> Seedy appeal.

And when the poet visualizes 'a faultless love' or 'the life to come,' he can hear only 'the murmur of underground streams.'

"In Praise of Limestone" is a very good specimen of Auden's casual style and the technique of working variations of moods and feelings around his theme. The argument of the poem rises like a crescendo, gradually reaching its well prepared for climax. We find, in the poem, a mood of tranquility and mystery affected by an imaginative reflection of art, an argumentativeness and the dramatic tone sustained throughout and a metaphysical speculation on the nature of love and the ultimate state of life.

The poet is superbly at ease with his subject, introducing modulations into it gradually and expanding the significance of his argument and the landscape. The whole landscape is symbolic and fragile, symbolizing the fragility of art and the stuff of which life itself is made.

Mendelson, Auden's biographer, summarises the response to "In Praise of Limestone" in the years following its publication:

> Readers found the poem memorable … but even the critics who praised it did not pretend to understand it. Those who, without quite knowing why, felt grateful to it were perhaps responding to its secret, inexplicit defense of a part of themselves that almost everything else written in their century was teaching them to discredit or deny.

The images are ideally blended with the theme and the mood of the poem. The style is casual and relaxed. The poem has a lyrical and romantic quality which makes it commendable to the reader with immediacy. It is Auden's magnificent contribution to the corpus of modern poetry. Stephen Spender, the English poet, called the poem as one of the century's greatest poems describing it as "the perfect fusion between Auden's personality and the power of acute moral observation of a more generalized psychological situation, which is his great gift. David Daiches, the literary critic, found it loose and unfulfilling.

4.4. Themes

Auden frequently visited Ischia, an island in the Gulf of Naples, between 1948 and 1957. "In Praise of Limestone" was among the first poems he wrote in Ischia. The nominal limestone is the characteristic of the Mediterranean landscape. It is considered as an allegory of history in the poem. The properties of this limestone (sedimentary rock) invoke the sedentary and domestic picture of Mediterranean culture. The calcium in limestone makes it water-soluble. But it builds up over eons, a stratum of time, out of organic matter, recalling the stratified history of Mediterranean civilization. The ground, in the poem, is a perfect symbol of cultural, ethnic, and national identity. It is a significant confluence of the historical and the mythical, individual and collective.

The Mediterranean's religious tradition and culture are contrasted in 'Limestone' with the Protestant and rationalistic 'Gothic North.' The poem is an attempt to rediscover

the sacramental quality of nature, a quality still animate in the under-developed regions of the Mediterranean South. Auden looking at the landscape, near the Mediterranean, from the outside, as a member of the Northern community, includes himself as one of the 'inconstant ones.' Look at the following lines:

If it form the one landscape that we, the inconstant ones,
Are consistently homesick for, this is chiefly
Because it dissolves in water …

But other outsiders do not share his appreciation for the landscape. Perhaps the reason for this is that they never stayed there for long. Instead they sought immoderate soils where the beauty was not so external. The 'granite wastes' attracted the ascetic 'saints-to-be,' the 'clays and gravels' tempted the would-be tyrants, and an 'older-colder voice, the oceanic whisper' beckoned the 'really reckless' romantic solitaries who renounce or deny life. W.H. Auden writes thus:

'I am the solitude that asks and promises nothing;
That is how I shall set you free. There is no love;
There are only the various envies, all of them sad.'

In these lines Auden says that the immoderate soils together represent the danger of humans who are trying to belittle gods on earth, while the limestone landscape promises that life's pleasures need not be incompatible with public responsibility and salvation. Later Auden seemingly dismisses the landscape as historically insignificant in the middle sections of the poem,but justifies it in theological terms at the end. He says that in a world where "sins can be forgiven" and "bodies rise from the dead," the limestone landscape makes a further point as the blessed will not care what angle they are regarded from having nothing to die. The poem closes by envisioning a realm like that of Kingdom of God in physical, not idealistic terms. The concluding lines run thus:

… Dear, I know nothing of
Either, but when I try to imagine a faultless love
Or the life to come, what I hear is the murmur
Of underground streams, what I see is a limestone landscape.

Auden's literary executor and biographer, Edward Mendelson and others interpret the poem as an allegory of the human body whose characteristics correspond to those of the limestone landscape. They say that Auden recognizes that the landscape, like the body, is not witness to great historical events. But it exists at a scale most suitable to human. 'Limestone' questions the valuation of that which exists on a scale different from the body like politics, the fascination with consciousness, and other abstractions. The poem's concluding lines which justify the landscape in theological terms are like a theological statement of the body's sacred significance. The poem is thus an argument against Platonic and idealistic theologies in which the body is inherently fallen and inferior to the spirit.

The Karst topography of Auden's birthplace, Yorkshire, also contains limestone. It is because of this, if we read the poem, we get a feeling that Auden is trying to describe his own homeland. He makes a connection between the two locales – one is Italy and

the other is the place where he was born. The maternal theme in the poem is a point of entry into the psychoanalytical interpretation in which the limestone landscape is a suitable backdrop for narcissism.

4.5. Structure and Narration

The narrator's tone is informal and conversational. He attempts to conjure the picture of a dialogue between the reader and the speaker. In the poem, Auden himself speaks directly in the first person as he does in a large proportion of his work. The informality is established by enjambment – only 13 of the poem's 93 lines are clearly end-stopped. There are few instances of rhyme, and about half the lines end on unaccented syllables. The pattern of the poem is reinforced by the line indentation and confirmed by Auden's own reading. This structure mitigates the tendency of normally accented English speech to fall into the rhythm of iambic pentameter.

4.6. Summing Up

After reading this lesson we will be able to learn what a limestone landscape is and how it is described in the poem. We learn the fact that the young city boys do not have any faith in religion, love, and friendship. We also realize the truth that death is a fact and if sins are forgiven and people rise from the dead, human civilization can make an additional point and the city boys become changed persons.

4.7. Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write a brief note on the structure employed in the poem.
2. Comment on the thematic concerns in the poem.
3. Critically analyze W.H. Auden's "In Praise of Limestone."

4.8. Reference Books

1. Margaret Drabble, *Oxford Companion to Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
2. J.A. Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, London: Penguin Books, 1998.
3. Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_Praise_of_Limestone
4. S.C. Mundra, *A Critical Study of Selected Poems*, Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 2001.
5. R.N. Srivastava, *W.H. Auden: The Poet*, New Delhi: Doaba House, 2000.
6. The text of the poem can be downloaded from the following link: http://www.poemhunter.com/best-poems/wh-auden/in-praise-of-limestone-3/

LESSON - 5
ANNOTATIONS ON W. H. AUDEN'S PRESCRIBED POEMS

Objectives of the Lesson

The objectives of this lesson are

a) to make a detailed study of the text and understand it better
b) to learn the meaning of some important lines
c) to identify the techniques Auden employed in the poem

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

5.1. Introduction

Annotation is a key component of close reading. As learners it is our prime duty to make a thorough and close reading of the text. Annotations will be very much helpful for the reader to understand the meaning of the text and also comments made by the writers. They help the reader understand the words and the slang used by the author. They make us explore why the author would have used a particular word or phrase. They help the reader in understanding the theme, context, and literary techniques that are used in the lines or in the passages. Analysis or interpretation of what is there in the text can be made through annotations.

As we work with the text, we have to think about all the ways that we can connect with what we are reading. The following are some suggestions that will help in annotating the text.

- ✓ Plan on reading the passages twice or thrice.
- ✓ In the first two readings try to find out the overall meaning of the lines.
- ✓ Third reading should be done carefully to write the comment.
- ✓ Summarize the idea of the lines in your own words.
- ✓ Comment on the use of language and other literary devices used by the author.
- ✓ Explain the context of the lines.

5.2. Literary Devices and Definitions

Alliteration – the practice of beginning several consecutive or neighboring words with the same sound: e.g., "The twisting trout twinkled below."

Allusion – a reference to a mythological, literary, or historical person, place, or thing: e.g., "He met his Waterloo."

Flashback – a scene that interrupts the action of a work to show a previous event.

Foreshadowing – the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future action

Hyperbole – a deliberate, extravagant, and often outrageous exaggeration; it may be used for either serious or comic effect: e.g., "The shot was heard 'round the world."

Idiom – an accepted phrase or expression having a meaning different from the literal: e.g., to drive someone up the wall.

Imagery – the words or phrases a writer uses that appeal to the senses.

Irony – there are three types;

- *Verbal irony* – when a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite; sarcasm is a form or verbal irony: e.g., "It is easy to stop smoking. I've done it many times."
- *Situational irony* -- when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect; often the twist is oddly appropriate: e.g., a deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub is ironic.
- *Dramatic irony* – when a character or speaker says or does something that has different meaning from what he or she thinks it means, though the audience and other characters understand the full implications: e.g., Anne Frank looks forward to growing up, but we, as readers, know that it will never be.

Metaphor – a comparison of two unlike things not using "like" or "as": e.g., "Time is money."

Mood – the atmosphere or predominant emotion in a literary work.

Oxymoron – a form of paradox that combines a pair of opposite terms into a single unusual expression: e.g., "sweet sorrow" or "cold fire."

Paradox – occurs when the elements of a statement contradict each other. Although the statement may appear illogical, impossible, or absurd, it turns out to have a coherent meaning that reveals a hidden truth: e.g., "Much madness is divinest sense."

Personification – a kind of metaphor that gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human characteristics: e.g., "The wind cried in the dark."

Rhetoric – the art of using words to persuade in writing or speaking.

Simile – a comparison of two different things or ideas using words such as "like" or "as": e.g., "The warrior fought like a lion."

Suspense – a quality that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events.

Symbol – any object, person, place, or action that has both a meaning in itself and another that stands for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value: e.g., a tortoise represents slow but steady progress.

Theme – the central message of a literary work. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied: e.g., pride often precedes a fall.

Tone – the writer's or speaker's attitude toward a subject, character, or audience; it is conveyed through the author's choice of words (diction) and details. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, etc.

Understatement (meiosis, litotes) – the opposite of hyperbole. It is a kind of irony that deliberately represents something as being much less than it really is: e.g., "I could probably manage to survive on a salary of two million dollars per year."

5.3. Sample Annotation

1. *He disappeared in the dead of winter:*
   The brooks were frozen, the airports almost deserted,
   The snow disfigured the public statues;
   The mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day. …
   The day of his death was a dark cold lady.

Reference: The above lines are taken from "In Memory of W.B. Yeats." It is a poem written by W.H. Auden. It was published in 1939. It is an elegy written on the death of W.B. Yeats, a great symbolist poet.

Meaning: The poem commemorates the death of Yeats who died in the winter of 1939. It indicates Auden's mature but gloomy observations on the reality of poetry. Entire nature bemoans the death of the poet. The frozen brooks, the empty airports and the disfigured statues, all symbolize the season of bitter winter. It is not only the poet who sinks, but even the thermometer sinks in the mouth of the dying day. Entire nature becomes as cold as the body of the dead poet.

Comment: In these lines we observe Auden's reaction on the death of W.B. Yeats, a great poet. Auden's nature is not to sympathise with the death of the poet as in a conventional elegy. But the image of the wintry city shares many of the frailties which Yeats himself had. Here, Auden uses 'personification' when he says that 'the mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day.' Winter also symbolizes old age, death and paralyses of nature.

5.4. Annotations from the Text

5.4.1. In Memory of W.B. Yeats

1. *Far from his illness*
   The wolves ran on through the evergreen forests,
   The peasant river was untempted by the fashionable quays;
   By mourning tongues
   The death of the poet was kept from his poems.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The poem commemorates the death of Yeats who died in the winter of 1939. Nature bemoans the death of the poet. But entire nature was not arrested by the death of the poet. The wolves as usual ran on through the evergreen forests. The peasants performed their daily work without being affected by the death of the poet. Yeats died as a man but not as a poet. His admirers have kept his poems alive. The poet lives through his poetry.

Comment: Through these lines Auden proves that art is long but life is short. The poet may not live physically, but becomes immortal by his great work of art. Auden feels that Yeats' death is an ordinary occurrence. His death did not affect the order of things. In fact, in these lines Auden introduces an idea which is central to the theme of the poem. The poet says that a poet's work ultimately becomes independent of him because he has no control over the interpretation which prosperity will give it. He becomes what

his readers make him. The environment continues to be personified. The always-laboring rivers are peasants. The quays are fashionable as if they were well-dressed people. In these lines the unaffected nature, epitomized by the image of the countryside with evergreen forests and the peasant river provides a contrast to the stagnant city of the opening stanza. The poet also identifies the undying poetry of Yeats which lives in the minds of the readers forever.

2. *The provinces of his body revolted,*
The squares of his mind were empty,
Silence invaded the suburbs,
The current of his feeling failed; he became his admirers.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The poem commemorates the death of Yeats who died in the winter of 1939. Nature bemoans the death of the poet. Yeats died of sudden illness. His death is figured as a revolt in the city of his body. It is almost like life receding into the silence of eternal darkness. Silence prevails everywhere as the tears of his admirers also are frozen. Even his body breaks down; he wakes up in his admirers. He becomes what his readers make him. The environment continues to be dynamic but not dead with the poet.

Comment: Yeats died of a sudden illness. In these lines which are metaphoric, his death figures as a revolt in the city of his body almost like a violent eruption receding gradually into the pale silence of eternal darkness. When his body breaks down, he resurrects in his admirers and is like the ruins of a city scattered among other cities. Auden says that once a poem is composed and published by the poet, it is no more under his control. But it lives its own life continually in the minds of the people. The grief of the mourners is personified as the silence that has invaded the suburbs.

3. *Now he is scattered among a hundred cities*
And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections,
To find his happiness in another kind of wood
And be punished under a foreign code of conscience.
The words of a dead man
Are modified in the guts of the living.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The poem commemorates the death of Yeats who died in the winter of 1939. Nature bemoans the death of the poet. Auden says that once a poem is composed and published by the poet, it is no more under his control. Dead writers can't control how their words will be changed and interpreted. The words of a dead man are modified according to the whims of the living. Thus it causes intellectual disgrace.

Comment: Here, the words of Auden echo the words of Tagore who says that from the words of a poet men may take what meanings please them. But Auden warns against the misinterpretation of words by the successive generations of the poet.

4. *You were silly like us; your gift survived it all:*
The parish of rich women, physical decay,
Yourself. Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The poem commemorates the death of Yeats who died in the winter of 1939. Nature bemoans the death of the poet. Yeats was as silly as any common man. But Auden explains how he was able to overcome his weaknesses by means of his gifts. In a sense, Yeats' poetic life was a sublimated reaction to his interaction with ladies like Lady Gregorry, Olivia Shakespeare, Dorothy Wellesley, and Maud Gonne. "Yeats' passion and dream was the chief inspiration for many of his poems". Despite Yeats' poetic endeavours, Ireland remains as she was. Auden is reminded of the bitter truth that poetry is utterly helpless in reforming social reality.

Comment: Auden's admiration in these lines for Yeats is neither superfluous nor one-sided. He is pessimistic about the influence of poetry on society. He explains how Yeats was able to overcome his weaknesses by means of his gifts. The tone here is philosophic and grave. Any poet is a product of his culture or society.

5. *In the nightmare of the dark*
   All the dogs of Europe bark,
   And the living nations wait, …
   Intellectual disgrace
   Stares from every human face …
   Locked and frozen in each eye

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The poem commemorates the death of Yeats who died in the winter of 1939. Nature bemoans the death of the poet. Auden along with Yeats was the direct witness of the two World Wars. They saw the horrors of war, death and devastation. It was a critical period for the poet as well as the world at large. Man lost his rationality and intellectual faculty. The war clouds fully hovered over the world, particularly, over Europe. The warring nations looked like barking dogs.

Comment: In these lines Auden discloses the devilish face of the age. Auden feels that the time of Yeats' death was a terrible one. It was a time of intellectual disgrace without pity and compassion. He says that all men are actually trapped in a prison of limitations. We can also notice the sudden shift in idiom, verging on the inventive. The language also redeems the poet's views, oddities of character.

6. *In the deserts of the heart*
   Let the healing fountains start,
   In the prison of his days
   Teach the free man how to praise.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The poem commemorates the death of Yeats who died in the winter of 1939. Nature bemoans the death of the poet. In this stanza, Auden singles out the highest accomplishment of Yeats' who transformed the poetry to an eternal healing fountain. Auden says that one's poetry is a 'healing fountain' that can 'teach the free man how to praise' life anyway.

Comment: Auden introduces an idea which is central to the theme of the poem. A poet like Yeats can teach the free man how to praise that fundamental spark of existence that survives in one's poetry. Here, Auden glorifies the greatness of poetry in general and that of Yeats in particular.

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5.4.2. The Shield of Achilles

7. *She looked over his shoulder*
For vines and olive trees,
Marble well-governed cities
And ships upon untamed seas.

Reference: The above lines are taken from "The Shield of Achilles," a poem written by W.H. Auden. It was published in 1952. The Shield of Achilles is also the title poem of a collection of poems by Auden, published in 1955.

Meaning: The title of the poem is taken from Homer's epic, '*The Iliad'*. Auden describes the scenes carved on the shield of Achilles, the hero of the Trozen war. The shield is a symbol of hope and disappointment of modern man who is torn between peace and war.

Thetis, mother of Achilles expects to see classical and traditional images of beauty. But instead, she sees a vision of war and wilderness of the modern world. Auden feels that the modern world is becoming increasingly dehumanized. This greatly disturbs him. So he warns against the philosophy of nihilism.

Comment: 'She' referred to in the above lines is Thetis, the mother of Achilles. Thetis, mother of Achilles, stands for love and construction. While Hephaestos stands for greed and destruction. The co-existence of pacifist and fascist tendencies is the main theme of the poem. Here, the poet presents the dichotomy that exists in the post-war generation.

8. *His hands had put instead*
An artificial wilderness
And a sky like lead.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The title of the poem is taken from Homer's epic, '*The Iliad'*. Auden describes the scenes carved on the shield of Achilles, the hero of the Trozen war. The shield is a symbol of hope and disappointment of modern man who is torn between peace and war. Thetis expects to see classical images of beauty on the shield carved by Hephaestos, the blacksmith of the Gods. But she sees a vision of war and wilderness of the modern world. The sky like 'lead' echoes the metallic, frigid and cold human behaviour.

Comment:' His hand' referred to in the above lines is the hand of Hephaestos, the blacksmith of the Gods. It is he who has made the shield. These lines reflect the hollowness and futility of a life that verges on nothingness. The word 'artificial' points to the superficiality of this sort of life. The sky like 'lead' echoes the metallic, frigid and cold human behaviour.

9. *A plain without a feature, bare and brown,*
No blade of grass, no sign of neighborhood,
Nothing to eat and nowhere to sit down,
Yet, congregated on its blankness, stood
An unintelligible multitude

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The title of the poem is taken from Homer's epic, '*The Iliad'*. Auden describes the scenes carved on the shield of Achilles, the hero of the Trozen war. The shield is a symbol of hope and disappointment of modern man who is torn between peace and war. Thetis, mother of Achilles, expects to see classical images of beauty on the shield carved by Hephaestos. But she sees a vision of war and wilderness of the modern world. There is no blade of grass and no vegetation on the plain. Therefore, it is barren. There is no sign of neighbourhood and no communion. The multitudes of soldiers wait for the command of their leader. They are 'unintelligible', like a herd of cattle with no ability to think.

Comment: From the above lines, we learn that the plain is without any feature. It has no individuality. In an era of competition, people have a shortage of the basic amenities of living. What foregrounds the background to Thetis is a multitude of soldiers. The soldiers wait for the command of their leader. They are without expression and without the power to communicate.

10. *Out of the air a voice without a face*
Proved by statistics that some cause was just
In tones as dry and level as the place:
No one was cheered and nothing was discussed;
Column by column in a cloud of dust.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The title of the poem is taken from Homer's epic, '*The Iliad'*. Auden describes the scenes carved on the shield of Achilles, the hero of the Trozen war. The shield is a symbol of hope and disappointment of modern man who is torn between peace and war.

Comment: The life described here is one that is based, supposedly, on logic and reasoning. It is characterized by a lack of sentiment. The tone is 'dry and level'. The cause of war was not discussed with the multitude. It is an authoritarian assessment. Statistics are enough to prove that the cause was just. The face ordering the same is not visible either. He has no identity, and is therefore a construct by himself. The line "No one was cheered and nothing was discussed" reminds us of Tennyson's lines:

> Theirs not to make reply,
> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do and die:
> Into the valley of Death
> Rode the six hundred.

11. *They marched away enduring a belief*
Whose logic brought them, somewhere else, to grief.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The title of the poem is taken from Homer's epic, '*The Iliad'*. Auden describes the scenes carved on the shield of Achilles, the hero of the Trozen war. The shield is a symbol of hope and disappointment of modern man who is torn between peace and war. Thetis expects to see classical images of beauty on the shield carved by Hephaestos. But she sees a vision of war and wilderness of the modern world. The common people cannot understand the cruel strategies of the fascists. Nothing could be

done without their acceptance. They cannot expect any help. They die inwardly even before their bodies collapse as their self-respect is crushed under the totalitarian forces.

Comment: In these lines it is said that the people of the world are cheated by the so-called commander into the logic of their reason. Little did the common people comprehend that though they are small in comparison, their collective might could be awesome.

12. *She looked over his shoulder*
For ritual pieties,
White flower-garlanded heifers,
Libation and sacrifice, ...
She saw by his flickering forge-light
Quite another scene.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The title of the poem is taken from Homer's epic, '*The Iliad'*. Auden describes the scenes carved on the shield of Achilles, the hero of the Trozen war. The shield is a symbol of hope and disappointment of modern man who is torn between peace and war. Thetis, mother of Achilles expects to see classical images of beauty on the shield carved by Hephaestos. She also expects the scenes of religious piety and sacrifice of heifers before a deity. She also likes to have scenes of libation and drinking. But she sees the scenes contrary to her expectations.

Comment: Through these lines we observe Thetis searching the shield for scenes pertaining to Greek life (as depicted on Keats' Grecian Urn). The phrase "white flower-garlanded heifer" echoes the same, as perhaps does the term 'ritual pities.' The 'libation' refers to the pouring forth of wine in honour of a god. In these lines the poet presents a contrast between the ancient Greek world and the modern world. Thetis looks for pictures of athletes busy in their games, and men and women dancing rhythmically in accompaniment to music. On the modern shield, on the other hand, there are no dancing floors or playgrounds but only a 'weed-choked field,' symbolizing the spiritual desolation of the modern age.

13. *Barbed wire enclosed an arbitrary spot*
Where bored officials lounged (one cracked a joke)
And sentries sweated for the day was hot.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The title of the poem is taken from Homer's epic, '*The Iliad'*. Auden describes the scenes carved on the shield of Achilles, the hero of the Trozen war. The shield is a symbol of hope and disappointment of modern man who is torn between peace and war. Thetis, mother of Achilles expects to see classical images of beauty on the shield carved by Hephaestos. But she sees a vision of war and wilderness of the modern world. The other scene on the shield is a camp where prisoners of war are kept. Officers cracked jokes to while away their time. The enemy soldiers amidst such callousness are captured and tied to three stakes and killed. The picture is a reminder of the crucifixion of Christ filled with overwhelming reverence.

Comment: The modern society with the loss of religious conviction is juxtaposed against an act that is emblematic of the redemption of mankind. The claustrophobia of confinement and enslavement is referred to in the line "Barbed wire enclosed an arbitrary spot."

14. The mass and majesty of this world, all
That carries weight and always weighs the same
Lay in the hands of others; they were small
And could not hope for help and no help came.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The poem is Auden's response to the detailed description of the shield of Achilles who appeared in Homer's epic poem *The Iliad.* The poet describes the scenes that are carved on the shield. The shield is a symbol of art showing the culture and conditions of life which prevailed at some particular time.

Thetis, mother of Achilles expects to see classical images of beauty on the shield carved by Hephaestos. But she sees a vision of war and wilderness of the modern world. The three prisoners, executed are without any hope. They have no ability to save themselves. And this inability causes them to "die as men before their bodies died." There is no hope, death conquers all.

Comment: The humans pictured in this scene are essentially zombies – animated corpses that have long since been vacated by anything resembling a true Human. This is the fruit of the "belief" followed by humanity in the preceding scenes – the fruit of Nihilism. If there is no truth, then there can certainly be no true hope.

15. Men and women in a dance
Moving their sweet limbs
Quick, quick, to music,
But there on the shining shield
His hands had set no dancing-floor
But a weed-choked field.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The poem is Auden's response to the detailed description of the shield of Achilles who appeared in Homer's epic poem *The Iliad.* The poet describes the scenes that are carved on the shield. The shield is a symbol of art showing the culture and conditions of life which prevailed at some particular time.

Thetis expects to see classical and traditional images of beauty on the shield carved by Hephaestos. But she sees a vision of war and wilderness of the modern world. Thetis looks for athletes at their games, for men and women dancing rhythmically swaying their sweet limbs to the beat of the music, but finds children loitering about the weed-choked field and scaring away birds with their slings.

Comment: Here, Auden says that what one is finally left with is aimlessness, hurting each other for no reason. Unwarranted violence, rape, broken promises and lack of humanity was the order of the day.

16. Loitered about that vacancy; a bird
Flew up to safety from his well-aimed stone:
That girls are raped, that two boys knife a third.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: The poem is Auden's response to the detailed description of the shield of Achilles who appeared in Homer's epic poem *The Iliad.* The poet describes the scenes that are carved on the shield. The shield is a symbol of art showing the culture and conditions of life which prevailed at some particular time.

Comment: In these lines, we see a lone child, throwing a rock at a bird. But what is incredible about this child is that horror and sin are axioms to him. He is not bothered by the fact that girls are raped or that two boys would knife a third. He never hears of any world where promises were kept and weep because another is weeping.

5.4.3. In Praise of Limestone

17. *If it form the one landscape that we, the inconstant ones,*
Are consistently homesick for, this is chiefly
Because it dissolves in water. Mark these rounded slopes
With their surface fragrance of thyme and, beneath,
A secret system of caves and conduits.

Reference: The above lines are taken from W. H. Auden's poem entitled "In Praise of Limestone." It was published in 1948. It is often considered one of his best poems. It is also one of his most difficult, striking, and rewarding poems.

Meaning: The poem begins with reference to the young city boys in the present world. They don't have any faith in love or friendship. They often change their mind. They are consistently feeling homesick for the landscape that is made of limestone, the one that dissolves in water. The stone slopes are rounded by the landscape. They empty into little pools for fish and chisel out ravines for butterflies and lizards.

Comment: The poem describes Auden's limestone landscape that is interpreted as an allegory of Mediterranean civilization and also of the human body. The titular limestone is the characteristic of the Mediterranean landscape and is considered an allegory of history. It has been called the first postmodern pastoral. James Person writes about the poem, "it is about the beauty of mutable imperfect human nature."

18. *What could be more like Mother or a fitter background*
For her son, the flirtatious male who lounges
Against a rock in the sunlight, never doubting
That for all his faults he is loved; whose works are but
Extensions of his power to charm?

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: Here, the landscape is of short distances and definite places. Such an area is like Mother Earth and her son. She has lot of concern for him. But he arrogantly lounges against a sun-warmed rock with contentment and confidence that he is loved and basks in his power to charm. Here, the son takes only short steps from outcrop to temple, from flowing waters to fountains, from wild to formal vineyards. He wishes that his small efforts will gain him more attention from the mother. But the point is we do not know whether the Mother Earth loves his son in spite of his faults. Even we do not get any information that he, through his little attempts, ultimately gets more from Mother Nature than death.

Comment: Same as above

19. *Watch, then, the band of rivals as they climb up and down*
Their steep stone gennels in twos and threes, at times
Arm in arm, but never, thank God, in step …

There are any important secrets, unable
To conceive a god whose temper-tantrums are moral

Reference: Same as above
Meaning: There is a lot more commotion in the city. But the primary tension is between the blithe, uncaring, amoral lifestyle of the young men and the dwellers in the limestone locale. The city boys have no patience. They walk arm-in-arm but not in step. They are engaged in friendly and animated conversation in the square. They know each other well enough not to keep secrets. They do not know that there is a god who judges them morally. They feel that they are born lucky and take their easy city life for granted. They have not experienced any jungle or desert. Their eyes have never peered through "the lattice-work of a nomad's comb" to worry about the infinite.
Comment: Same as above

20. *Their eyes have never looked into infinite space*
Through the lattice-work of a nomad's comb; born lucky,
Their legs have never encountered the fungi …
So, when one of them goes to the bad, the way his mind works
Remains incomprehensible …
But the best and the worst of us...

Reference: Same as above
Meaning: These lines reveal that the young boys were born lucky and take their easy city life for granted. They haven't had to experience jungle or desert. Their eyes have never had to peer through the lattice-work of a nomad's comb to worry about the infinite. When such a city boy ventures into evil, his mind sees no moral problem. Only the best and the worst of us realize what is at stake. The best and worst do not linger in the mad camp of the city. But, they venture to immoderate soils where the granite waste reminds one of mortality and humility.
Comment: Same as above.

21. *They were right, my dear, all those voices were right*
And still are; this land is not the sweet home that it looks,
Nor its peace the historical calm of a site
Where something was settled once and for all.

Reference: Same as above
Meaning: Through these lines we learn that all the voices were right. The voices of granite and clay and gravel as well as the oceanic voice draw people to acknowledge the cold whose kisses are accidental and death is permanent.
Comment: Same as above.

22. *The poet,*
Admired for his earnest habit of calling
The sun the sun, his mind Puzzle, is made uneasy
By these marble statues which so obviously doubt
His antimythological myth.

Reference: Same as above
Meaning: In these lines the poet habitually sees and describes reality, "calling / The sun the sun," although the reality of the human mind is that it remains a "Puzzle." The city's

statues represent the rest of civilization trying to hold things fast despite the unfettered freedom of Nature, and the poet "is made uneasy" by civilization's obvious efforts to ignore Nature's cold voices.

Comment: Same as above.

23. *The blessed will not care what angle they are regarded from,*
Having nothing to hide. Dear, I know nothing of
Either, but when I try to imagine a faultless love
Or the life to come, what I hear is the murmur
Of underground streams, what I see is a limestone landscape.

Reference: Same as above

Meaning: In these lines Auden says that if one lives in the wilderness or lives in the city, what matters is living as one of "the blessed." Living without shame means "having nothing to hide," regardless of "what angle they are regarded from." This hopeful note, however, is quickly undercut. Addressing his fellow humanity as "Dear" for the second time (the first was at the beginning of this final stanza), the speaker claims to "know nothing of Either" angle or either alternative view of the fate of humanity and the soul. He tries out a view of "a faultless love" and "the life to come" after death, but he is not convinced. All he hears and sees are Nature's underground streams and the "limestone landscape," the wilderness of a cold reality and the puzzling paths of the mind's attempt to come to terms with it.

Comment: Same as above.

5.5. Summing Up

After reading this lesson we will be able to learn the poetic art of W.H. Auden. We know the definition of poetry, which Auden defines, how poetry can have impact on the society, and how a poet is recognized by the society. We come to know how Auden describes the shield of Achilles and what are the images that one finds on the shield. Besides the above said, we also learn how the young boys neglected God and everything and are enjoying themselves forgetting the sorrows of the people and the world.

5.6. Reference Books

1. S.C. Mundra, *A Critical Study of Selected Poems*, Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 2001.
2. R.N. Srivastava, *W.H. Auden: The Poet*, New Delhi: Doaba House, 2000.
3. Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_Praise_of_Limestone

LESSON - 6

GEORGE ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM*

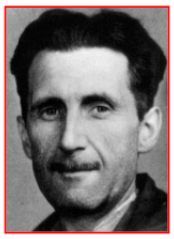
Objectives of the Lesson

a) to learn what is a fable
b) to know what is satire and its practitioners
c) to define allegory and its characteristic features
d) to know the central theme and conflict of the novel
e) to realize the truth that Orwell wrote the novel with a purpose

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

6.1. Introduction



George Orwell (1903-50) was born in Bengal. He was brought to England at an early age. He was educated at St. Cyprian's and then at Eton, at both with C Connolly. His first patriotic poem appeared in a local Henley paper in 1914. His pen-name was Eric Arthur Blair. He served with the Indian Imperial Police in Burma from 1922-1927. His experiences as Imperial Police are reflected

in his first novel entitled *Burmese Days* (1934). But later he resigned to escape not merely from imperialism but from every form of man's dominion over man. He then returned to Europe where he worked in Paris and London in a series of ill-paid jobs in a state of 'fairly severe poverty' struggling with rejection of his work. His second novel *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1935) describes the adventures of Dorothy, who through loss of memory briefly escapes from her narrow spinster's life to join the tramps and hop-pickers. In style, the novel uneasily mixes realism with Joycean experiment. *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936), which he wrote while working in a Hampstead bookshop, recounts the literary aspirations, financial humiliations, and shotgun wedding of Gordon Gomstock, bookseller's assistant. A journey north in 1936, commissioned (like J. B. Priestley's *English Journey)* by Gollancz, produced his vivid and impassioned documentary of unemployment and proletarian life *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937, published by the Left Book Club), and the Spanish Civil War (in which he fought for the Republicans and was wounded) intensified his political preoccupations and produced *Homage to Catalonia* (1938).

The threat of the coming war hung over his next novel, *Coming up for Air* (1939), which deals with suburban frustration and Georgian nostalgia in the person of insurance man George Bowling. By this stage Orwell saw himself primarily as a political writer, a democratic socialist who avoided party labels, hated totalitarianism, and was to become more and more disillusioned with the methods of communism. His plain, colloquial style made him highly effective as pamphleteer and journalist. He was literary editor of *Tribune,* 1943-5, and contributed regularly to it and other papers). V. S. Pritchett, reviewing his *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius* (1941), compared him to Defoe and Cobbett both for his 'subversive, nonconforming brand of patriotism' and for his 'lucid conversational style'. His collections of essays include *Inside the Whale* (1940), *Critical Essays* (1946), and *Shooting an Elephant* (1950). But his most popular works were undoubtedly his political satires *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), which brought inevitable comparisons with Swift. His first wife, Eileen, died in 1945, and he married Sonia Mary Brownell in 1949, shortly before his death from tuberculosis, an illness from which he had suffered for many years. His *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters* (4 vols, ed. S. Orwell and I. Angus) appeared in 1968 and his *Complete Works* (20 vols, ed. Peter Davison) in 1998; see also *George Orwell: A Life* by Bernard Crick (1980).

Animal Farm (1945) is a satire in fable form on revolutionary and post-revolutionary Russia, and, by extension, on all revolutions. The animals of Mr. Jones's farm revolt against their human masters and drive them out. Then the pigs become the leaders. Eventually the pigs, dominated by Napoleon, their chief, become corrupted by power and a new tyranny replaces the old. The ultimate slogan runs 'All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.' Napoleon, ruthless and cynical, represents Stalin, and Snowball, the idealist whom he drives out, Trotsky. Boxer, the noble carthorse, stands for the strength, simplicity, and good nature of the common man.

6.2. Background

6.2.1. Fable

Fable is a term most commonly used in the sense of a short story that is devised to convey some useful moral lesson. Historically, fable or parable has allowed writers to criticize individuals or institutions without endangering themselves. Fable often carries with it the associations of the marvelous or the mythical, and frequently employs animals as characters. Aesop's fables and the 'Reynard the Fox' series were well-known and imitated in Britain by writers such as Geoffrey Chaucer, Henryson, and others. La Fontaine, the greatest of modern fable writers, was imitated by Thomas Gay. Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* may be described as satirical fables. The form enjoyed something of a vogue in the 1920s and 1930s, in works by T F. Powys, D. Garnett, John Collier, and others, and has always been popular in children's literature.

6.2.2. Satire

Satire is a term that has come from the Latin term *satira,* a later form of *satura,* which means 'medley.' The word has no connection with 'satyr', as was formerly often supposed. A 'satire' is a poem, or in modern use sometimes a prose composition, in which prevailing vices or follies are held up to ridicule. In English literature, satire may be held to have begun with Chaucer, who was followed by many 15th century writers, including Dunbar. Skelton used the octo-syllabic metre, and a rough manner which was to be paralleled in later times by Butler in *Hudibras,* and by Swift. Elizabethan satirists include Gascoigne, Lodge, and Marston, whereas J. Hall claimed to be the first to introduce satires based on Juvenal to England. The great age of English satire began with Dryden, who perfected the epigrammatic and antithetical use of the heroic couplet for this purpose. He was followed by Pope, Swift, Gay, Prior, and other satirists of the Augustan period. The same tradition was followed by Charles Churchill, and brilliantly revived by Byron in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. The Victorian age was not noted for pure satire, although the novel proved an excellent vehicle for social satire with Dickens, Thackeray, and others. In the early 20th cent. Chesterton and R. Campbell (in his *Georgiad)* contributed to a moderate revival of the tradition, pursued in various verse forms by P. Porter, J. Fuller, Clive James, and other young writers. Satire in prose works continued to flourish in the works of E. Waugh, A. Powell, Angus Wilson, K. Amis, and others. In theatre and television the 'satire boom' of the 1960s is generally held to have been pioneered by the satirical revue *Beyond the Fringe* (i960) by Alan Bennett, Jonathan Miller, Peter Cook, and Dudley Moore.

6.2.3. Allegory

Allegory is a narrative wherein abstractions are made concrete for the purpose of effectively communicating a moral. It is called an extended metaphor in which characters, actions, and scenery are symbolic. Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is the greatest allegory in English literature. In the novel a man called Christian journeys to the Celestial city encountering on his way Mr Worldly Wiseman, Giant Despair and others. Bunyan uses personifications of abstract ideas. In an allegory

moral significance stands behind the visible presentation. In modern times, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen-Eighty Four* are considered to be the political allegories. The distinctive feature of an allegory is that it is a large scale exposition in which problems are conceptualised and analysed into their constituent parts and presented through personified symbols of abstract ideas and values.

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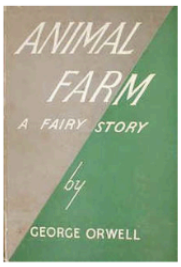
6.3. Summary



Animal Farm is an allegory and a dystopian (an imaginary place in which everything is extremely bad or unpleasant) novel. It was published in England on 17th August 1945. The original title of the novel was *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story.* But the subtitle was dropped by the US publishers and subsequently all. According to Orwell, the book reflects events leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and then on into the Stalin era in the Soviet Union.

The novel runs in ten Chapters. Old Major, the old boar on the Manor Farm, summons the animals on the farm for a meeting. In the meeting, he refers to humans as parasites and teaches the animals a revolutionary song called Beasts of England. Later he dies. After his death, two young pigs by name Snowball and Napoleon assume command and consider it a duty to prepare for the Rebellion. The animals revolt against Mr. Jones, a drunken and irresponsible farmer, and drive him away from the farm. They rename the farm as "Animal Farm". They adopt Seven Commandments to form the basis of Animalism. They are:

1. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
2. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.
3. No animal shall wear clothes.
4. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
5. No animals shall drink alcohol.
6. No animal shall kill any other animal.
7. All animals are equal.

Snowball teaches the animals to read and write. Napoleon educates young puppies on the principles of Animalism. Food is plentiful and the farm runs smoothly. The pigs elevate themselves to positions of leadership and set aside special food items, ostensibly for their personal health. Napoleon and Snowball struggle for preeminence. When Snowball announces his plans to build a windmill, Napoleon has his dogs chase Snowball away. Soon Napoleon declares himself as a leader of Animal Farm.

Napoleon brings out some changes to the governance structure of the farm. He replaces meetings with a committee of pigs to run the farm. Through a young pig named Squealer, Napoleon claims credit for the windmill idea. The animals work harder with the promise of easier lives with the windmill. When the animals find the windmill collapsed after a violent storm, Napoleon and Squealer convince the animals that Snowball is trying to damage their project deliberately. Once Snowball becomes a scapegoat, Napoleon begins to purge the farm with his dogs, killing animals he

accuses of consorting with his old rival. 'Beasts of England' is replaced by an anthem glorifying Napoleon, who appears to be adopting the lifestyle of a man. The animals remain convinced that they are better off than they were under Mr. Jones.

Mr. Frederick, one of the neighbouring farmers, attacks the farm, using blasting powder to blow up the restored windmill. Though the animals win the battle with great difficulty, many animals are injured and wounded including Boxer the workhorse. Despite his injuries, Boxer continues working harder and harder until he collapses while working on the windmill. Napoleon sends for a van to take Boxer to the veterinary surgeon. He tells the other animals that better care can be given there. Benjamin, the cynical donkey who 'could read as well as any pig' notices that the van belongs to a knacker, and attempts a futile rescue. Squealer reports that the van was purchased by the hospital and the writing from the previous owner had not been repainted. But in reality, Napoleon has sold his most loyal and long-suffering worker for money to buy whisky for himself.

Years pass, and the pigs start to resemble humans. Animals walk upright, carry whips, and wear clothes. The Seven Commandments are abridged to a single phrase, i.e., "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." Napoleon holds a dinner party for the pigs and local farmers, with whom he celebrates a new alliance. He abolishes the practice of the revolutionary traditions and restores the name "The Manor Farm." As the animals look from pigs to humans, they realize that they can no longer distinguish between the two.

6.4. Analysis

Animal Farm is an allegory or fable, a fairy tale for adults. Orwell uses animal characters in order to draw the reader away from the world of current events into a fantasy space where the reader can grasp ideas and principles more crisply. At the same time, Orwell personifies the animals in the tradition of allegory so that they symbolize real historical figures. In their own universe, people can become desensitized even to terrible things like deception, mistreatment, and violence. By demonstrating how these things occur in an allegorical world, Orwell makes them more clearly understood in the real world. For example, in Animal Farm's public execution, Orwell lays bare the matter of execution by having the dogs rip out the supposed traitors' throats. In this scene, the reader is led to focus not as much on the means of execution as on the animalistic, atrocious reality of execution itself.

Animal Farm is also a powerful satire. Orwell uses irony to undermine the tenets of totalitarianism, specifically that of Stalinism. It became the subject of revisionism. It became a cautionary fable in order to expose the seriousness of the dangers posed by Stalinism and totalitarian government. It was for this reason that he faced lot of difficulties in getting the book published. The allegorical characters of the novel represent specific historical figures and different factions of Imperial Russian and Soviet society. These include Karl Marx (Major), Vladimir Lenin (Major), Leon Trotsky (Snowball), Joseph Stalin (Napoleon), Adolf Hitler (Frederick), the Allies (Pilkington), the peasants (Boxer), the elite (Mollie), and the church (Moses).

The resemblance of some of the novel's events in Soviet history is indubitable. For example, Snowball's and Napoleon's power struggle is a direct allegory of Trotsky's and Stalin's. Frederick's trade agreement with Napoleon, and his subsequent breaking of the agreement, represents the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact that preceded World War II. The Battle of the Windmill represents World War II itself. Tosco Fyvel, writing in *Tribune*, 24th August 1945, called the book, "a gentle satire on a certain State and on the illusions of an age which may already be behind us." Orwell himself described "*Animal Farm* as a satirical tale Stalin." He further wrote in his essay, "Why I Write", that the *Animal Farm* was the first book in which he had tried, with full consciousness on what he was doing, "to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole."

The book is greatly inspired by real events that went down during the era of communism in Russia, using animals as the actual people. While it helps to know about that time period, the book is written so well that it is easily understood even if you only know a little about what happened during that time. The use of animals was a very creative way to tell this story, as it gives you a big incentive to actually care for these characters. Had this just been about real people, then it would've just sounded like anything you could find in your history books. Orwell finds a much more interesting way of tackling the topic. He gives life to every one of his characters and they all elicit some kind of a feeling from you. There are times when the book is funny, and then there are times when it is just downright chilling (the last chapter will stay in your head for more than a few hours).

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is a genuine masterpiece that quickly hooks the reader from the very beginning. It's an extremely easy read as well as an enjoyable one--not enjoyable in the sense that this is a "happy tale," but enjoyable in the sense that you really feel like you're reading something great. If you haven't had the chance to check it out, make sure you add this to your reading list. It is something that should be read by everyone at least once in their life, even if they don't end up enjoying it as much as others. I loved every single word that was written in the extremely creative read. This is an important classic in literature that shouldn't be missed for any reason.

Animal Farm is universally appealing for both the obvious and the subtle messages of the fable. While the allegorical characters and events are deeply or specifically symbolic, Orwell's narrator softens some of the punches by including a gentle and un-opinionated narrator. The third-person narrator is outside the animals' world. So he does not relate any of the lies, hardships, or atrocities in firsthand. Rather, he is a quiet observer. He relates the tale from the perspective of the animals other than the dogs and pigs. In this way, the narrator's approach to the story resembles Orwell's approach to life. His animal perspective, as well as his reluctance to opine, fits well with the naiveté of the animal characters.

One finds ironic humour in the novel *Animal Farm*. Some of the examples of ironic humour can be seen in two chapters – Chapter I and Chapter IX. In Chapter I, the narrator describes "Beasts of England" as "a stirring tune, something between 'Clementine' and 'La Cucaracha'" (32). Anyone familiar with those two songs knows that they are childish ditties. In Chapter IX, the narrator reports that the pigs find "a large bottle of pink medicine" in the farmhouse's medicine cabinet. They send it out to Boxer, who is deathly ill. We can assume that the medicine, being pink, is the

antacid Pepto-Bismol, hardly useful to someone on his deathbed. By lightening his allegory with ironic humor, Orwell makes the story more palatable without taking away from his message.

6.5. Major Themes

6.5.1. Animalism

The pigs Snowball, Napoleon, and Squealer adopt Old Major's ideas into a complete system of thought. They name the farm as Animalism, an allegoric reference to Communism. Later Napoleon and Squealer partake in activities associated with the humans – drinking alcohol, sleeping in beds, trading, which were explicitly prohibited by the Seven Commandments. Squealer is employed to alter the Seven Commandments to account for this humanization; an allusion to the Soviet government's revising of history in order to exercise control of the people's beliefs about themselves and their society. The original commandments are:

1. Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy.
2. Whatever goes upon four legs, or has wings, is a friend.
3. No animal shall wear clothes.
4. No animal shall sleep in a bed.
5. No animal shall drink alcohol.
6. No animal shall kill any other animal.
7. All animals are equal.

Later, Napoleon and his pigs secretly revise some commandments to clear themselves of accusations of law-breaking. The changed commandments are as follows:

4. No animal shall sleep in a bed **with sheets.**
5. No animal shall drink alcohol **to excess.**
6. No animal shall kill any other animal **without cause.**

Eventually, these are replaced with the maxims, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others", and "Four legs good, two legs better!" as the pigs become more human. This is an ironic twist to the original purpose of the Seven Commandments, which were supposed to keep order within the Animal Farm by uniting the animals together against the humans and preventing animals from following the humans' evil habits. Through the revision of the commandments, Orwell demonstrates how simply political dogma can be turned into malleable propaganda.

6.5.2. Totalitarianism

Orwell held the pessimistic belief that totalitarianism was inevitable, even in the West. According to Russell Baker, who wrote the preface to *Animal Farm*'s 1996 Signet Classics version, Orwell's pessimism stemmed from his having grown up in an age of dictatorship. Witnessing Hitler's and Stalin's movements from afar, as well as fighting totalitarianism in the Spanish Civil War, Orwell came to believe in the rise of a new species of autocrat, worse even than the tyrants of old. The pigs justify their

actions on the basis of their superiority. They are smart and need more nutrition than the other animals, to fuel their brainpower.

Orwell uses a cyclical structure in *Animal Farm*, which helps advance the idea of totalitarianism's predictability. The novel begins with Jones as an autocratic tyrant and ends with Napoleon not only in Jones's position, but in his clothes as well. Over the course of the novel, Napoleon essentially becomes Jones just as Stalin becomes an autocrat after pretending to espouse equality and freedom. Orwell cements this idea in the book's final scene, where he writes, "Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which" (139). The circularity of Orwell's story prevents the reader from imagining a better future for Animal Farm. After all, even if another Rebellion were to take place, its leaders would eventually come to emulate Napoleon.

According to Baker, technology turned out to be the force freeing people from Orwell's age of dictators. But "technology" can be just another banner under which to rally the people. While Orwell does portray technology as a source of progress in *Animal Farm*, he points out that it is useless unless it is in the people's hands. Most notably, even when the windmill is finished it is used for milling corn instead of its original purpose of supplying the animals with electricity in their stalls.

6.5.3. Intelligence and Education as Tools of Oppression

From the very beginning of the novel, we become aware of education's role in stratifying Animal Farm's population. Following Major's death, the pigs are the ones that take on the task of organizing and mobilizing the other animals because they are "generally recognized as being the cleverest of the animals" (35). At first, the pigs are loyal to their fellow animals and to the revolutionary cause. They translate Major's vision of the future faithfully into the Seven Commandments of Animalism. However, it is not long before the pigs' intelligence and education turn from tools of enlightenment to implements of oppression. The moment the pigs are faced with something material that they want – the fresh milk – they abandon their morals and use their superior intellect and knowledge to deceive the other animals.

The pigs also limit the other animals' opportunities to gain intelligence and education early on. They teach themselves to read and write from a children's book but destroy it before the other animals can have the same chance. Indeed, most of the animals never learn more than a few letters of the alphabet. Once the pigs cement their status as the educated elite, they use their mental advantage to manipulate the other animals. For example, knowing that the other animals cannot read the Seven Commandments, they revise them whenever they like. The pigs also use their literacy to learn trades from manuals, giving them an opportunity for economic specialization and advancement. Content in the role of the intelligentsia, the pigs forgo manual labor in favor of bookkeeping and organizing. This shows that the pigs have not only the advantage of opportunity, but also the opportunity to reject whatever opportunities they like. The pigs' intelligence and education allow them to bring the other animals into submission through the use of propaganda and revisionism. At the book's end,

we witness Napoleon's preparations to educate a new generation of pigs and indoctrinate them into the code of oppression.

6.5.4. Violence and Terror as Means of Control

In *Animal Farm*, Orwell criticizes the ways that dictators use violence and terror to frighten their populace into submission. Violence is one of the yokes from which the animals wish to free themselves when they prepare for the Rebellion. Not only does Jones overwork the animals and steal the products of their labor, but he can whip or slaughter them at his discretion. Once the pigs gain control of the animals, they, like Jones, discover how useful violence and terror can be. They use this knowledge to their full advantage. The foremost example of violence and terror in the novel is the pattern of public executions. The executions can be said to represent both the Red Terror and the Great Purge, but they stand more broadly for the abuse of power. For example, they are also similar to the Taliban's public executions in Kabul's soccer stadium in modern Afghanistan.

Killing *suspected* criminals, as Napoleon does, is quite another issue. The executions perhaps best symbolize the Moscow Trials, which were show trials that Stalin arranged to instill fear in the Soviet people. To witnesses at the time, the accused traitors' confessions seemed to be given freely. In fact, they were coerced. Napoleon likely coerces confessions from many of the animals that he executes. Orwell's use of the allegory genre serves him well in the execution scene. Execution with weapons is a violent and horrifying act, but many people have become desensitized to it. Orwell's allegorical executioners, the dogs that kill cruelly, portray the bloody and inescapably animalistic side of execution.

Terror comes also in threats and propaganda. Each time the animals dare to question an aspect of Napoleon's regime, Squealer threatens them with Jones's return. This is doubly threatening to the animals because it would mean another battle that, if lost, would result in a return to their former lifestyle of submission. Jones's return is such a serious threat that it quashes the animals' curiosity without fail. The other major example of fear tactics in the novel is the threat of Snowball and his collaborators. Napoleon is able to vilify Snowball in the latter's absence and to make the animals believe that his return, like Jones's, is imminent. Snowball is a worse threat than Jones, because Jones is at least safely out of Animal Farm. Snowball is "proved" to be not only lurking along Animal Farm's borders but infiltrating the farm. Napoleon's public investigation of Snowball's whereabouts cements the animals' fear of Snowball's influence. In modern language, Snowball is pegged as the terrorist responsible for the infringements on the rights and liberties instigated by the pigs.

6.5.5. Exploitation and the Need for Human Rights

Exploitation is the issue around which the animals unite. Initially, the animals do not realize Jones is exploiting them. For this reason, Old Major's speech is a revelation of momentous proportions. Major explains to the animals that they are enslaved and exploited and that Man is to blame. He teaches them not only what exploitation means, but also the fact that it is not inevitable. Orwell suggests that exploitation is, in fact, bound to happen when one class of society has an advantage over another. The opposite of exploitation, according to Major, is the state of being

"rich and free." Major's ideas about animal rights symbolize the importance – and scarcity – of human rights in an oppressive regime. Gaining freedom does not necessarily lead people also to become rich, but it is better to be poor and free than poor and exploited.

All the animals on Animal Farm are exploited under Napoleon's control, save the pigs. Even the dogs, which work closely with the pigs, are exploited. The dogs face perhaps even a worse form of exploitation than the other animals, because they are made into agents of intimidation and death. Whereas Napoleon exploits the other animals' physical strength and their ignorance, he exploits the dogs' viciousness and turns them into villains against their parents' wishes.

Boxer's life is a particularly sad example of exploitation because he exploits himself, believing wholeheartedly in Napoleon's goodness. In the end, Napoleon turns the tables and exploits Boxer, having him slaughtered for profit. By the end of the novel, we see clearly how the animals participate in their own exploitation. They are beginning to build a schoolhouse for the thirty-one young pigs Napoleon has fathered (perhaps an oblique reference to the "Thirty Tyrants" of ancient Greece). That schoolhouse will never benefit the animals that build it. Rather, it will be used to educate the pigs and indoctrinate them into the cycle of exploiting others. Throughout the novel, Orwell shows us how the lack of human rights results in total helplessness. However, though it underscores the need for human rights, the novel does not suggest how to achieve them. After all, once the animals expel Jones and gain rights for themselves, the pigs take those rights away and the cycle of exploitation continues with new players.

6.6. Summing Up

After reading this lesson we will be able to describe the central conflict in the novel, identify the role of the narrator and what Orwell may have intended to say through this voice. We can identify the primary themes and motifs in the novel. We also understand literary devices such as fable, satire, allegory, and metaphor.

6.7. Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write a brief note on satire.
2. What is an allegory and relate its features with the novel.
3. Discuss the Seven Commandments of the novel.
4. Consider *Animal Farm* as a satire.
5. Comments on the various themes in the novel *Animal Farm*.
6. Examine the failure of human effort to create a better society in the novel *Animal Farm*.
7. Why do you think Orwell chose to use a fable in his condemnation of Soviet Communism and totalitarianism?

6.8. Reference Books

1. Margaret Drabble, *Oxford Companion to Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
2. J.A. Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, London: Penguin Books, 1998.
3. K. Ramachandran Nair, *Literary Forms*, Chennai: Emerald Publishers, 2010.
4. Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_Farm
5. Full Movie can be downloaded from Youtube.

LESSON - 7

BERTRAND RUSSELL'S *THE CONQUEST OF HAPPINESS*

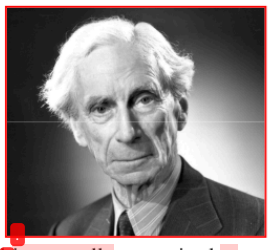
Objectives of the Lesson

a) to learn the causes of unhappiness
b) to learn the causes of happiness
c) to know the historical misperceptions that were common among liberal intellectuals of the day
d) to know the prose style of Russell

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

7.1. Introduction



Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872-1970) was a British philosopher, logician, essayist, and social critic. He was educated privately at Trinity College, Cambridge. Later he became a fellow of that University. He wrote voluminously on philosophy, logic, education, economics, and politics. Throughout his life he was the champion of advanced political and social causes. Much of his writing was relatively practical and ephemeral in intent. He successfully aimed at a wide audience. He also contributed to the most technical fields of philosophy and logic. Together with G.E. Moore, Russell is generally recognized as one of the main founders of modern analytic philosophy. He was also the inventor of the Theory of Descriptions. Along with Kurt Godel, he is regularly credited with being one of the most important logicians of the twentieth century. Over the course of a long career, Russell also made contributions to a broad range of subjects including the history of ideas, ethics, political and educational theory, and religious studies. General readers have benefitted from his many popular writings on a wide variety of

topics. His books entitled *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903) and *Principia Mathematica* quickly became the classics of mathematical logic. Other important philosophical works include *The Analysis of Mind* (1921), *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1940), and *Human Knowledge, Its Scope and Limits* (1948). Russell was awarded the Order of Merit in 1949 and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950. He remained a prominent public figure until his death at the age of 97.

The Conquest of Happiness is a prose work. It is not addressed to the learned, or to those who regard a practical problem merely as something to be talked about. No profound philosophy or deep erudition is exhibited by Russell. He has aimed only at putting together some remarks which are inspired by his common sense. All that he claims for the recipes offered to the reader is that the remarks are confirmed by his own happiness whenever he has acted in accordance with them. On this ground he ventures to hope that some among those multitudes of men and women, who suffer from unhappiness without enjoying their life, may find their situation diagnosed and method, of escape suggested. It is in the belief that many people who are unhappy could become happy, by well-directed effort, that he has written this book.

7.2. Russell's Prose Style

In the history of English prose, Bertrand Russell with his many volumes of essays, made a solid contribution to English prose. In fact he is one of the greatest masters of English prose. He revolutionized not only the subject matter but also the mode of expression. He has in him a happy blend of a great philosopher and a great writer. In the words of Cazamian,

> Bertrand Russell was not only the most important and original of contemporary philosophers, but also a genuine writer – a duality which incidentally is becoming increasingly rare.

The subject matter of his essays may be difficult but his manner of expression is so lucid and simple that even a layman can understand without any special difficulty. His style mainly appeals to our intellects and very little to our feelings or emotions. He uses words simply as tools to convey his meaning plain and effective and not to produce any special effects. He can condense an idea or a thought in a few words, as he knows that complexity of expression leads to ambiguity. Nothing can be more lucid than such opening lines:

> Of all the institutions that have come down to us from the past, none is so disorganized and derailed as the family.

Russell's sentences clearly show Bacon's terseness. They are replete with so deep thoughts like those of Bacon that we may elaborate them in countless pages. Many sentences are like proverbs, replete with deep meanings like:

> *Extreme hopes are born of extreme misery.*
> *Pride of a race is even more harmful than national pride.*

Russell's quotations from the Bible, Shakespeare, Roman and Greek writers, lend sublimity to his prose and make his style scholarly. Irony is another principal

instrument of his style. He ironizes the so-called modern minded people. He makes frequent uses of wit and humour. James R. Newman says,

> Russell's writings combine profundity with wit, trenchant thinking with literary excellence, honesty, and clarity with kindliness and wisdom.

Though Russell uses long sentences in his essays, the main link of the thought is not broken anywhere. As far as possible, he never leaves the idea in any ambiguity. As a result, all his essays are well-knit and self-contained.

To conclude, Russell is one of the great prose writers who wrote on almost all kinds of varied subjects with great force and confidence. The unity of his thoughts goes hand in hand with the unity of style. That is why his prose style exhibits his balanced personality. 'Style is the man' applies to him more logically.

7.3. Outline

The book falls neatly into two halves: the causes of unhappiness and the causes of happiness. The first chapter, *What Makes People Unhappy?* , can be viewed as an introduction to the book, and the final chapter, *The Happy Man,* as a conclusion.

Preface

"No profound philosophy or deep erudition will be found in the following pages. I have aimed at putting together some remarks which are inspired by what I hope is common sense. ... It is in the belief that many people who are unhappy could become happy by well-directed effort that I have written this book." [page 11] His belief and conviction that many unhappy people could become happy by well- directed effort may be hard to accept but he has a logic behind his belief.

The Causes of Unhappiness

1. What Makes People Unhappy?

"My purpose is to suggest a cure for the ordinary day-to-day unhappiness from which most people in civilized countries suffer, and which is all the more unbearable because, having no obvious external cause, it appears inescapable. I believe this unhappiness to be largely due to mistaken views of the world, mistaken ethics, mistaken habits of life, leading to the destruction of that natural zest and appetite for possible things upon which all happiness, whether of men or of animals, ultimately depends." [page 17]

2. Byronic Unhappiness

"It is common in our day, as it has been in so many other periods of the world's history, to suppose that those among us who are wise enough have seen through all the enthusiasms of earlier times and have become aware that there is nothing left to live for. ... I do not myself believe that there is any superior rationality in being unhappy. The wise man will be as happy as circumstances permit, and if he finds the contemplation of the universe painful beyond a point, he will contemplate something else instead. ... I wish to persuade the reader that, whatever the arguments may be, reason lays no embargo upon happiness." [page 24]

3. **Competition**

Russell paints a bleak picture of the businessman so obsessed by competing with other businessmen for success that the rest of life passes him by. "Success can only be one ingredient in happiness, and is too dearly purchased if all other ingredients have been sacrificed to obtain it." [page 43]

4. **Boredom and Excitement**

We have come to associate boredom with unhappiness and excitement with happiness, but Russell argues that boredom and excitement form a separate axis entirely, having little relationship with happiness. "Running away from enemies who are trying to take one's life is, I imagine, unpleasant, but certainly not boring. ... The opposite of boredom, in a word, is not pleasure, but excitement." [pages 48-49] The confusion of excitement and happiness, and the flight from boredom that it entails, is a chief cause of unhappiness. The cure is to teach oneself to endure boredom without running from it.

5. **Fatigue**

This chapter is actually about worry. Russell believes that such physical fatigue as people feel in the industrialized world is mostly healthy, and that only "nervous fatigue", caused largely by worry, is really destructive to happiness. Russell believes most worry could be avoided by learning good thinking habits, by refusing to over-estimate the significance of possible failures, by taking a larger perspective, and by facing fears squarely.

6. **Envy**

"If you desire glory, you may envy Napoleon. But Napoleon envied Caesar, Caesar envied Alexander, and Alexander, I dare say, envied Hercules, who never existed. You cannot therefore get away from envy by means of success alone. ... You can get away from envy by enjoying the pleasures that come your way, by doing the work that you have to do, and by avoiding comparisons with those whom you imagine, perhaps quite falsely, to be more fortunate than yourself." [pages 71-72]

7. **The Sense of Sin**

Traditional religion, in Russell's view, has saddled us with an ascetic moral code that will make us unhappy if we keep it (by denying us joy in life) and also if we break it (by causing us guilt). The only solution is to root this moral code out of our unconscious, and replace it with a code less inimical to human happiness.

8. **Persecution Mania**

This is probably the most amusing chapter of the book, as Russell uses his droll wit to puncture human self-importance. "My purpose in this chapter is to suggest some general reflections by means of which each individual can detect in himself the elements of persecution mania (from which almost everybody suffers in a greater or lesser degree), and having detected them, can eliminate them. This is an important part of the conquest of happiness, since it is quite impossible to be happy if we feel that everybody ill-treats us." [page 90]

9. **Fear of Public Opinion**

"Very few people can be happy unless, on the whole, their way of life and their outlook on the world is approved by those with whom they have social relations, and more especially by those with whom they live." [page 100] Fortunately the modern world gives us some choice about where we live and who our friends will be.

10. **The Causes of Happiness**

In general, the second half of Conquest *is not as impressive as the first. Not only is this section shorter than the first, but Russell has more of a tendency to ramble. These ramblings can be entertaining, but they are usually not very informative. I am left with the impression that the causes of happiness remain mysterious to Russell. Once the obstacles to happiness are removed, happiness just happens -- somehow.*

11. **Is Happiness Still Possible?**

"Fundamental happiness depends more than anything else upon what may be called a friendly interest in persons and things. ... The kind [of interest in persons] that makes for happiness is the kind that likes to observe people and finds pleasure in their individual traits, that wishes to afford scope for the interests and pleasures of those with whom it is brought into contact without desiring to acquire power over them or to secure their enthusiastic admiration. The person whose attitude towards others is genuinely of this kind will be a source of happiness and a recipient of reciprocal kindness. ... To like many people spontaneously and without effort is perhaps the greatest of all sources of personal happiness." [pages 121-122]

12. **Zest**

Zest is the x-factor that causes us to be interested in life. Russell has little to say about what zest is or how to obtain it. He does argue against those who would devalue zest by claiming that it is a mark of superior taste not to be interested in vulgar or lowbrow subjects. "All disenchantment is to me a malady which ... is to be cured as soon as possible, not to be regarded as a higher form of wisdom. Suppose one man likes strawberries and another does not; in what respect is the latter superior? There is no abstract and impersonal proof that strawberries are good or that they are not good. To the man who likes them they are good, to the man who dislikes them they are not. But the man who likes them has a pleasure which the other does not have; to that extent his life is more enjoyable and he is better adapted to the world in which both must live." [page 125]

13. **Affection**

"One of the chief causes of lack of zest is the feeling that one is unloved, whereas conversely the feeling of being loved promotes zest more than anything else does." [page 137] Unfortunately, considering the importance of affection to happiness, this chapter is almost completely descriptive rather than prescriptive. Russell describes the types of affection and evaluates their effects, but gives little advice about how to either give or get higher quality affection.

14. The Family

"Of all the institutions that have come down to us from the past none is in the present day so disorganized and derailed as the family. Affection of parents for children and of children for parents is capable of being one of the greatest sources of happiness, but in fact at the present day the relations of parents and children are, in nine cases out of ten, a source of unhappiness to both parties, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred a source of unhappiness to at least one of the two parties. This failure of the family to provide the fundamental satisfactions which in principle it is capable of yielding, is one of the most deep-seated causes of the discontent which is prevalent in our age." [page 145]

15. Work

"Whether work should be placed among the causes of happiness or the causes of unhappiness may perhaps be regarded as a doubtful question." [page 162] Russell places it among the causes of happiness for a number of reasons:

1. It passes time.
2. It provides an opportunity for success.
3. The work itself may be interesting.

16. Impersonal Interests

Certain interests are central to a person's conception of his/her life: career, family, and so forth. In this chapter Russell asserts the value of having interests that are not central, that have no effect on the major issues of life. Such hobbies and pastimes serve two purposes: (1) They provide an escape from larger worries, and distract the conscious mind so that the unconscious can work productively toward a solution. (2) They provide a reserve pool of interest in life, so that if disaster or a series of disasters destroy the pillars that support our central interests, we will have the possibility of growing new central interests.

This chapter contains an important tangential discussion of "greatness of soul" which we shall discuss, for your convenience, under the *Transcending Personal Hopes and Interests* theme.

17. Effort and Resignation

What Russell calls *resignation* is more popularly referred to these days as *acceptance*. The question discussed in this chapter is basically: Should we try to change the world or accept it the way it is? Russell takes a middle position, roughly equivalent to the Serenity Prayer.

18. The Happy Man

In the final chapter Russell comes back to his main point: attention should be focused outward, not inward. "It is not the nature of most men to be happy in a prison, and the passions which shut us up in ourselves constitute one of the worst kinds of prisons. Among such passions some of the commonest are fear, envy, the sense of sin, self-pity and self-admiration. In all these our desires are centered upon ourselves: there is no genuine interest in the outer world, but only a concern lest it should in some way injure us or fail to feed our ego." [page 187]

7.4. Summary

The Conquest of Happiness is the most wonderful and simple work written by Russell. The book is divided into sections on causes of unhappiness and sources of happiness. The unhappiness, Russell says, is rooted in attitudes like fear of public opinion, introversion, envy, and one interesting thing called the persecution mania. A victim of persecution mania is always asking 'why me?' and suggesting from their behavior that the entire world is out to 'get' them. They are unable to believe in others' good intentions and find it extremely difficult to be content in life. The most significant cause of unhappiness is diagnosed by Russell as self-centeredness. It is not possible to experience real joy as long as our thoughts, interests and efforts are directed inwards. Self-centered people are narcissists, megalomaniacs or victims of Byronic unhappiness. The former two always require praise, homage and power, insatiable things that are forever consuming them from within. The latter condition of Byronic unhappiness, a malaise that also plagues this reviewer, is an intellectual inconsistency in which people profess their disillusion with the world claiming to have come to the philosophical conclusion that the world is a mortal and inherently sad place where no joy is possible, whereas in reality their outlook has been shaped by limited, particular experiences which they use as a lens to view the general human condition through.

After analyzing unhappiness Russell proceeds to give the reader strong hope. Happiness is not dependent on fate or the coincidence of being born rich or beautiful. We can conquer it. Russell tells us how. We can find joy in simple yet essential things like family, work, love and healthy interests. Clichéd as it sounds, our mathematician-philosopher cites sharing a sunset with a loved one as a source of deep joy and further goes on to say that if we have never had such a simple experience, we may find it very difficult to find happiness in anything else. Most importantly, happiness is found in constructive outward activity. Take the example of charity or social work. If we are involved in them to feel better about ourselves, to improve our image as a good person or worst of all, to beautify our CV, we may not find the satisfaction we expect. But if the intention is to actually help someone, to alleviate someone's pain regardless of how it makes us feel, this would eventually introduce us to the joy of self-less giving. So the next time we feel up to taking a genuine shot at true happiness, try helping someone anonymously, try not to take credit for some great contribution and try to forget our sacrifices.

7.5. Analysis

Russell's *The Conquest of Happiness* work is based on two assumptions. First, happiness needs to be conquered. We cannot expect happiness in life without reaping our thoughts to be happy or putting efforts to be happy. Second, we have to put maximum effort to attain happiness.

The conquest of happiness is in three stages. First we need to learn about the principles that lead to happiness, next internalize them and, finally, put them into practice. If we can follow these three steps for each of the fourteen characteristics described by Russell, we will give ourselves the best chance of achieving not just happiness but also freedom from what the Enlightenment philosopher Spinoza called 'human bondage.' This framework is given flesh by Russell's analysis of the

fourteen characteristics of happy and unhappy people. Each chapter consists of a justification of why the chosen characteristic is good or bad.

Russell divides the conquest of happiness into two separate tasks. First is conquering happiness which will give us peace of mind, and then attaining happiness, actually living a joyful and zestful life. Russell begins with the characteristics of unhappy people, in Part 1, before going on to look at happy people.

Russell's analysis of widespread unhappiness is innovative in tracing its origin to social, political, and economic causes. He describes the causes of unhappiness by taking the lessons which he has learnt from his painful experiences. He identifies unhappiness as an imbalance between the willful part of one's personality and the healthy needs for physical and intellectual satisfactions. He says that some people are made unhappy by the thought that life is meaningless and that unhappiness is mankind's natural condition. Russell thinks that such people are projecting their passing fears, they draw false conclusions about the human situation from their own temporary malaise. He calls this sort of unhappiness 'Byronic Unhappiness.' Russell then proceeds to describe unhappiness as the result of a mother's faulty rearing habits.

His portrait of the 'frustrated mother and vulnerable infant' rings true. It captures well the actual life experiences of the 1920s era middle class woman living in Britain or America about whom Russell is writing. This mother is bound to the home and in service to birthing and rearing her children. It is her cultural role. As a result, her greater potential, talents, and hopes are sacrificed. To Russell, such a burdened and resentful mother will compensate emotionally by extracting obedience from her children, favoring the more compliant ones and humiliating the more rebellious. She will enhance her own authority by filling her children with unnecessary fears about their own independence, supporting this with a corrupt religion-inspired morality. That defective morality will, for example, restrict swearing and prohibit sexual curiosity.

Russell shows in painful detail how such a dissatisfied mother will produce a thwarted and exploited child. The child, he argues, will grow up thirsting for individual power to compensate for the lost love and the feeling of defectiveness that has been implanted in him. Self-absorption and self-aggrandizement are the key emotions that will shape this person's growing up and determine the direction of his adult life. Russell further describes how this success-prone individual will be haunted by all the signs of excessive egoism. He will envy everyone else's success. He will drive himself unmercifully at work. This will exhaust him so that only the strongest diversions or stimulants will be able to arouse excitement. He will also easily feel persecuted as he is never as highly regarded as he demands he should be. Finally, he will be constantly fatigued from all his exertions and be frightened of asserting his own tastes and desires as he struggles to preserve his social standing by remaining a member of the herd.

We just have to take Russell's own example of the unhappy man driven to ruthless competition to get the full picture. Russell lays it out as follows:

> The working life of this man has the psychology of the hundred yard race, but as the race upon which he is engaged is one whose only goal is the grave, the concentration, which is appropriate enough for a hundred yard race, becomes ... excessive. What does he know about his children?... He has probably no men friends who are important to him.... Books seem to him futile and music high-brow.... His life [is] too concentrated and too anxious to be happy.

Such a devitalized individual reminds Russell of the dinosaurs who killed themselves off despite being the most powerful animals to have ever lived.

In a few brief paragraphs, Russell presents us an impressive example of a wrecked personality. He expresses his feelings on the indictment of a capitalistic society. He says that the exploitive mothers, in a capitalistic society, in turn produce exploitive, but unhappy children. Later in the work, he gives us a way of finding happiness that liberates individuals from the indoctrinated view of puritanical capitalism with its emphasis on individual success and nationalistic dominance. Russell makes clear that happiness also needs a proper social milieu in which patients and individuals can have access to the abundant ways that the community and universe can protect and enrich people. It will take a more equitable social, political, and economic organization to produce happy people.

In Part 2, Russell projects a wider, truly visionary concept of universal happiness available to those who could shed the narrow confines of a life. He makes a suggestion to the individuals to free themselves from irrational impulses. He offers a plan for genuine happiness, asserting the values of zest, affection, the family, work, impersonal interests and resignation, along with the cultivation of broad and meaningful relationships with others. He advocates connecting to a wide variety of outside interests that are readily available to the average individual, some as simple as reading about the excavations or engaging in gardening. They could open up the unhappy personality to the rich world of stimulation and interest that never ceases. However, the egocentric, success-driving individual has largely discounted them because they appear so common.

Russell retains the humanistic view that we are part of the universe's creation, with lives that have been harmonized by evolution to fit into its rhythms. To Russell, these rhythms are alternating periods of renewal and quiescence, which allow for energetic activity but also safeguard contemplation. Once the unhappy individual readjusts and starts to experience satisfaction in his family and outside interests, he will cease to be a willful tyrant. He will not exploit himself and others for his personal glorification but become a giving and receiving member of the community and world.

Russell stresses on the individual's life that that is functioning in many areas against the destructive effects of personal loss and despair. He says that the broad-based interests can comfort one when death claims a loved one. He relates this with the story of a scientist. He says that a scientist with great intellectual desires may suffer a brain-damaging blow to his head. But if he desires the progress of science and not merely to contribute to the field, knowing that others would continue to pursue knowledge he valued, he would not suffer the same despair as would the man whose research had purely egoistic motives. Similarly, despair is more easily faced in less

dramatic cases when one has interests outside oneself. Russell gives as an example of this, the man who is engaged in absorbing work and is less distracted by an unhappy married life, than one not absorbed by interests outside oneself.

Russell also values equal development of the intellectual, sensual, and willful drives and warns against an unbalanced development. Not only does he stress the dangers of too egocentric and willful a life, but he also sees dangers in going too far in one-sided intellectual development or sensual indulgence. He esteems, instead, the balanced life where all potentials fit within the boundaries of health and fairness. These he sees as the formula for harmony, solidity, resilience and happiness.

To conclude, we may say that Russell's more powerful message is addressed to society at large: to create new social norms and programmes that allow happiness to thrive, and replace the striving for profits, unlimited growth, and dominance with a fair world that offers each of its people a chance for education, health, prosperity, and pleasure.

7.6. Summing Up

After a careful reading of the lesson, we will be able to learn the causes of unhappiness and the causes of happiness. We know how the disturbed human beings of this world can start their life afresh and be happier and make others happy. We discover the joy of human bonding and remove darkness from our lives when pessimism threatens to engulf us.

7.7. Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write a note on Russell's prose style.
2. What are the causes of unhappiness?
3. Comment on the causes that make us happy.
4. Examine the views of Russell on the psychology of a person.
5. Critically analyze Bertrand Russell's *The Conquest of Happiness.*

7.8. References

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LESSON - 8

T.S. ELIOT'S *THE COCKTAIL PARTY*

Objectives of the Lesson

The objectives of this lesson are

a) to learn what is a poetic drama
b) to know the contribution made by Eliot to the poetic drama
c) to appreciate the play
d) to understand the concept of comedy and how it is employed in the play

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

8.1. Introduction

T(homas) **S**(tearns) **Eliot** (1888-1965) is a major figure in English literature since the 1920s. He was born at St Louis, Missouri, and educated at Harvard, the Sorbonne, and Merton College, Oxford, where he pursued a doctoral thesis on F. H. Bradley. In 1914 he met Pound, who encouraged him to settle in England. In June 1915 he married Vivien Haigh-Wood, and in the same month his poem 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' appeared in *Poetry*. Eliot taught briefly during the war, then in 1917 began to work for Lloyds Bank. From 1917 he was also an Assistant Editor of the *Egoist*. His first volume of verse, *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917) was followed by *Poems* (1919). These two anthologies struck a new note in modern poetry, satiric, allusive, cosmopolitan, at times lyric and elegiac. In 1922 Eliot founded a new quarterly, the *Criterion*. In the first issue appeared, with much éclat, *The Waste Land,* which established him decisively as the voice of a disillusioned generation. He was regarded

as a figure of great cultural authority, whose influence was more or less inescapable. Later he wrote 'The Hollow Men' (1925), 'The Journey of the Magi' (1927), 'Ash-Wednesday' (1930), and *Four Quartets* (1935-42). His prose also shows the same movement. His title essay of *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928) praises tradition, prayer, and liturgy, and points away from 'personality' towards hierarchy and community, and in the preface to this collection he describes himself as 'classical in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion'. The same preoccupation with tradition continued to express itself in his critical works, and developed in part from the concept of 'dissociation of sensibility' which he had formulated in 1921.

In the 1930s Eliot began his attempt to revive poetic drama. *Sweeney Agonistes* (1932), *The Rock* (1934), *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), *The Family Reunion* (1939), and three 'comedies': *The Cocktail Party* (1950), *The Confidential Clerk* (1954), and *The Elder Statesman* (1959) were his poetic dramas. Eliot's classic book of verse for children, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* appeared in 1939. Eliot was equally influential as a critic and poet, and in his combination of literary and social criticism, he may be called the M. Arnold of the 20th cenuryt. Among his critical works may be mentioned: *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (1920) (which contains the essay on *Hamlet,* coining the phrase 'objective correlative'); *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933); *Elizabethan Essays* (1934); *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1940); *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (1948); *Poetry and Drama* (1951); *On Poetry and Poets* (1957).

8.2. Background

8.2.1. Poetic Drama

The poetic drama was inaugurated with great fervour by the poets like T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats. They defended poetic plays and waged a war against realistic prose drama of the modern age. This new surge of hopeful revival is based on the increasing realization of the futility of science and the growing understanding in the efficacy of faith as a formative influence in human life. Some poets of the contemporary theatre wrote 'religious' plays dealing with the relationship between God and Man, and more especially with that relationship as shown in the Bible and Christian history. It is believed that a return to poetic drama is the only way to deintellectualize the theatre and give it back the full emotional appeal. It is also said that the poets always wanted to write plays and were even haunted by the feeling that the dramas would be better if they were poetic. According to Bamber Gascoigne,

> The argument is that dramatic characters must be larger than life and in the same way dramatic language must be something higher than the members which Moliere's bourgeois 'Gentihomme' talked without knowing it. Some have carried this attitude so far as to maintain that there can be no real drama except poetic drama.

Twentieth century poetic drama has assumed different forms and shapes in the hands of different dramatists. Poetic dramas have been written on a variety of themes and subjects. Some plays have been written on the glorification and exaltation of religion and the church, while a good many of them have atheism and denunciation of God and priests as their subjects. Some poetic plays are symbolic and mystical in

character and quite a large number of them have Celtic mythology and Irish life as their subjects. Some plays have oriental grandeur and are inspired by oriental setting and splendor, while others have aesthetic enjoyment and glorification of sex-urge as their main spring.

Among the practitioners of poetic drama in the twentieth century may be included Stephen Phillips, the chief exponent of poetic drama in English, John Masefield, John Drinkwater, J.M. Synge, Stephen Spender, and Christopher Fry. These playwrights never hesitated to exhibit deep emotional feelings of characters thereby exhibiting an intensified view of life. To clothe, his vision of the intensity of life to intensify emotions, the dramatist has to employ verse as the medium of expression.

8.2.2. Eliot's contribution to Poetic Drama

Though there are many practitioners, T.S. Eliot is often considered to be the great exponent of poetic drama. In his opinion, the craving for poetic drama is permanent in human nature. He wrote a number of essays formulating his concept of poetic drama, and giving an impetus to the production of poetic plays. His *The Possibility of Poetic Drama*, *The Need for Poetic Drama*, *Aims of Poetic Drama*, and *Poetry and Drama* are pioneering works in criticism advocating the theory and practice of drama. He firmly and emphatically stated that poetry is the natural and complete medium of drama; that the prose play is a kind of abstraction capable of giving you only a part of what the theatre can give while the verse play is capable of something much more intense and exciting. In his *Poetry and Drama* he emphasized the ability of poetic drama to capture the elusive in life, comparing it to the vision out of the corner of the eye. His first triumph in the realm of drama is to revive poetic drama.

His *Murder in the Cathedral* is one such plays that deals with the theme of martyrdom of St. Thomas Beckett who returns to Canterbury after a seven-year absence. He receives visits from four Tempters, the last of whom tempts him to spiritual pride 'to do the right deed for the wrong reason.' The tempters are in fact only the projections of Thomas' mind and the conflict is more on the level of ritual than on that of strictly dramatic action. The eminent success achieved by Eliot in *Murder in the Cathedral* led him to write another poetic drama entitled *The Family Reunion*.

The Cocktail Party is a landmark in the history of poetic drama. It is a more ample play than the *Murder in the Cathedral*. In *The Cocktail Party*, Eliot shows an awareness of a way of life different from that of the saint. He comes to conclusion that both ways are necessary and none of the two is better. The exceptional person, the saint, has been moved to one side of the play and the Chamberlaynes and their social group, with whose salvation the play is concerned, is in the centre. Ordinary experience is thus brought into the foreground, and the play is concerned with the spiritual well-being of ordinary men and women. The plays relevance to the contemporary situation is significant. In moments of intense emotional excitement, the human being naturally expresses himself in poetry, and Eliot made such an expression possible once again by producing a dramatic verse which has grown from the contemporary idiom. Thus, *The Cocktail Party* is a remarkable achievement, a major breakthrough in the history of poetic drama in the 20th century.

8.3. List of Characters

Edward Chamberlayne – A lawyer. He is the husband of Lavinia Chamberlayne. The majority of the play focusses on his relationships with his wife and with his mistress, Celia Coplestone.

Lavinia Chamberlayne – A socialite and the wife of Edward. At the beginning of the play, she has left her husband, though she returns the next day. Later, in the play, it is revealed that she has just ended an affair with Peter Quilpe.

Celia Coplestone – A young socialite woman. She is the mistress of Edward Chamberlayne. She would like to become an actress. But she goes to England to work as a nurse in Africa when her affair with Edward ends. In the final act, it is reported that she has been abducted and killed by the natives in Africa.

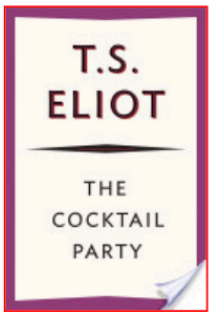
Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly – An unidentified guest. He is a mysterious stranger / psychiatrist. He plays a crucial role in the play. It is through his counselling, there is a sea change in the Chamberlaynes. In his capacity as a psychiatrist, he is the fashionable modern substitute for the priest, and his psychiatrist's couch is the substitute for the Confessional box.

Miss Barraway – Sir Henry's secretary.

The Couple's friends:

- **Peter Quilpe** – An emotional adolescent, rather affected young man. He belongs to the social circle of the Chambarlaynes. He has artistic tastes and is interested in music, poetry, and film making. He is in love with Celia while in his own turn he is loved by Lavinia.
- **Julia Shuttlethwaite** – A feathery minded, obtuse old lady. She constantly forgets her property and constantly pops in to get it. During conversation, her mind wanders. Her understanding of others is the feeblest.
- **Alexander MacColgie Gibbs** – An officious, interfering, good-for-nothing fellow. He boasts of his skill in cooking, but he often makes a mess of the dinner he cooks for Edward. His sincerity is above doubt. He is genuinely eager to help Edward.

8.4. Summary



The Cocktail Party (1950) is divided into three acts. The first act consists of three scenes. Between the first act and the second act some weeks elapse and between the second act and the third act, there is a gap of two years.

Act I, Scene 1 opens on an evening on a British couple, the Chambarlaynes' home drawing room. It presents all the major characters of the play – Edward, Julia, Celia, Peter, Alex, and an unidentified guest - in one place. Lavinia Chambarlayne, the wife of Edward is missing. The other characters are making friendly remarks and jokes on the absence of Lavinia and also on the absence of other members to the cocktail party arranged by the Chambarlaynes. Edward gives the party attendants a

feeble excuse concerning his wife's absence. Everyone becomes skeptical and prompts all to leave except Reilly, the unidentified guest. . Edward takes Reilly into his confidence and reveals to him his wretched state. He tells the guest where Lavinia is, why she is gone, and why he finds it difficult to contact the party attendants before they arrive. The first scene of Act 1 ends with Edward calling Celia over a phone. Peter and Edward discuss Celia. In Scene 2, Celia approaches Edward about their affair. She believes that because Lavinia has left him, she may continue her relationship with Edwards. They talk about their future. Celia, who loves Edward, wants to become Edward's wife. But she is disillusioned when Edward disagrees and informs Celia that the unidentified guest has agreed to arrange for Lavinia's return. Scene two ends with Edward informing Celia that their affair is over. Scene 3 begins in the afternoon of the next day. Lavinia returns. Both Edward and Lavinia throw sly remarks at each other in a bitter domestic quarrel. Edward regrets the decision to have her return. So Lavinia returns to business of completing chores.

Act II takes places several weeks later in the office of Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly, who is now clearly the unidentified guest from the Chambarlaynes' cocktail party. Throughout the act, he sees and consults Edward, Lavinia, and Celia. Reilly, the unidentified guest becomes a psychiatrist, asks Edward to come to the sanatorium so that he can meet another patient and speak to that patient. When Edward visits he becomes shocked as the patient turns out to be Lavinia. Reilly then chastises them both for lying about the causes of their upset. He reveals that Edward has been having an affair with Celia. But later Edward realizes that he did not love Celia. Reilly then reveals that Lavinia has been having an affair with Peter. He goes on to say that it was not discovering Edward's affair that upset Lavinia, as she proclaimed, but instead it was the end of her own affair with Peter due to his falling in love with Celia. This made her feel that perhaps she was unlovable and it was that fear that sent her into her own dilemma. He suggests that Lavinia and Edward are more suited for each other than they thought. Then the couple leaves after some further discussion.

Celia then enters saying that something is wrong with her because she suddenly feels more aware of her solitude. She even says that she is feeling a sense of sin for her failures. Reilly tells her that she can go back to her old life and learn to forget these realizations or she can engage on a challenging, terrifying journey and face the challenges. She chooses the latter, and Reilly agrees to help her. Finally, the conversations Reilly has with Julia and Alex before and after these consultations show that the three of them have been manipulating the actions of the other characters for some purpose, though it is not clear what it is. He recommends to Celia the path of martyrdom.

Act III begins two years later. Once again the scene occurs in the Chambarlaynes' drawing room where both Edward and Lavinia are preparing for another cocktail party. The couple is noticeably different. They are congenial and even tender with each other. The same guests from the first cocktail party stop in, with the exception of Celia. When Peter says that he would like to have Celia in a movie he is working on, Alex says that Celia died. Alex says that, Celia had gone to Africa to work as a nurse for a plague-ridden village of 'heathen natives,' and in the midst of social and political unrest, she was abducted and killed. When the guests listen this distressing news they express their wonder. Edward, Lavinia, and the others help Peter put her death in perspective. Then Peter takes leave. Harcourt-Reilly says that he is not

surprised by the news of her death because he has seen a shadow of the dead Celia at the first cocktail party, and that this was inevitable. In the end, Reilly recites a poem about life, death, and destiny. The play ends with both Edward and Lavinia wishing to see the end of the party and have some time to themselves.

8.5. Analysis

The Cocktail Party (1950) is a play by T.S. Eliot. It is often considered one of his best works. It is the most popular play in T.S. Eliot's literary canon. Eliot called it 'a comedy' and so it is. He has taken ordinary Wet End drawing-room comedy convention – understatement, upper class accents and all – and used it as a vehicle for utterly serious ideas. It is more accurately considered a modern morality play or a drama with hints of comic relief provided from time to time. It is also a profoundly thoughtful religious drama. The humour employed in the play is dark rather than light-hearted. Parallels have been drawn between *The Cocktail Party* and the Ancient Greek play by Euripides called *Alcestis*, as both involve the idea of bringing a spouse back from the dead. However, the resurrection in Eliot's play is figurative, or, at least, not clearly delineated. Norman Nicholson remarks that "the play succeeds, not because it compromises with conventional stage realism, but because its picture of a small and bizarre segment of society reveals something of the reality which is shared by the world outside that segment." In many of its details, the play burlesques Eliot's poetic symbols. It simultaneously offers a theme of serious spiritual quest. The plot structure is indebted to the traditions of ritual drama.

The plot of *The Cocktail Party* is interesting along with its profound meanings. It concerns itself with domestic relationships. Edward Charmberlayne, a barrister, is estranged from his wife, Lavinia. Lavinia is in love with a young film writer, Peter Quilpe. Peter is in love with Celia Coplestone, who writes poetry. Celia is Edward's mistress and is in love with him. Edward loves nobody, and nobody loves Lavinia.

The Cocktail Party is a clever, domestic comedy, and readily intelligible.in the theatre. Its main plot is concerned with the family life of the Chamberlaynes. Its action is laid in contemporary London and most of the scenes take place in the London flat of the Chamberlaynes. Though the Chamberlaynes hail from an aristocratic family, they are the representatives of average humanity. Their experiences, their joys and their sufferings, are those of ordinary men and women.

The Chambarlaynes have been married for five years. But their life has been dull, unhappy, and wretched. They are dissatisfied with each other. They don't find any pleasure in each other's company. They always argue among themselves on unnecessary issues that are common among married people. Each of them blames the other. Edward blames Lavinia that she is a woman whom nobody can love. She, in turn, blames Edward that he is a man incapable of loving. In order to prove to himself that he can love, Edward takes Celia as his mistress. Lavinia, in order to prove that she can be loved, turns to Peter. This clearly shows that there is a lack of understanding and sympathy between them. Domestic life cannot continue for long under the circumstances.

Lavinia, in order to save their family life, is persuaded to disappear for some time. Her disappearance gives a shock to Edward. It is during her absence, he starts a

process of self-exploration and self-examination. He realizes that he cannot live without Lavinia. He even thinks that there won't be any meaning for his life without his wife. He longs for her return. He feels glad when Reilly, a doctor, tells him that his wife will come back to him within twenty-four hours, if only he would promise to ask no questions to her. Edward feels sorry and the first sign of change in him is that he gives up his relationship with Celia. Being faithful to the wife or the husband is the first essential element for happy domestic life. From the moment, Edward knows that his wife is going to come back, he tries to be faithful to his wife.

It is all a question of right attitudes and the formation of right attitudes that is made possible by the wisdom of Sri Henry Harcourt-Reilly. It is largely through his efforts that booth the husband and wife come to realize their own faults. Through his counselling both of them learn that they should not find fault with each other. Lavinia says that she is a woman whom no man can love. Edward realizes that he is man incapable of loving. Such awareness of one's own weakness, such self-examination and self-criticism, as the Chambarlaynes have achieved, is the key to a successful and happy married life. They are offered a choice, either to choose the saint's way, or the kind of life that the human condition offers. They choose the latter. The advice that Reilly gives to the Chamberlaynes is of universal application. He advises them to

Maintain themselves by common routine,
Learn to avoid excessive expectation.
Become tolerant of themselves and others
Giving and taking, in the usual actions,
What there is to give and take.

A happy domestic life can be built up on these foundations alone. The last Act of the play shows them living such a life. They are considerate to each other and give a cocktail party together.

8.6. Themes and Techniques

The Cocktail Party is essentially a comedy of manners. It mirrors realistically the social life and manners of fashionable upper class people like the *Chambarlaynes*. Some of the characters in the play are witty, while others are bores or fops. Love intrigues and counter-intrigues play an important part, and form the basis of the plot. The main plot of *The Cocktail Party* bears close resemblance to a comedy of manners. It begins with a cocktail party arranged by Edward and Lavinia. It is a party in which the hostess Lavinia disappears from the very beginning, in a mysterious manner. The Chambarlaynes, their friends, and all other characters hail from the upper class society of London. They are primarily aristocrats. Alex's over-helpful and interfering nature makes him the conventional bore. The setting is urban and the story faithfully mirrors the ennui, the boredom, and the many frustrations of life in the contemporary waste land. Most of the characters, including Edward and Lavinia, indulge themselves in ample wit and humour, silly and meaningless talk.

Though Eliot has taken his plot and symbolism from Euripides, he has given it an entirely new interpretation and integration. Reilly combines in himself both the characters of Heracles and of Pheres. He symbolizes the spiritual savior as well as the psychiatrist. He also symbolizes the priest and the father confessor. His consulting

room is the confessional box. He is the magic doctor working wonders with his art and bringing about spiritual salvation and change of heart. The Guardians – Julia and Alex – symbolize the Divine or the Providence watching over erring mortals and setting them on the right path. They symbolize the supernatural, always hovering round us and influencing our lives in some mysterious manner. Reilly's being 'one-eyed' symbolizes the limitations of modern science, the psychiatrist.

Edward, in the play, is the counterpart of Admetus in *Alcestis*, and Lavinia that of Alcestis herself. Lavinia, like Alcestis, dies to her husband, but it is not a physical death. It is a spiritual death, and Reilly, like Heracles, is the instrument of bringing her back to life, i.e., spiritual regeneration. Heracles uses physical force to restore Alcestis to her husband, Reilly fights spiritual death with the forces of the mind and the spirit. Lavinia's return symbolizes spiritual awakening and regeneration. Both Edward and Lavinia have to undergo a process of self-introspection, penance in Christian terms. The presence of the Unidentified Guest symbolizes the interference of unknown forces into our lives, disturbing our feelings of comfortable security.

The Cocktail Party suggests an opposition between commonplace and heroically vital people. Of the four suffering characters two are men and two are women. They are paired so that each has an opposite on his own sex. They are opposite in temperament and in what is crucial to this play — the ability to love or be loved. By nature Edward and Lavinia are alike in being dispassionately conservative. Their inertia triumphs over will and imagination. Celia and Peter are imaginative and rebellious. Celia, however, is converted to patience, and by sublimation of the will she is led to attain a nobler calling than is possible even to imagination. Only Peter, upon whom the Guardians exert no present influence, still relies, at the end of the play, on his own forces of creative will. Will is acquisitive, but not necessarily selfish. Peter and Celia resemble each other not simply in the detail of being creative artists, but in their common ability to affirm through love for another. This is all that Peter has, and in losing Celia he can only retreat to his film writing. Celia more readily, in losing Edward, upon whom she has fixed her desire, abnegates her will to the service of holiness. Celia in submitting to the 'tougher self' accepts suffering through action. Edward and Lavinia, the opposites of Peter and Celia, both yield to tougher selves by following the advice of Sir Henry, but they have too much of the spirit of mediocrity to become saints. The vocation of Celia is not for them.

In *The Cocktail Party*, Eliot has succeeded in controlling his tendency towards extreme versification and has made an even further attempt to approach natural prose speech patterns. In place of versification and poetizing he has relied on ritual to carry the poetic rhythm of the play. Due to this ritualistic quality, the play still has an underlying rhythm pattern which maintains its poetic quality in a special sense.

8.7. Summing Up

After reading this lesson we will be able to learn what is a poetic drama, and the contribution made by Eliot to the poetic drama. We understand the summary of the play and analyze it. We will be able to identify various themes and techniques employed by T.S. Eliot in the play.

8.8. Self-Assessment Questions

1. Define poetic drama.
2. Write a note on the contribution made by Eliot to poetic drama.
3. Examine the plot structures of Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*.
4. Consider Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* as a domestic comedy.
5. Comment on the thematic concerns in the play *The Cocktail Party*.

8.9. Reference Books

1. Margaret Drabble, *Oxford Companion to Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
2. http://www.storyinsight.com/techniques/media/forster.html.
3. Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cocktail_Party.
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LESSON - 9
ANNOTATIONS ON T.S. ELIOT'S *THE COCKTAIL PARTY*

Objectives of the Lesson

The objectives of this lesson are

a) to make a detailed study of the text and understand it better
b) to identify the depth and complexity of some important lines
c) to learn the poetic art of T.S. Eliot

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

9.1. Introduction

You already know that an annotation is a key component of close reading. As learners it is our prime duty to make a thorough and close reading of the text. Annotations will be very much helpful for the reader to understand the meaning of the text and also meanings made by the writers. They help the reader understand the words and the slang used by the author. They make us explore why the author would have used a particular word or phrase. They help the reader in understanding the theme, context, and literary techniques that are used in the lines or in the passages. Analysis or interpretation of what is there in the text can be made through annotations.

As we work with the text, we have to think about all the ways that we can connect with what we are reading. The following are some suggestions that will help in annotating the text.

- ✓ Plan on reading the passages twice or thrice.
- ✓ In the first two readings try to find out the overall meaning of the lines.
- ✓ Third reading should be done carefully to write the Meaning.

- ✓ Summarize the idea of the lines in your own words.
- ✓ Meaning on the use of language and other literary devices used by the author.
- ✓ Explain the context of the lines.

9.2. Sample Annotation

1. *I know you're always the perfect host,*
   But just try to pretend you're another guest ...
   There are so many questions I want to ask you.

Reference: The above lines are taken from T.S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*. It is a drama, a comedy, and a verse play published in 1950. The play concerns itself with the private married life of the Chambarlaynes and shows how they succeed in working out a tolerable adjustment.

Context: Julia, Alex, Peter, and others have come to the cocktail party hosted by the Chambarlaynes. Lavinia Chambarlayne is not seen in the party. Julia is speaking to Edward.

Meaning: Julia asks Edward to sit down for a moment. She says that Edward is always a perfect host. He takes utmost care about his guests. Yet she asks Edward to pretend as though he is another guest at Lavinia's party. She even says that she has to ask many questions to Edward. The absence of Lavinia gives scope to Julia to ask many questions. She feels that it is a golden opportunity so that she can have a really serious conversation with Edward.

Comment: Love intrigues and counter-intrigues play an important part and form the basis of the plot. It deals with spiritual discipline in the life of the common man as well as in the life of the saint. It also communicates to larger audiences the themes of his poetry. Parallels are drawn between *The Cocktail Party* and the Ancient Greek play *Alcestis* by Euripides as both involve the idea of bringing a spouse back from the dead.

9.3. Annotations from the Text

1 *Without warning, of course;*
Just when she'd arranged a cocktail party.
She'd gone when I came in, this afternoon.
She left a note to say that she was leaving me;
But I don't know where she's gone.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: When Julia and Alex leave the cocktail party arranged by the Chambarlaynes, Edward starts speaking with the unidentified guest. He expresses his feeling regarding his wife and her absence from the party.

Meaning: Through these lines we come to know that Edward is rather unhappy. The reason for his unhappiness is that his wife Lavinia Chambarlayne left the house without any warning. He informs the unidentified guest that he could not see his wife in the house when he came in the afternoon. She kept a note saying

that she is leaving from her husband Edward and from the house as well. Edward is in a confused state of mind as he doesn't know where his wife has gone and when she will return.

Comment: Same as above.

2. *Who is that dreadful man*?
I've never been so insulted in my life…
Tell me about him. You've been drinking together!

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Edward and the unidentified guest are seriously discussing Lavinia's matter. Suddenly Julia appears on the scene and interrupts the conversation between Edward and the unidentified guest.

Meaning: The unidentified guest, while taking alcohol, starts singing a song. Later he leaves the room. When he leaves the room, Julia enters the chamber of Edward and enquires about the unidentified guest. She is horrified by listening to the song. As such she asks Edward to tell her about the dreadful man (the unidentified guest). When Lavinia is not in the house, Edward is drinking with the unidentified guest without searching for his wife. They are drinking as though they are close friends.

Comment: Same as above.

3. *I had thought of her merely as a name*
In a society column, to find her there alone.
Anyway, we got into conversation
And I found that she went to concerts alone
And to look at pictures. So we often met
In the same way, and sometimes went together.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Edward and Peter are seriously in the discussion. Edward asks Peter to tell him how he has come to know about Celia or how they know each other.

Meaning: Peter says that he always goes to concerts when he is alone. But a girl like Celia seemed very strange to him. He thought of her merely as a fashionable young lady, popular in society and frequently mentioned in the columns of the fashionable newspapers. One day, he got into conversation with Celia. Through conversation, he came to know that Celia too goes to concerts alone and looked at pictures in the picture-gallery. Due to this, he often met Celia and went together and dined together.

Comment: Same as above.

4. *I had never imagined such quiet happiness.*
I had only experienced excitement, delirium,
Desire for possession. I was not like that at all.
It was something very strange. There was such tranquility…

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Peter is in conversation with Edward. The intimacy between Peter and Celia becomes more and more. Often they meet and share their feelings. She speaks about their family members and about their lack of intellectual interests.

Meaning: Peter feels that Celia is in love with him. He is so happy with her presence. He says that he cannot express his feelings in words. He has never imagined such peace and happiness in his life. So far in his life he has only experienced excitement, excessive passion, and desire for possession. But this feeling is not like that at all. It is something very strange. The very presence of Celia brings him peace or tranquility.

Comment: Same as above.

5. *How did he persuade me? Did he persuade me?*
I have a very clear impression
That he tried to persuade me it was all for the best.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Celia asks Edward to tell her how the unidentified guest persuaded him to have Lavinia back.

Meaning: Edward says that he is not in a position to answer the question, how the unidentified guest persuaded him to have Lavinia back. He says that he even doesn't know whether the unidentified guest persuaded him at all. He tells Celia that he remembers very clearly that what the unidentified guest tried was, to make him believe that Lavinia's going away was all for the best. In the end, Edward says that what he wants is Lavinia back.

Comment: Same as above.

6. *It cannot be simply a question of vanity:*
That you think the world will laugh at you
Because your wife has left you for another man?
I shall soon put that right.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: When Edward wants Lavinia to come back, Celia tries to convince him by saying that she will marry and protect his reputation.

Meaning: Celia questions Edward's desire to get Lavinia back. She says that her return cannot be the result of a false sense of pride. She further questions Edward if he wants her back just because he is afraid of people who will laugh at him as his wife has left him. If that is the reason, she can correct the situation quickly. She can marry him and show the world that he is still loved by a woman.

Comment: Same as above.

7. *A dream. I was happy in it till to-day…*
And I waited, and wanted to run to tell you.
Perhaps the dream was better… well, it's humiliating.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: After listening to Celia who says that she was in that imaginary world in which she found Edward and herself were alone, Edward remarks that those who are in love have such a peculiar experience. Then Celia, who is shocked, bursts out.

Meaning: Celia says that it was a dream that strengthened her and made her delighted when she learned that Lavinia had left him (Edward). But now watching Edward's reaction, and finding that he wants his wife back, Celia's dream is shattered. She even feels that the fault lies with her. She gets a feeling that if she had remained content with the dream, she would not have been frustrated in that way. Now the weakness of dreaming of a beautiful world with Edward has collapsed and this humiliates her.

Comment: Same as above.

8. *That is the worst moment, when you feel you have lost*
The desires for all that was most desirable,
Before you are contented with what you can desire;
Before you know what is left to be desired;
And you go on wishing that you could desire
What desire has left behind. But you cannot understand.
How could you understand what it is to feel old?

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Celia learns the truth that Edward is very much interested in the return of Lavinia. She says that Edward doesn't have any right to take any interest in her life. But she doesn't understand why Edward wants Lavinia back, though he has never been in love with Lavinia.

Meaning: Edward responds to the question raised by Celia. He says that he himself doesn't understand why he wants Lavinia back. But one thing he has realized: he is a middle-aged man and realized what getting old is. He feels that he has arrived at the worst period in the life of a man. The period where he has lost the desire for the most desirable things of life, even before he is mentally prepared for such a change. He says to Celia that she cannot understand these things because she is still so young and cannot understand what it is to feel old.

Comment: Same as above.

9. *He is a feeble creature*
He has to come to terms in the end
With the obstinate, the tougher self; who does not speak,
Who never talks, who cannot argue;
And who in some men may be the guardian.
How could you understand what it is to feel old?
But in men like me, the dull, the implacable,
The indomitable spirit of mediocrity…

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Edward is the speaker of the lines. He remarks that he cannot be happy with her (Celia). Later he says that if at all there is any happiness, it will be the happiness of knowing the truth. One does not become miserable when his beautiful dreams are destroyed. And the boredom is not the result of the enjoyment of some ecstatic moments of joy.

Meaning: Edward understands that the course of his life was determined long ago. Any attempt to escape from it can only by unreal and deceptive. Even if he does, the change can only give him a sense of temporary escape from reality, nothing more. A person's self or the ego tries for the satisfaction of its desires, it is a weak part of one's nature, a stronger, silent part of the individual remains. This part of man's self is often silent and does not assert itself at every stage. In some people this stronger self may turn out to be a kind of guardian but in men like Edward it is the dull but unconquerable spirit of a mediocre person.

Comment: Same as above.

10. *We die to each other daily.*
What we know of other people
Is only our memory of the moments
During which we knew them.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Lavinia's disappearance gives Edward a rude shock. He feels that his settled life is disturbed. He realizes that he has taken his wife and himself too much for granted. Without her, he is nothing. There can be no life for him without his wife.

Meaning: The shock which is administered to Edward, leads to self-exploration. He is helped and guided by Reilly, who tells him that, such is human nature. A man is constantly changing and becoming different from what he is. The process of understanding one's own self as well as others is a continuous process. Edward doesn't really know what his wife is, nor does he know himself. He is keen to get her back to know himself and herself. This is the first sign of spiritual re-birth.

Comment: Same as above.

11. *What is Hell? Hell is oneself,*
Hell is alone, the other figures in it
Merely projections. There is nothing to escape from
And nothing to escape to. One is always alone.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Lavinia accuses Edward of having no sense of humour. Edward charges her with making him feel quite insignificant, and using him and his career as a sort of public background. She treats him as a mere nothing. Thus they seem to be quarrelling and relapsing into the kind of life they had lived in the past.

Meaning: Edward claims that he carries Hell within him. From that hell, he finds that there is no escape. He is always alone. Lavinia suggests that he should consult a doctor and says that she knows one who would be able to help him. Edward stoutly replies that if he sees a doctor, it would be one of his own choice. He accepts no one who has been tutored by her and who sees things from her point of view.

Comment: Same as above.

12. *Half of the harm that is done in this world.*
Is due to people who want to feel important,
They don't mean to do harm ... or they do not see it,
Because they are absorbed in the endless struggle
To think well of themselves.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Reilly, who appeared as the unidentified guest in Act 1 is the speaker of these lines. He suggests to Edward who came for treatment that dreams would only go to flatter ones vanity.

Meaning: Reilly, a character in whom one finds the features of Heracles and Pheres, listens to Edward who is haunted by his own thoughts as he lacks personality. He says that half of the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. They don't mean to do harm, but they do not see the harm they do. They justify it because they are lost in the constant effort to think well of themselves.

Comment: Same as above.

13. *Without her, it was vacancy,*
When I thought she had left me, I began to dissolve.
To cease to exist. That was what she had done to me:
I cannot live without her ...
That is what she has done to me in five years together!

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Edward is thoroughly disillusioned with the absence of his wife and speaks these lines. When he consults a psychiatrist, he expresses his condition to him.

Meaning: Edward is suffering from a nervous break-down. He is constantly haunted by a sense of his own insignificance. He is incapable of taking any decision or of doing any action. He has ceased to believe in his own personality. He wants his wife to return because without her he feels helpless, oppressed with a sense of his own unreality. Her very absence is intolerable for him. He feels that he cannot live without her. She has made him incapable of having any life of his own. That is what Lavinia had done to him in five years of marriage. She has made the world a place where Edward cannot live without her presence. So he strongly desires her and expects her to come back.

Comment: Same as above.

14. *And were not prepared to make the least sacrifice*

On her account. This injured your vanity. ...
To men of a certain type
The suspicion that they are incapable of loving
Is as disturbing to their self-esteem
As, in cruder men, the fear of impotence.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: After counselling Edward and Lavinia, Reilly speaks these lines to Edward. On the advice of Reilly, Edward and Lavinia sit together and exchange their views. They discuss their own life and come to a certain understanding.

Meaning: Reilly says to Edward that he was not prepared to make the least sacrifice for the sake of Celia. This injures his sense of his own importance. Edward likes to think of himself as a passionate lover. Then he realizes, what his wife has rightly said, that he has never been in love with anybody. It makes him suspect that he is incapable of loving. Reilly says that men of a certain type suspect themselves that they are incapable of loving. This is injurious to their vanity, as seriously damaging as the thought of impotence in less cultured men .

Comment: Same as above.

15. *And now you begin to see, I hope,*
How much you have in common. The same isolation
A man who finds himself incapable of loving
And a woman who finds that no man can love her.

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Reilly, while counselling Edward and Lavinia speaks these words.

Meaning: Edward and Lavinia discuss their problems and difficulties in the presence of the doctor. It makes them realize that they have much in common. They both have been in love, the one with Celia and the other with Peter. They both try to conceal their love-affairs from the doctor whom they have come to consult. They are both alike in their natures and temperaments. He is a man incapable of loving and she is a woman whom it is impossible to love. Therefore, instead of finding fault with each other, they try to understand their own shortcomings. They try if they might reach a sort of working arrangement and live together. The parting words of the doctor are "Go in peace, and work out your salvation with diligence."

Comment: Same as above.

16. *Everyone's alone — or so it seems to me.*
They make noises, and think they are talking to each other;
They make faces, and think they understand each other.
And I'm sure they don't. Is that a delusion?

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Celia comes to consult the doctor at the suggestion of Julia. Her trouble is a peculiar one, something quite abnormal. In this context Celia speaks these lines.

Meaning: Celia has come to Reilly for medication. She strongly feels that she suffers from two things. First, she suffers from a sense of loneliness. Secondly, she suffers from a sense of sin. She says that she doesn't want to be alone. She requests the doctor to say whether she is in a state of illusion or what she listens is only a delusion. She says that she can hear others who make noises, and think that they are talking to each other. She even feels that they make faces and understand each other.

Comment: Same as above.

17. *The difference that made to the natives who were dying*
Or the state of mind in which they died?

Reference: Same as above.

Context: Reilly, the doctor, is the speaker of these lines. He is a character with a combination of the qualities of two historical Greek characters namely, Heracles and Pheres. He assures the characters that no responsibility for Celia's death lies on anybody.

Meaning: Alex who has come straight from Kinkanji breaks the sad news of Celia's death to the people. Two years ago, Celia was sent to Kinkanji as a nurse to look after the plague-stricken natives. There she was killed by the natives and her body was badly mutilated. Her death is the natural consequence of her choice. Moreover, her life may appear a mere waste to them. But in reality her tragic end is a triumph in her life. She died as a saint and as a martyr. Thus, Reilly hints at the theme of the play that the sacrifice of the saint has the power to fructify the life of the common people.

Comment: Same as above.

9.4. Question and Answers

9.4.1. Consider *The Cocktail Party* as the revival of poetic drama.

T.S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* is a landmark in the history of poetic drama as it clearly solves the problems of poetic drama. The main problems of poetic drama are two. One is a suitable theme and the other is a suitable medium of communication. Traditionally, mythological and historical subjects are considered suitable for poetic drama. But Eliot feels that if poetic drama is to be revived in the present age, he must select the story of a contemporary life and to get a feel, poetry must be brought into the world in which the audiences live. Hence, Eliot selects the theme from contemporary life, with characters of our own time, living in our own world. Through this play, he demonstrated that poetic plays could be written with success on contemporary subjects.

The Chambarlaynes, though they are aristocrats, live and move in a world with which we are all familiar. *The Cocktail Party* is a perfect poetic drama. In the play Eliot shows an awareness of a way of life different from that of the saint, and comes

to conclusion that both ways are necessary, and neither of the two is better. The exceptional person, the saint, has been moved to one side of the play and the Chambarlaynes and their social group, with whose salvation the play is concerned, is in the centre. Ordinary experience is thus brought into the foreground. The play is concerned with the spiritual well-being of ordinary men and women.

The other problem of a poetic drama is the problem of a suitable medium of communication. Since contemporary audiences are used to prose, the dramatist should follow the ascetic rule of using the minimum of decoration. The use of prose also must be avoided, for the use of prose along with verse gives a shock and makes them conscious of the medium. In other words, the verse that a dramatist uses should be flexible enough to suit every scene and situation.

In *The Cocktail Party*, Eliot solved the problem of a suitable medium of communication. He has gone back to the root principle of English prosody, organization of stresses, and devised a line of varying length, but a fixed number of stresses, normally three. He has used a language and a verse which has grown out of contemporary idiom and rhythm. He has made it flexible enough to express every kind of mental state, and every type of situation and character. He has used extreme austerity in the use of imagery so that the readers get a feeling whether there is any poetry in the play at all. In this sense, the play is a remarkable achievement in the history of poetic drama. It does not transport us into an artificial world, but it takes us into the sordid, dreary, and daily world.

In *The Cocktail Party*, Eliot has succeeded in controlling his tendency towards extreme versification and has made an even further attempt to approach natural prose speech patterns. In place of versification and poetizing he has relied on ritual to carry the poetic rhythm of the play. Due to this ritualistic quality the play still has an underlying rhythm pattern which maintains its poetic quality in a special sense. Look at the following lines:

To approach the stranger,
Is to invite the unexpected, release a new force,
Or to let the genie out of the bottle.
It is to start a train of events
Beyond your control.

To conclude, one may say that through *The Cocktail Party* Eliot shattered the various prejudices against poetic drama. He showed that the play can meet prose drama on its own ground and also demonstrated that its range is much larger. In moments of intense emotional excitement, the human beings naturally express themselves in poetry and Eliot made such an expression possible once again by producing a dramatic verse which has grown from the contemporary idiom. In all these ways, *The Cocktail Party* is a major breakthrough in the history of poetic drama in the twentieth century.

9.4.2. Meaning of the plot of the play and its weaknesses.

The Cocktail Party is divided into two Acts and Scenes. It is quite opposite to Eliot's usual practice of dividing a play into two parts. The plot of the play is made up of two stories. The main plot consisting of the Edward-Lavinia story is in the tradition

of the restoration *comedy of manners* which had been revived in the twentieth century. It may also be called a domestic comedy as it deals with the private married life of the Chamberlaynes and shows how they succeed in working out a tolerable adjustment. The sub-plot consists of the story of Celia's martyrdom. The main plot is light and comic, while the sub-plot is serious and tragic.

The play opens in the London flat of the Chambarlaynes. It is a cocktail party. All the guests have assembled. But the host's wife, Lavinia, is not seen in the party. The host explains to the guests that she has gone to see a sick aunt. But the guests do not believe in what the host says. Naturally mystery surrounds her whereabouts. Suddenly, an unidentified guest arrives. Nobody knows who he is, and who invited him. As Eliot tells us, "He has tried in the play to see that the audience should be kept in constant expectation of something that is about to happen, and that when it does happen, it should be different, but not too different from what the audience had been led to expect." In pursuance of this aim, the atmosphere of mystery and suspense is kept up throughout the play. The mystery deepens after the party, because, Edward, the host, is seen in a drinking bout with the unidentified guest. The unidentified guest tells him that his wife would return to him within twenty-four hours, if only he will promise not to question her. The readers are curious to know who this man is, what connection he has with Lavinia, and how he would restore her to her husband.

The mystery is well-maintained in the scenes which follow. There is the mystery of the telegrams which bring all the guests who were assembled at the cocktail party, rushing back to the flat of the Chamberlaynes. Everybody says that Lavinia had sent them a telegram asking them to come there. But when Lavinia returns a moment later, she emphatically says that she had not sent any telegram to anybody. The curiosity regarding the whereabouts of Lavinia is not satisfied, for no questions are to be asked. Delayed telephone calls, unexpected visits and disappearances, the mystery surrounding the sanatorium, etc. all excite curiosity and keep up the interest of the audience. Suspense is there even in Act III, for Alex delays the information he has to give regarding the fate of Celia.

The sub-plot dealing with the story of Celia has a great significance and implication to the main plot. The conventional love triangles are shown in the plot. Celia loves Edward and is his mistress but she in turn is loved by Peter. Lavinia is married to Edward, but she loves Peter though he doesn't love her. Once the cocktail party is over, Celia tries to express her love towards Edward. She feels glad that Lavinia is out of their way and Edward is free to devote himself to her. But she is much shocked when Edward says that he is eagerly waiting for the return of his wife. The shock leads to self-exploration and self-examination. As a result, she realizes that she has been living all the time in an unreal world, a world of dreams. She realizes that she had been remaking Edward all the time according to her own dreams. In reality, he was a very different sort of person. She becomes aware that she has always been alone. She feels a nameless sense of sin. She reacts thus:

> It is not the feeling of anything I have ever done
> Which I may get away from, of anything in me,
> I could get rid of – but of emptiness, of failure,
> Towards someone, or something, outside of myself.

She feels that an ordinary life is not possible for her. She cannot make a life with anyone. Therefore, she chooses the way of the saint, the way of martyrdom. Thus, the two stories – main plot and sub-plot – are interlinked with the love of Celia for Edward and the consequences of its frustration, as well as through the impact of her martyrdom.

Though the structure of the play is clear, it has certain weaknesses. The Edward-Lavinia story is in a light comic vein, while the presentation of Celia's story is in a tone of high seriousness. The real fault lies with Celia's story. It is sensationally gruesome, too far from the comic and tame main-plot. Secondly, the specific detailed exhibition of death comes as a shock to the readers. We are told that Celia was crucified near an ant hill. This sensationally gruesome death could easily have been avoided. She could have been made to die a less painful death. As it is, it does violence to dramatic propriety and gives a jar and a jolt to the readers. Thirdly, the whole tendency of the main plot is to make family life look contemptible and worthless. The way of martyrdom has been exalted at the expense of ordinary married life.

9.5. Summing Up

After reading this lesson we will be able to learn the poetic art of T.S. Eliot. We know the meaning and significance of some of the lines that are there in the text. We may learn the inter-link between the main plot and sub-plot of the play. We will be in a position to analyze the text by applying various genres to it. We also learn the other technicalities that Eliot employed in the play.

9.6. Reference Books

1. T.S. Eliot, *The Cocktail Party*, London: Faber and Faber, 1950.
2. Raghukul Tilak, *The Cocktail Party: A Critical Study*, New Delhi: Rama Brothers, 1997.
3. Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cocktail_Party.

LESSON - 10
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW'S *SAINT JOAN*

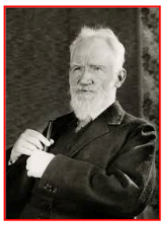
Objectives

After going through this lesson you will be able to

a. Know how will- power is essential for the progress and survival of human beings
b. Believe that wars spoil the brevity of human lifespan
c. Know that the play is on the life and trial of Joan of Arc
d. Observe how the church is more powerful than the King
e. Learn the fact that women are equally capable to participate in wars
f. Recognize the bravery of women who are strong like men

Structure of the Lesson

10.1. Introduction



George Bernard Shaw (26 July 1856 – 2 November 1950) was an Irish playwright, novelist, critic, pamphleteer, essayist, and orator. He is considered as the most significant British dramatist since Shakespeare. He was the father of the 'Theatre of Ideas'. He was born in Dublin to unhappily married and inattentive parents. In 1876 he moved to London, joining his mother and sister, and began his career by ghosting music criticism and writing five unsuccessful novels. He wrote more than 50 stage plays. His writings discuss social follies and social vices such as education, marriage, religion, government, and class privilege.

Shaw's dramatic output includes *Man and Superman* (1905), *Major Barbara* (1905), *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906), *Androcles and the Lion* (1913), *Pygmalion* (1913), *Heartbreak House* (1920),

Back to Methuselah (1921), *Saint Joan* (1923), *Too True to be Good* (1932), *Village Wooing* (1934), *In Good King Charles' Golden Days* (1939), *Buoyant Billions* (1948), and others. These plays were published with lengthy prefaces in which Shaw expressed his rationalist, anti-romantic, ameliorist views. He was a strict vegetarian and never drank spirits, coffee, or tea, and remained active as a playwright and controversialist until his death at 94. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1925 and an Oscar in 1938 for his contribution to literature and theatre.

10.2. Summary

Saint Joan is a play by George Bernard Shaw. It is based on the life and trial of Joan of Arc. It dramatizes the life of Joan, the Maid, based on the substantial records of her trial. Shaw studied the transcripts and decided that the concerned people acted in good faith according to their beliefs. In the Preface of the book Shaw remarks about the play thus:

> There are no villains in the piece. Crime, like disease, is not interesting: it is something to be done away with by general consent, and that is all [there is] about it. It is what men do at their best, with good intentions, and what normal men and women find that they must and will do in spite of their intentions, that really concern us.

Michael Holroyd, another critic said that the play is "a tragedy without villains."

Shaw characterized *Saint Joan* as "A Chronicle Play in 6 Scenes and an Epilogue." The play begins on a fine morning on the river Meuse, between the Lorraine and Champagne. The period is 1429. The story opens in the castle of Vaucouleurs. In the castle, Captain Robert de Baudricourt is complaining aginst his steward.

Scene 1 – The Captain is shouting because he could not get his daily supply of eggs as the hens could not produce them. Soon he learns from his steward that the Maid is waiting to meet him. The Maid is a young girl of 17 or 18, respectably dressed. She affirms that she has been sent by the Lord. She says that she would raise a siege against Orleans if he helps her. She also says that she will eventually crown the Dauphin in Rheims cathedral. These words make the Captain to think that she is mad. But others who listen feel inspired by her words. When she tells him about herself and her mission, he, like others, begins to feel the same sense of inspiration. At last, he gives his consent to Joan. The steward enters at the end of the scene to exclaim that the hens have begun to lay eggs again. De Baudricourt interprets this as a sign from God.

Scene 2 (8 March 1429) – The scene of action shifts from the Castle to Chinon, in Touraine. Joan, the Maid, starts her journey. She is received at the court of Dauphin, a weak and vain king. There, she tells him that her voices have commanded her to help him. At first, she tries to make him realise his duty in life. She offers to put courage into him. In the end, she asks him to become a true king by rallying his troops to drive out the English occupiers and restore France to greatness. Thus, Joan succeeds in convincing Dauphin and in getting help from him through her excellent powers of flattery, negotiation, leadership, and skill on the battlefield.

Scene 3 (29 April 1429) – The scene takes place in Orleans. Joan enters the scene and approaches Dunois, also known as the Bastard of Orleans. She complains to him that the soldiers have brought her to the wrong side of the river. But Dunois reveals that she had been brought there at

his orders. In the course of conversation, he tells her that he and his page are waiting for the wind to turn so that he and his forces can lay siege to Orléans. Later he requests her to pray for a change of the direction of the wind. Then suddenly a miracle happens. They look outside and perceive that the wind is turning in their favour. The sight of this change makes Dunois kneel down before the Maid. He offers his baton to her and promises to follow her wherever she may lead.

Scene 4 – The scene of action is a tent in the English camp. It takes place sometime later. In the English camp, Warwick, the leader of the English forces, and his chaplain, de Stogumber, are very angry. They discuss the battle that has just then come to an end. The battle is unfavourable for the English. Their conversation slowly turns to the Maid, who, they realise, is responsible for the defeat of the English.

They believe that the Maid must be a witch because there is no other way of accounting for the heavy English losses and defeats except by sorcery. Peter Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais who is about 60 years old, enters then and discusses the fate of Joan of Arc. Cauchon's principal intellectual concern is that Joan is setting up her own private conscience in place of the authority of the Church. They even discuss what steps they should take against the Maid. They plan to capture the Maid for she has taken upon herself the functions and duties of the Church. Warwick, who is not influenced by the concerns of the Church, tells Cauchon that the only way in which they can deal with the girl is to burn her as a witch. But Cauchon opposes it. He suggests that the Church cannot take that dire step without deliberations. But slowly, he is made to believe that the girl may be burned, if she is proved to be a heretic. In the end, both of them agree that the Maid must be put to death.

Scene 5 – The scene takes place in the cathedral of Rheims. Joan, after more victories, has finally been able to fulfill her promise to drive the English back. She even crowns Dauphin as the king in the Cathedral at Rheims. After the crowning ceremony, Joan is anxious to move on and capture Paris and drive the English from the city. But Charles expresses his inability for this proposal. He feels that he is content with what he has recaptured. Commander Dunois too is hesitant to start another campaign after all of the recent successes. Then they appeal to the Archbishop to decide the matter just then raised by the Maid. The Archbishop gives a chance to Joan to speak about her achievements. After listening to her, he gets the feeling that Joan is too proud and defiant to accept the views of others and listen the words of the Church. He cautions her that if she is taken by the enemy, then she will be burnt as a witch. Joan then realizes that she must stand alone in the same way that "saints have always stood alone," and that if she falls into the enemy's hands, neither the military, nor the state, nor the Church will lift a hand to rescue her.

Scene 6 – The scene begins, nine months later, in Ronen on 30th May 1431. Joan is standing trial for heresy. She has been imprisoned and in chains for these nine months and has been questioned many times about the validity of her "voices." After many complicated theological questions, her accusers force Joan to admit that her voices were not heavenly sent voices but, instead, came from Satan. After her recantation of the voices, her judges then sentence her to perpetual imprisonment and isolation, living off only bread and water. Joan rejects this horrid punishment and tears up her recantation. In the end, she accepts death at the stake as preferable to such an imprisoned existence. De Stogumber vehemently demands that Joan then be taken to the stake for immediate execution. The Inquisitor and the Bishop of Beauvais excommunicate her and deliver her into the hands of the English. The Inquisitor asserts that Joan was fundamentally innocent, in the sense that she was sincere and had no understanding of the church and the law. De Stogumber re-enters, screaming and severely shaken emotionally after seeing Joan die in the flames, the first time that

he has witnessed such a death, and realizing that he has not understood what it means to burn a person at the stake until he has actually seen it happen. A soldier had given Joan two sticks tied together in a cross before the moment of her death. Bishop Martin Ladvenu also reports that when he approached too close to the flames with a cross to let her see the cross before she died, she had warned him of the danger from the stake, which convinced him that she could not have been under the inspiration of the devil. He also announces that Joan's heart would not burn.

Epilogue – The scene is laid in the year 1456. After 25 years of Joan's execution, a new trial has cleared her of heresy. Brother Martin brings the news to the now-King Charles. Charles then has a dream in which Joan appears to him. She begins conversing cheerfully not only with Charles, but with her old chief accusers, who have now been condemned by a subsequent court, which has pronounced Joan innocent of all charges and her judges guilty of all sorts of crimes. The time then moves to 1920. An emissary brings news that Joan is declared to be a saint by the Catholic Church. Joan says that saints can work miracles, and asks if she can be resurrected. At this, all the characters desert her one by one, asserting that the world is not prepared to receive a saint such as her. The last to leave is the English soldier, who is about to engage in a conversation with Joan before he is summoned back to hell at the end of his 24-hour respite. The play ends with Joan ultimately despairing that mankind will never accept its saints: "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to accept thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?"

10.3. List of Characters

Joan of Arc, often referred to as The Maid – Joan is the central character of the play. Based upon the historical character, Shaw presents her as a simple country girl. She is uneducated but not unintelligent. For the public, Joan offers her brilliant ideas in terms of voices from heaven which speak to her. Early in the play, she establishes her superiority in terms of military tactics and strategy, always knowing where to place the cannons and other artillery. Until her capture, she proves that her military strategy is flawless. Her belief in the rightness of her own conscience and her refusal to yield to the authority of the Church, have caused others to call her as the first Protestant to be martyred by the Catholic Church.

Robert de Baudricourt – A gentlemanly squire from Joan's district, Lorraine. He is the first person of position or rank to back The Maid's plans. Through him, Joan is able to obtain her first armor and her first chance to show her military skills.

Bertrand de Poulengey (Polly) – One of Joan's first converts. He aids Joan in getting an audience with Robert de Baudricourt, and he later rides with her in the Battle of Orleans.

The Archbishop of Rheims – The churchman, who, at first, sees Joan as a pious and innocent girl, one who is in close service with God. He becomes disheartened with Joan when he comes to know she is responsible for crowning Dauphin king. Later he fights against her.

Monseigneur de la Trémouille – The Lord Chamberlain in the court of Dauphin and also the "commander-in-chief" of the French forces. He has been accustomed to bullying Dauphin, and, therefore, he deeply resents Joan when she is given command of the French forces.

Gilles de Rais (Bluebeard) – A captain in the army and a devoted follower of The Maid even though he is not a religious person.

Dauphin Later to be crowned Charles VII in the Rheims cathedral – Dauphin is portrayed as weak, sniveling, and unconcerned about matters of the court or of the country. He is forced by The Maid to become more manly and to assume an authority that he does not want.

Dunois (The Bastard) – The young, popular, and efficient leader of the French forces. He recognizes Joan's military genius.

The Earl of Warwick – The English earl in-charge of the English forces and Joan's most bitter and avid secular opponent. He demands Joan's death as a way of retaining the status quo of the feudal system.

John de Stogumber – The Earl of Warwick's chaplain. At first, he is seen as a vicious and ferocious accuser of Joan. He sees her in the most simplistic terms as a witch who should be burned without delay. He does not understand either the most complicated or the most subtle arguments concerning Joan's threat to the Church and to the aristocracy. However, the most dramatic change of the entire drama occurs in the person of de Stogumber; after he has witnessed the burning of The Maid. He becomes a weak, broken man who spends the rest of his life trying to do good deeds for others in order to lessen his guilt for his vicious attacks against The Maid.

Peter Cauchon – The academic theologian who represents the "considered wisdom of the Church." For him, Joan represents a direct threat to the historical power invested in the Church. He is proud that he has never asserted his own individuality and has always yielded to the opinion of the Church.

The Inquisitor – Physically, the Inquisitor should look like a kindly and sweet elderly gentleman. However, he represents the institutions of the Church in their most iron-clad disciplines. He believes strongly in the rightness of these institutions and in the collected wisdom of the Church. His long rambling speech on heresy shows him to be a defender of these institutions and one who rejects any type of individualism.

D'Estivet – The prosecutor against Joan. He is often impatient with the subtle questions of the court, and his case is based on pure legalism.

Courcelles – A young priest who has been of help in compiling some sixty-four charges against The Maid. He is incensed that many of the charges ("She stole the Bishop's horse") have been dismissed by the court.

Brother Martin Ladvenu – A sympathetic young priest who wants to save Joan's life. He is seemingly deeply concerned about Joan's inability to intellectually distinguish or understand the charges made against her. He feels that her only sin is her ignorance. But once she is sentenced, he declares her imprisonment to be just. However, he holds up the cross for Joan to see while she is on her funeral stake.

The Executioner – He represents the horrors of the stake. His other importance is that he reports that The Maid's heart would not burn.

An English Soldier – He is the common soldier who makes a cross out of two sticks and gives it to Joan. For this deed, he receives one day a year out of Hell.

10.4. Analysis

10.4.1. *Saint Joan* as a Tragedy

Bernard Shaw in his *Preface to Saint Joan* tells us that it is a 'high tragedy' and not a mere melodrama or a police court sensation. In a high tragedy, tragedy is brought about not by any villainy or by a conspiracy of Fate, but by pious and innocent persons, acting in good faith and with the best of intentions. *Saint Joan* is a high tragedy in this sense. Joan is burnt, it may be a heart-rending spectacle, but Shaw tells us that the tragedy of such murders is that they are not committed by murderers. They are judicial murders, pious murders, and the contradiction at once brings an element of comedy into the tragedy: the angels may weep at the murder, but the Gods laugh at the murderers.

Saint Joan is a high tragedy. There is no conflict of villain and hero. In this play Shaw has not introduced any villain. He has just whitewashed the characters of the Bishop Cauchon and the Inquisitor. In history, they are hypocrites, monsters of cruelty and iniquity, moved by personal reasons to burn the Maid. In Shaw's play, they are worthy and eloquent exponents of the Church Militant and the Church Litigant. They are disinterested, and selfless representatives of the Church, who genuinely believe that Joan is a threat to the authority of the Church, and who, during the trial, are sincerely concerned with justice and fair play. They even try to save her soul, and the Bishop forbids the use of torture. They kill her only because they sincerely and truly believe that such killing is necessary. Thus, the burning of the Maid is not a crime committed by black-hearted villains.

As a tragedy, *Saint Joan* differs from other tragedies, both romantic and classic, at least in two important respects. Firstly, Shaw has made a saint, the heroine of his tragedy. Now saints have been considered as suitable heroes or heroines for tragedies. For one thing they are not people of action, and so the tragedy tends to become static. Shaw has overcome this difficulty by making his heroine 'a combative saint,' a saint who is also remarkably swift in action, one who strikes hard at established authority. But the saint as hero suffers from another limitation. In a tragedy, there is a reversal of fortune, and this reversal, this fall from grace, is brought about by some fault or error of judgment on the part of the hero. But the very conception of sainthood implies perfection. The saint has achieved perfection, he has no faults of character, and is incapable of making any errors, and so his fall cannot be the result of his own actions. In the case of Joan, critics pointed out that she has faults of character, and she commits error of judgment. She is vain, conceited, presumptuous, and that she is too impetuous and hasty by her own actions. But such views arise only from a superficial reading of the play. Joan is divinely inspired, her pride is a pride in her own saintliness and divine mission, and as she is divinely guided she cannot commit any mistake. As a matter of fact, the fault lies not in Joan, but in those who sent her to the stake. Thus, the tragedy of Joan is the tragedy of Christ but not hers.

Another peculiarity of *Saint Joan* as a tragedy is the addition of an Epilogue. Normally a tragedy comes to an end with the death of the hero or the heroine, nothing more is added after the final catastrophe so that the tragic effect may not be weakened or dissipated. It is for this reason that critic after critic has considered the *Epilogue* not only a superfluity, but also a serious fault. However, it must be remembered that the tragedy of Joan is not only the tragedy of an individual, but a continuing tragedy, a tragedy which is repeated in every age and country. Joan's tragedy is not a conclusive but a continuing phenomenon. This is emphasized by the Epilogue. As Shaw tells us in the Preface, the story of Joan did not end with her burning, rather it began with it. The burning of a woman is a common everyday occurrence. Accidents do happen and women get burnt. In Joan's case it is not the burning which is significant, but the canonization which is the consequence of it. This aspect of Joan's tragedy is highlighted by the *Epilogue*. Through the *Epilogue*, the dramatist has shown the remorse which overtook the most determined of her opponents, and also that though her body perished, her spirit conquered. The *Epilogue* infuses an element of comedy into the tragedy, and thus transforms it into a noble work of art.

It is through the *Epilogue* that Shaw has harmonized the comedy of impersonal evolution with the tragedy of personal death. According to Shaw's philosophy, Joan is a 'genius,' a 'vital genius,' the instrument of the Life Force for carrying life to higher and higher levels of Evolution. She symbolizes the Evolutionary will, the ceaseless upward striving of the Life Force, which comes into conflict with established authority. The struggle might be tragic on the individual plane, but it leads to the comedy of human evolution. Successive stages in the evolution of Joan as a saint,

symbolize the successive stages in the evolution of humanity. In short, *Saint Joan* is a great tragedy with a number of peculiarities of its own.

10.4.2. Importance of the Epilogue in *Saint Joan*

Bernard Shaw is the most powerful playwright who has stirred the imagination of the theatre goers in the later half of the 19th century. He wrote the plays that are called 'Problem Plays' which raised the social and moral consciousness of the people of his times. Wilson Knights remarks thus: "Shaw's thinking may be related metaphysically to Goethe and Lamarck and dramatically to Wagner and Ibsen."

Shaw's *Saint Joan* deals with the life of Joan of Arc, a fifteenth century French girl who very much wanted to drive away the aliens from her native land. The first six scenes of the play deal with the way in which she succeeds in winning her object and ambition of crowning Dauphin, the king of France. All these contribute to her death. But Shaw added one more scene as the Epilogue which occupies a prominent place. Shaw himself says thus:

> As to the Epilogue, I could hardly be expected to stultify myself by implying than Joan's history in the world ended unhappy by her execution, instead of beginning there.

These words of the author prove that he paid great importance not merely to the story of the life and death of Joan, but to the moral excellence of the girl who was canonized. The canonization was even more important in view of the fact that a great thing has been achieved by her. Though the play ends practically in the sixth scene, the real merit of the girl cannot be understood without the Epilogue. It is here that Shaw summarizes all the aftermath of the martyrdom of Joan.

The Epilogue describes the tributes that are paid to Joan after she is burnt as a witch. Men like Dauphin, Charles the victorious, the Bishop, Cauchon, De Stogumber and others prove that the burning of Joan was a mis-happening and should have been avoided. Charles says thus, "The unpretending praise thee, because thou has taken upon thyself the heroic burdens that are too heavy for them." Cauchon follows and says "The girls in the field praise thee, for thou has raised their eyes; and they see that there is nothing between them and heaven." These lines show that they are well aware of the heroic qualities exhibited by Joan and how such heroism has been responsible for the success of her mission. The dramatist reveals here that there is much evil in the world and that however much people may talk highly of people who are dead and gone, they will not willingly allow the departed noble souls to come back. The concluding words of Joan run thus: "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long!" The pathos of these words is unforgettable and these words clearly reveal that more than the death of Joan, her canonization is of greater significance. These significant factors would not have been brought about had it not been for the epilogue. A.C. Wards aptly remarks that "Without the Epilogue, the play will be like taking away the brain from the body."

10.4.3. Character of Saint Joan

Shaw's *Saint Joan* is one of the highly regarded plays. He always considered himself as a social reformer who would reform the society by his plays. He wrote the play *Saint Joan* to revive the dying national spirit in countrymen. The play has a good structure and very objective characterization.

Joan of Arc, a village girl, was born in 1412 and she was burnt for heresy and witchcraft at Roven in 1431. She is the most notable warrior saint in the Christian calendar. Though a devout catholic she was the first protestant martyr. She was the first to introduce Napoleonic realism in the battle field. She became the pioneer of two great movements, nationalism and Protestantism. She was the first woman to think of a rational dress for women and she never accepted the traditional role of a woman. Even before Joan comes on the scene, we are told of her miracles. The hens have stopped laying eggs. The foul mouths have stopped swearing before her. Robert is convinced that there is something about her. She easily picks out Dauphin from the row of courtiers and impresses the Archbishop who declares that the Maid has to be obeyed, as she has come with the blessings of God. She crowns Dauphin at the Cathedral. In a short time she turns every one against her. She blames the generals to their face and expects the Archbishop to confirm her virtues. She is surprised to find that even Charles, whom she has crowned, is not on her side.

The Archbishop declares that she is committing the sin of "pride and disobedience." Dunois advises her to stop her military campaigns as they do not have money to ransom her if she gets caught. To all this Joan says that she will go on daring in the name of God. She says that France is alone and God is alone and in this loneliness lies strength. She is captured by the English soldiers and the Earl of Warwick regards her death a political necessity. Her ideas of nationalism are not liked by the nobility. The idea of France for French speaking people and England for English speaking people makes the clergymen believe that the voices of Joan (or) the evil voices of devil are leading her to her damnation. The holy Saint Catherine and Margaret would speak through the Church rather than through an illiterate girl like Joan.
She is crushed between two mighty forces of law and church. Peter Cauchon and the Inquisitor try to change her mind in the most fair manner but fail to make it and in the end they pronounce the death sentence on her. She is burnt at the market place. The executioner ,who is a master in his craft, fails to burn her heart. De Stogumber returns sobbing from the burning place and declares her blessedness.

In the Epilogue, nearly five centuries get compressed and Joan is justified. She is rehabilitated and declared as blessed and designated venerable and finally canonized in 1920. Dunois exclaims that it is half an hour to burn her but five centuries to know the truth about her. In the Epilogue she asks Charles whether they want her to come back. To this everyone says that they cannot distinguish between a saint and a heretic with mortal eyes. If she should come back, she would again go to the stake in six months, in spite of all the present love and adoration. Joan wonders when the world will be ready to receive the saints of God. She says "how long, O Lord how long!"

10.5. Summing Up

Through this lesson, you will come to know about Shaw's *Saint Joan* that gives a picture of the life of a simple rustic girl. You will learn how a country girl rose to a very high level whose powers were recognized and was canonized as a saint later. You will be in a position to say that *Saint Joan* is a tragedy. You will identify the significance of the Epilogue in the play. You will also observe the bravery which Joan exhibits in the play not only to protect her country but also to drive away the English forces from the French land. Though it is written in brief, it may give a comprehensive account on the play. The following references and links will help you in a better understanding of the play.

10.6.Comprehension Check Questions

1. What is the theme of the play Saint Joan?
2. Consider Shaw's *Saint Joan* as a tragedy.
3. Write a note on the importance of Epilogue in Shaw's *Saint Joan*.
4. *Saint Joan* without the Epilogue would be a much poorer play.Justify
5. Sketch the character of Saint Joan in the play.
6. Saint Joan as a tragic heroine.
7. Examine *Saint Joan* as a record of what mankind does to its saints and geniuses.
8. *Saint Joan* is not only a great play, but a religious play. Explain.
9. *Saint Joan* is a Romantic drama about a young girl of lowly origin – Elucidate.

10.7.References

1. Dinah Birch, 2009. *Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. George Bernard Shaw, 1984. *Saint Joan*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
3. Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Joan_(play)
4. Gradesaver, http://www.gradesaver.com/saint-joan/wikipedia/
5. Dan H. Lawrence, 1970-74. *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw; Collected Plays with their Prefaces*. 7 Volumes, Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

10.8.E-Links of the text/movie

1. You can download the film from the links below:
   https://torrentz.eu/a89a66b6c21e0e7882d049e76944c306f1bdee82
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAaj4gBQSOg
2. You can download the full-text from the link given below:
   http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200811h.html
3. You can download the PPT from the link given below:
   https://madameshackelford.wikispaces.com/file/view/Saint+Joan.ppt

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LESSON - 11

E.M. FORSTER'S *A PASSAGE TO INDIA*

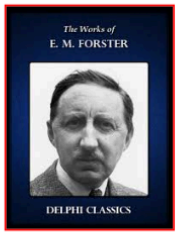
Objectives of the Lesson

a) to know what are the 'Aspects of the Novel'
b) to know about the life and works of E.M. Forster
c) to learn what is colonialism and how it is used in the novel
d) to appreciate the novel *A Passage to India*
e) to understand the situation of India during pre-Independence period

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

11.1. Introduction



E(dward) **M**(organ) **Forster** (1879-1970) was born in 1879. His boyhood was dominated by women, among them being his influential great-aunt and benefactress Marianne Thornton. His happiest childhood years (1883-93) were spent at Rooksnest, Stevenage. In 1893 he and his mother moved to Tonbridge, and Forster attended Tonbridge School, where he was deeply unhappy and developed a lasting dislike of public-school values. In 1897 he went to King's College, Cambridge, where he found congenial friends. The atmosphere of free intellectual discussion and a stress on the importance of personal relationships inspired partly by G. E. Moore, had a profound influence on his work. A year of travel in Italy with his mother and a cruise to Greece followed,

providing material for his early novels, which satirize the attitudes of English tourists abroad, Baedeker in hand, clinging to English *pensioni,* and suspicious of anything foreign.

On his return from Greece he began to write for the new *Independent Review* and published his first short story, 'The Story of a Panic' in 1904. Next year he completed *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. *The Longest Journey* appeared in 1907, *A Room with a View* in 1908, and *Howards End,* which established Forster as a writer of importance, in 1910. In 1911 he published a collection of short stories *The Celestial Omnibus*, mostly pastoral and whimsical in tone and subject matter. In 1913 his significant visit to the home of E. Carpenter near Chesterfield resulted in his writing *Maurice,* a novel with a homosexual theme which he circulated privately. It was published posthumously in 1971. His *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* was published somewhat abortively in 1922 (almost the entire stock was burned) and reprinted in revised form in 1938. *A Passage to India* appeared in June 1924. It was highly acclaimed and won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction. Forster's fears that this would be his last novel proved correct, and the remainder of his life was devoted to a wide range of literary activities. In 1927 he delivered the Clark Lectures at Cambridge. Those lectures are printed in the form of a book entitled *Aspects of the Novel.* In 1928, he published an anthology *The Eternal Moment,* a volume of pre-1914 short stories. He wrote two biographies, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (1934) and *Marianne Thornton* (1956).

11.2. Background

11.2.1. Aspects of the Novel

In 1927 E.M. Forster gave a series of lectures which were later published as *Aspects of the Novel*. His observations, in the book, are a primer in the essentials of storytelling. He discusses seven aspects he deems universal to the novel. They are story, characters, plot, fantasy, prophecy, pattern, and rhythm.

A story is a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence. It simply tells us what happened and in what order. It is the time sequence which turns a random collection of episodes into a story. The only skill of a storyteller is his ability to wield the weapon of suspense, making the audience eager to discover the next event in the sequence. Value has no role in a story, which is concerned with the life in time rather than the life by values. The basis of a novel is a story – the narration of events in the order they happened – but storytelling alone can never produce a great novel.

A novelist can only begin to explore the value of human experiences by developing the characters of the story. But Forster emphasizes that characters are not real people. Rather they are *like* real people. Characters' lives are different from real lives. According to Forster, characters are of two types namely flat characters and round characters. The flat characters are easily recognized when first introduced. They are

easily remembered. They are best when they are comic. But round characters have further dimension to their personality. They are revealed as events demand them. Flat characters never surprise us with their behaviour. But round characters may well surprise us with these unsuspected aspects of their nature.

A plot, like a story, is also a narrative of events, but the emphasis falling on casuality. 'The King died and then the Queen died,' is a story. 'The King died and then the Queen died of grief,' is a plot. If it is in a story we say 'and then?' If it is in a plot we ask 'why?' A plot demands intelligence and memory on the part of the reader, to remember incidents and create connecting threads between them. This allows the novelist to delay explanations and introduce human mystery to the narrative. Mystery is essential to a plot, and cannot be appreciated without intelligence.

Forster regards Fantasy and Prophecy as central aspects of the great novel. They provide a sense of the "universal," or spiritual. Fantasy implies the supernatural. It may do this by no more than simply hinting through a magical quality in events. He includes parodies and adaptations of earlier work as forms of fantasy which allow another writer's imagination to take flight. Prophecy, on the other hand, is an accent in the novelist's voice. His theme is the universe or something universal. The characters and events still have a specific meaning within the story, but they also have greater resonances. Prophecy is about mysterious, imprecise meanings which connect us with the history of humankind. It is not a veil. It is not an allegory. But it is the ordinary world of fiction and reaches back.

Finally, Forster dismisses the value of 'pattern' by which a narrative may be structured, as another aspect that frequently sacrifices the vitality of the character. He says that pattern is an aesthetic aspect of the novel. Though it may be nourished by anything in the novel – character, scene, and word – it draws most of its nourishment from the plot. Just as the story appeals to our curiosity and the plot to our intelligence, the pattern appeals to our aesthetic sense. It causes us to see the book as a whole. Rhythm, on the other hand, is like a musical motif. It reappears with slight variations and helps to unify the novel.

Thus, E.M. Forster in his seminal work *Aspects of the Novel* makes a clear distinction between story and plot. He emphasizes the relationship between character and incident. His discussion of fantasy, prophecy, and rhythm encourages us to see that truly great writing goes beyond storytelling.

11.2.2. Element of Colonialism

Colonialism has often been regarded as the struggle to determine who is the fittest, even in the times before Darwin. According to Darwin it was the Europeans who were the fittest of mankind. It was thanks to this quality that they were able to defend their colonies. According to Boehmer, "if colonization was a struggle for supremacy, not

only of white against black, but between European nations, the scramble for territory took on the aspect of a conflict between competing virilities."

In *A Passage to India*, the colonialists are definitely the stronger race and have authority over the locals. This authority gives them power which they use against the inferior race, the Indians. The Indians are considered weak, outcast, and second rate. They are believed to be different from Europeans, especially the English. Even though the British might have their own different categories like social class and religions, they are united as opposed to the local natives. There is very little social integration between the colonialists and the Indians. Yet there are incidents in the novel that show that the Indians are more sophisticated than the colonialists.

Forster had spent a long time in India before writing his book. On returning to England, he related to his friends that he had always felt miserable at the English Club, yet, on the other hand, in the company of Indians he always felt happy. Forster is quoted as saying "Looking back on that first visit of mine to India, I realize that mixed up with the pleasure and fun was much pain. The sense of racial tension, of incompatibility, never left me. It was not a tourist's outing, and the impression it left was deep."

Below is an extract from a letter regarding the novel, written by Masood, an Indian friend of Forster, who resided in England, "When I began the book I thought of it as a little bridge of sympathy between East and West, but this conception has had to go; my sense of truth forbids anything so comfortable. I think that most Indians, like most English people, are shits, and I am not interested whether they sympathize with one another or not. Not interested as an artist; of course the journalistic side of me still gets roused over these questions…" Ten years after the publishing of his book, Forster confirmed the statement that a Victorian writer, William Arnold, had made that "Until the point of divergence between Eastern and Western mentality has been discovered, co-operation is impossible."

11.3. List of Characters

Dr. Aziz - A young Muslim Indian physician. He works at the British hospital in Chandrapore, which is said to have been based on the city of Bankipur, a suburb of Patna in the state of Bihar. He relies heavily on intuition over logic. He is more emotional than his best friend, Fielding. He makes friends easily and seems quite garrulous at times. His chief drawback is an inability to view a situation without emotion, which Forster suggests is a typical Indian difficulty. Aziz seems to possess a profound love for his late wife but only thinks of her intermittently. Initially he is somewhat indifferent to the British colonists, but comes to resent them after his treatment during the trial.

Cyril Fielding - The 45-year-old, unmarried British headmaster of the small government-run college for Indians. Fielding's logical Western mind cannot comprehend the muddle (or mystery) of India. But he is highly tolerant and respectful toward Indians. He befriends Dr. Aziz, but cultural and racial differences, and personal misunderstandings, separate them.

Adela Quested - A young British schoolmistress. She visits India with the vague intention of marrying Ronny Heaslop. Intelligent, brave, honest, but slightly prudish, she is what Fielding calls a "prig." She arrives with the intention of seeing the real India. But after a frightening trip to the Marabar Caves, she falsely accuses Aziz of sexually assaulting her.

Mrs. Moore - The elderly, thoughtful mother of Ronny Heaslop. She is visiting Chandrapore to oversee her son's engagement to Adela Quested. She respects Indians and their customs, and the Indians in the novel appreciate her more than they do any other Briton. After undergoing an experience similar to Adela's, she becomes apathetic and bitter.

Ronny Heaslop - The British city magistrate of Chandrapore. Though not a bad man, he shares many of his colonial colleagues' racist view of Indians. He breaks off his engagement to Adela after she retracts her accusation against Aziz. He considers it a betrayal of their race.

Professor Narayan Godbole- An elderly, courteous, contemplative Brahmin who views the world with equanimity. He remains totally aloof from the novel's conflicts.

Mr. Turton - The British city collector of Chandrapore. He does not hate Indians, for that would be to negate his life's work. Nevertheless, he is fiercely loyal to his race, reviles less bigoted people like Fielding, and regards natives with thinly veiled contempt.

Mrs. Turton - Mr. Turton's wife. Openly racist, snobbish, and rude toward Indians and those Europeans who are different, she screams at Adela in the courtroom when the latter retracts her accusation against Aziz.

Maj. Callendar - The British head doctor and Aziz's superior at the hospital. He is more openly racist than any other male character. Rumors circulate among Indians that Callendar actually tortured an injured Indian by putting pepper instead of antiseptic on his wounds.

Mr. McBryde - The British superintendent of police in Chandrapore. Like Mr. Turton, he considers dark-skinned races inferior to light-skinned ones. During Aziz's trial, he publicly asserts that it is a scientific fact that dark men lust after white women. Nevertheless, he is more tolerant of Indians than most Britons, and he is friendly with Fielding.

Miss Derek - An Englishwoman employed by a Hindu royal family. She frequently borrows their car – and does not trouble to ask their permission or return it in

time. She is too boisterous and easygoing for most of her compatriots' tastes. She has an affair with McBryde.

Nawab Bahadur - The chief Indian gentleman in Chandrapore, a Muslim. Wealthy (he owns a car) and generous, he is loyal to the British (he lends his car to Ronny Heaslop). But after the trial, he gives up his title of "nawab," which the British bestowed on him, in favour of plain "Mr. Zulfiqar."

Hamidullah – Aziz's uncle and friend. Educated in law at Cambridge University, he declares at the beginning of the novel that it is easier to be a friend of an Englishman in England than in India. Aziz comes to agree with him.

Amritrao - A prominent Indian lawyer from Calcutta, called in to defend Aziz. He is known for his strong anti-British sentiment. He takes the case for political reasons and becomes disgusted when the case evaporates in court.

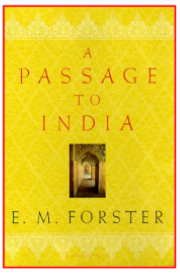
Mahmoud Ali - A Muslim Indian barrister who openly hates the British.

Dr. Panna Lal - A low-born Hindu doctor and Aziz's rival at the hospital.

Ralph Moore - A timid, sensitive and discerning youth, the second son of Mrs. Moore.

Stella Moore - Mrs. Moore's daughter and, later, Fielding's beautiful younger wife.

11.4. Summary



E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* is a novel set against the backdrop of the British Raj and the Indian Independence movement in the 1920s. It is about the attempt of two British ladies who visit India to understand India and the Indians. It is a study of the relationships that these women try to establish with the Indians and also how they fail. The story is told in three parts namely I – *Mosque*, II – *Caves*, and III – *Temple*. It revolves around four characters viz. Dr. Aziz, Mr. Cyril Fielding, Mrs. Moore, and Miss Adela Quested. During a trip to the Marabar (modelled on the Barabar Caves of Bihar), Adela finds herself alone with Dr. Aziz in one of the caves. She panics and flees. It is assumed that Dr. Aziz had attempted to assault her. Aziz's trial brings out all the racial tensions and prejudices between indigenous Indians and the British who rule India.

Adela Quested, a young British schoolmistress, earnest, charmless, sensible, and intelligent girl, comes to India along with Mrs. Moore, an old woman. They visit the fictional city of Chandrapore in British India, which is said to have been based on the city of Bankipur, a suburb of Patna in the state of Bihar. Adela is about to decide to marry Ronny Heaslop, the son of Mrs. Moore. Ronny is working as a city magistrate in a remote civil station. Adela and Mrs. Moore are liberal, kind and sympathetic. They want to know the 'real India.' The local Britishers are contemptuous of this

desire. They think that there is nothing to know about Indians. They also feel that the Indians belong to an inferior race. Mrs. Moore and Adela are dismayed to find that even Ronny has become one of the ruling race in his attitude. He is arrogant and concerned only to maintain his distance from the ruled. In spite of her son's warning about mixing too much with Indians, Mrs. Moore goes to mosque one evening. She gets into a conversation with Aziz, a young Muslim doctor.

Aziz is feeling hurt and miserable for he has just been snubbed and insulted by the Britishers. But he is soothed by the simplicity and kindness of Mrs. Moore. As a result, a remarkable friendship, unhampered by considerations of race or age, develops between the old British woman and the young Indian Muslim. Mrs. Moore is delighted by meeting some Indians. Through those Indians she will come to know the 'real India.' Aziz, to show his feelings towards his new found friends, organizes an expedition for the visitors to the famous Marabar Caves. Fielding, a friendly Englishman, and Professor Godbole, the School master and a Hindu, also want to come along with Aziz and Mrs. Moore. Unfortunately, Fielding fails to catch the train. Aziz alone must conduct the elaborate excursion. In one of the caves, Mrs. Moore has a suffocating experience and urges Aziz and Adela to continue the slightly tedious expedition. Forster deliberately omits all the details of what then happens. We only know that Aziz is greatly shocked at a tactless question of Adela's – "Have you one wife or more?" Then Aziz abruptly runs away from her into a cave. When Adela tries to follow him, she loses her way and gets into another cave. In the cave, the strap of her field-glasses is pulled by something or some one. She becomes nervous and tries to rush down from the caves. She accuses Aziz of trying to rape her.

Aziz is arrested and stands trial. The entire British population of the town becomes hysterical with rage. Every Britisher believes that Aziz, the Indian, is guilty. The Britishers try to suppress evidence favourable to Aziz by fair or foul means. Though all the Britishers feel that Aziz is guilty, Fielding and Mrs. Moore believe that he might be under some hallucination. Both of them say that such an event could not have happened.

At the trial, Adela is asked point-blank whether Aziz sexually assaulted her or not. She asks for a moment to think before answering. She has a vision of the cave in that moment, and it turns out that Adela received a shock when she was in the cave. She says that the echo disconcerted her so much that she temporarily became unhinged. Then she ran around the cave, fled down the hill, and finally sped off with Miss Derek. In the end, she accepts that she was under a hallucination that was encouraged by the mentality of the local Britishers. She withdraws her charge against Aziz by saying that "Dr. Aziz never followed me into the cave." She admits that she was mistaken. Then the case is dismissed. But Aziz turns furiously away from the British, towards a Hindu-Muslim *entente* (a friendly relationship between two groups or two countries).

When Adela gives such evidence, she is cut off by the Britishers. Her engagement with Ronny is broken. She then joins Fielding and stays in his house until her passage on a boat to England is arranged. After explaining to Fielding that the echo was the cause of the whole business, she departs from India with a feeling never to return to India.

In the third part of the book – a kind of epilogue to the narrative – Aziz has moved to a post in a native state. He is bringing up his family in peace, writing poetry and reading Persian. He is visited by his friend Mr. Fielding, the former Principal of the Government College, an intelligent and hard-bitten man. They discuss the future of India and Aziz prophesies that only when the British are driven out can he and Fielding really be friends. At the end of the novel, Professor Godbole, the detached and saintly Brahman makes his final appearance in supreme tranquility at the festival of the Hindu temple. During the festival (Birth of Krishna) people go wild with scenes of joy and love. In this atmosphere of universal love, Fielding and Aziz meet together once again – however, to part for ever.

11.5. Analysis

A Passage to India is a novel written by E.M. Forster. It is chosen as one of the 100 great books ever written in English literature. It is a picture of society in India under the British Raj, of the clash between East and West, and of the prejudices and misunderstandings that foredoomed goodwill. Criticized at first for anti-British and possibly inaccurate bias, it has been praised as a superb character study of the people of one race by a writer of another.

In the novel, Forster seems to observe the English Empire from a critical point of view rather than a nostalgic one. The theme of the book is the non-superficial relationship of the Indians and the English. It is an attempt at understanding the country 'India' and the Indians from a more personal, positive, and meaningful perspective. Boehmer, a critic, says that the novel "holds out little hope either for social interaction between Europeans and Indians, or for Indian national independence."

The novel focusses on the three characters, namely Dr. Aziz, his British friend Cyril Fielding, and Adela Quested. During a trip to the Marabar Caves, Adela accuses Aziz of attempting to rape her. Aziz's trial brings out all the racial tensions and prejudices between Indians and the British colonialists who rule India.

Throughout the novel there are many examples of racist attitudes and oppression by the Anglo-Indians towards the natives. Major Callendar boasts about torturing an injured Indian youth by putting pepper on his shattered face. Mr McBryde expresses supercilious views of the lust the Indians show for white women. Miss Dereck shows

anger towards her Indian employers. Mr Turton is arrogant towards the Indians. This racism is shown in the Anglo-Indians' attitudes towards Aziz after the incident in the caves. Mr McBryde feels that Aziz pretends to be a respectable member of society, getting a Government position, while in reality he is leading a double life. His negative way of life takes over his respectable self. In McBryde's opinion, Aziz behaves cruelly and brutally to an English lady and cannot be forgiven. The policeman is quick to blame the Indians as all the colonialists did. The District Superintendent of Police is never surprised by the behaviour of any Indian and has his own theory about climatic zones. Mr Turton states that he has "never known anything but disaster result when English people and Indians attempt to be intimate socially." Contact, in his opinion, would be allowed, as well as courtesy, but intimacy should not be allowed. Such intimacy is only negative. Only mutual respect and esteem can enable them to socialize with each other. The British feel that it is vital for them to stick to the unwritten rules on how they behave towards the locals.

The friendship between Aziz and Fielding is based on Indian and Englishmen being equals. Still, the friendship between the local Indian and the Englishman fails to bring the Anglo-Indian union. In a colony, there are no friendships on an equal basis. This issue is discussed on a personal level, through the relationship between Fielding and Aziz. Aziz is against the British at the beginning. But later he begins to alter his opinion after meeting Mrs. Moore in the mosque. This is the beginning of the possibility of a friendship with Fielding. If the British and the Indians treated one another as Aziz and Fielding did, then it would be possible for members of the two nations to be friends. The latter part of the book shows that this integration is not possible. Maybe no member of an occupied race can really be friends with a member of the master race. As long as the colonialists rule the colonised, they will always resent one another. The last conversation in the book is between Fielding and Aziz and takes place on their last ride at the Mau jungles. They are friends once again, yet they have to bear in mind that they will no longer meet. All the misunderstandings have been sorted out between them and yet they can no longer socialise. The cultural and racial differences, and personal misunderstandings, separate them.

A Passage to India is rather harsh and hostile towards women. They are portrayed as unsatisfactory: they are nags who criticise all the time, continually giggling, mixed-up spinsters. Their only goal in life is marriage. They contribute more to the racial situation in India than their fellow Englishmen. The novel is principally about men, about their attempts to reach across continents, across cultures, across race in order to understand and even to love one another. The novel ignores the presence of women, as can be seen in Fielding's view. According to him; "The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of goodwill plus culture and intelligence..." Repeatedly, we see incidents confirming this view. For example, the development of the brief affection between Aziz and an unidentified Englishman during a game of polo, and the moment when Aziz and Fielding attempt to embrace each other at the end of the novel. These two incidents

indicate that it is only through friendships between men that there can be a union of the two nations. Women do not play any part in this union. The possibility of friendship between women of different nationalities is not discussed at all. According to the Collector, women complicate their lives. The death of the wife of Aziz enables him to form a friendship with a man of another nationality, Fielding. Aziz's wife, like all other women in the novel, is of no importance in the men's life. The implication that British women could be obstacles to male friendships can be seen in the following quotation when the narrator explained why Fielding was shunned at the club:

> The men tolerated him for the sake of his good heart and strong body; it was their wives who decided that he was not a sahib really. He took no notice of them, and this, which would have passed without comment in feminist England, did him harm in a community where the male is expected to be lively and helpful. Mr. Fielding advised one about dogs or horses, or dined, or paid his midday calls, or decorated trees for one's children at Christmas. (Forster 1979:80).

The women show a more racist attitude than the men do. It seems that, according to Forster, women should support their husbands' friendships with Indian men, "trying to reach one another," but do not do so. Instead, they sabotage these friendships. In spite of this, some of the men are willing to be friends with the Indians. Paradoxically, in the case of Fielding, his marriage to an Englishwoman does enable friendship. The women who refuse to be quiet are resented both by the male characters in the novel and the narrator.

The clash between the colonialists and the local Indians, at the beginning of the novel, appears to be a racial one. The novel also addresses the issues of colonialism, rape and nationalism. There is a distinction between the political passions of the British in India, and their social issues. The political passions are only brought up every now and again in the novel. We read about this again at the end of the novel during the incident of the English at Mau. However, this incident only emphasizes the real theme of the novel, the friendship between the Englishman, Fielding and the Indian, Dr. Aziz. The setting on their ride symbolizes the significant differences between the two men. The main difference is the difference of race. Friendship between colonizer and colonized cannot work. India is presented as soft, seductive, and feminine, feminizing its men. However, there are also masculine men in India, and they fulfil important functions in the narrative.

11.6. Themes and Techniques

The Indian vs. the European Religion and Way of Thinking

Religion is probably the most definitive factor in the way Indians lead their lives, particularly if they practice Hinduism and this is why the clash between Hinduism and Christianity in *A Passage to India* parallels the conflict between the Indians and the British. Hinduism is best represented in the novel by professor Godbole, and Christianity is epitomized in Mrs Moore who comes to India with the kindness and understanding heart of a devout Christian but leaves morose and peevish. Perhaps she is haunted into this state by professor Godbole's strange song. It is this song that forces Mrs Moore and Adela Quested into emotional cocoons from which they only escape to meet horrible circumstances. Mrs Moore is terrorized to the point of apathy and Mrs Quested meets horror in the caves.

Another significant aspect is the enormous difference between the English colonial elite and the native population of India. One can see that the English treat the Indians with lack of respect and the Indians seem to expect it. Cultural misunderstanding is turned into a major theme in the novel. Differing cultural ideas and expectations regarding hospitality, social propriety and the role of religion in daily life are responsible for misunderstandings between the English and the Muslim Indians, the English and the Hindu Indians, and between the Muslims and the Hindus. Aziz tells Fielding at the end of the novel:

> *'It is useless discussing Hindus with me. Living with them teaches me no more. When I think I annoy them, I do not. When I think I don't annoy them, I do'.*

Forster demonstrates how these repeated misunderstandings become hardened into cultural stereotypes. They are often used to justify the uselessness of attempts to bridge the cultural gulfs. When Aziz offers his collar stud to Fielding in an effusive act of friendship, Heaslop later misinterprets Aziz's missing stud as an oversight and extends it as a general example.

A Realistic Documentation of the Attitudes

The novel aims at a realistic documentation of the attitudes of British colonial officials in India, primarily in Chandapore, a city along the Ganges River, notable only for the nearby Marbar caves. Forster spends large sections of the novel characterizing different typical attitudes the English hold toward the Indians whom they control. Forster's satire is harsh on Englishwomen, whom the author depicts as overwhelmingly racist, self-righteous, and viciously condescending to the native population.

Some of the Englishmen in the novel are as nasty as the women. But Forster more often identifies Englishmen as men who are largely well-meaning and invested in their jobs. For all Forster's criticism of the British manner of governing India, he does not appear to question the right of the British Empire to rule India. He suggests

that the British would be well served by becoming kinder and more sympathetic to the Indians with whom they live.

A Passage to India is an exploration of Anglo-Indian friendship. Forster pays great attention to the description of the two societies that are to be found in India, namely the natives, the Indians, and the new comers, the British, and also to the way they interact and to the relationships they establish.

The Impact of the landscape on the Indian Life-style

A novel like *A Passage to India* stands alone and it can be admired for its complex study of people who interact in an unfamiliar landscape, a landscape that ignores humans entirely. There are numberless watery images that mark in almost every crucial moment of the action the indissoluble bond between the human factor and the primordial element, the water that gives life. These images also suggest the ceaseless irrepressible flowing, the changeable forms and phenomena and the permanency of this dynamics of nature. It is sometimes complementary to the human actions. The novel is highly symbolic too.

Forster spends time detailing both Eastern and Western architecture in *A Passage to India*. Three architectural structures – though one is naturally occurring – provide the outline for the book's three sections: *Mosque*, *Caves* and *Temple*.

Forster presents the aesthetics of Eastern and Western structures as indicative of the differences of those particular cultures as a whole. In India, architecture is confused and formless. Interiors blend into exterior gardens, earth and buildings compete with each other, and structures appear unfinished or drab. As such, Indian architecture mirrors the muddle of India itself and what Forster sees as the Indians' characteristic inattention to form and logic.

Occasionally, Forster takes a positive view of Indian architecture. The mosque in Part I and the temple in Part III represent the promise of Indian openness, mysticism, and friendship. Western architecture is described during Fielding's stop in Venice on his way to England. Venice's structures, which Fielding sees as representative of Western architecture in general, honour form and proportion and complement the earth on which they are built. Fielding reads in this architecture the self-evident correctness of Western reason – an order that, he laments, his Indian friends would not recognize or appreciate.

The Marabar Caves

The incident in the caves is the central moment in the novel. It is a muddle or a mystery that shows that India can only present confusion of morals, misunderstandings and misreading between the colonialists and the locals. The issue of what happens in the caves is not solved in the book, but left up to the imagination

of the reader. Adela's recollection of what exactly happened in the caves seems to fade away. According to Fielding, what happens in the caves could be one of these three things, Either Aziz is guilty, as some of his friends think, or he invented the charge out of malice, or he has had an hallucination. It is never clear to the reader which explanation is the correct one.

Adela's admittance of error in accusing Aziz is a letdown for the English community. It is a welcome victory for the Indians, as for the first time in history an Englishman takes their side. The colonialists feel that he is a disgrace to the English community. Fielding suggests that Adela has made a wrongful accusation against Aziz. No English person had ever before stated publicly that he had wrongly accused an Indian. Fielding and Adela are rejected by the English community due to their friendships with and loyalty towards the Indian community.

11.7. Summing Up

After reading this lesson we will be able to learn the difference between a story and a plot, fantasy and prophecy, pattern and rhythm, and the types of characters in the novel. We learn the technique of writing a novel. We understand the discrimination shown by the Britishers against the Indians. We see the attitude of men, including the author, towards women. We equally learn how the novelist has cleverly portrayed the cultural clash between the two groups.

11.8. Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is the difference between a story and a plot?
2. Comment on the types of characters in the novel.
3. What is the summary of Forster's *A Passage to India*?
4. Discuss the relationship between the characters that are there in the novel.
5. Comment on the thematic concerns in the novel.

11.9. Reference Books

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LESSON - 12

VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *MRS. DALLOWAY*

Objectives of the Lesson

a) to know what is stream of consciousness
b) to learn the salient features of stream of consciousness
c) to learn the summary of the novel
d) to see how Virginia Woolf employed the stream of consciousness technique

Structure of the Lesson

Expansion of the Structure

12.1. Introduction

Adeline Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was born on January 25, 1882. She is the second daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen and Julia Duckworth. She lived at Hyde Park Gate along with her sister Vanessa and her brothers until her father's death in 1904. The Stephen children then moved to Bloomsbury where they formed the nucleus of the Bloomsbury Group. In 1905 she began to write for the *Times Literary Supplement,* a connection which lasted almost until her death. In 1912 she married Leonard Woolf. By then she was working on her first novel *The Voyage Out* that was published in 1915. It describes the voyage to South America of a young Englishwoman, Rachel Vinrace, her engagement there to Terence Hewet, and her subsequent fever and rapid death. Virginia herself had meanwhile experienced one of the bouts of acute mental disturbance from which she had suffered since her mother's death, and it was partly as therapy for her that she and Leonard founded, in

1917, the Hogarth Press. Its first production was *Two Stories,* one by each of them. Her second novel, also realistic, *Night and Day* (1919), set in London, centres on Katherine Hilbery, daughter of a famous literary family (modelled on Vanessa), whose pursuits are contrasted with her friend Mary's involvement with women's suffrage.

Jacob's Room (1922) is a novel evoking the life and death (in the First World War) of Jacob Flanders (clearly related to the death of her brother Thoby in 1906). The novel was recognized as a new development in the art of fiction, in its indirect narration and poetic impressionism. Shortly afterwards she published one of her important statements on modern fiction, 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown,' in the *Nation and Athenaeum,* 1 Dec. 1923. It was an attack on the realism of Arnold Bennett and advocated a more fluid, internal approach to the problem of characterization, etc. From this time onwards she was regarded as one of the principal exponents of Modernism, and her subsequent major novels, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *The Waves* (1931), established her reputation securely. Later she suffered from mental illness and sickness. But she continued to write and published serious works such as *Orlando* (1928), a fantastic biography inspired by her friend V Sackville-West. It traces the history of the youthful, beautiful, and aristocratic Orlando through four centuries and both male and female manifestations. *Flush* (1933), a slighter work, is the 'biography' of E. B. Browning's spaniel. *The Years* (1937) is in form a more conventional novel, whereas her last work, *Between the Acts* (1941), is again highly experimental. It was shortly after finishing it, and before its publication, that the last of her attacks of mental illness led to her drowning herself in the Ouse, near her home at Rodmell, Sussex.

Virginia Woolf is now acclaimed as one of the great innovative novelists of the 20th century. Her experimental techniques such as the use of the stream of consciousness, or interior monologue have been absorbed into the mainstream of fiction. Her novels have been particularly highly regarded from the 1970s onwards by the new school of feminist criticism. She was also a literary critic and journalist of distinction. *A Room of One's Own* (1929) is a classic of the feminist movement. A sequel, *Three Guineas* (1938), articulates Woolf's view on tyranny at home. Her critical essays were published in several collections, including *The Common Reader* and the posthumous *The Death of the Moth* (1942), *The Captain's Death Bed* (1950), and *Granite and Rainbow* (1958). A volume of short stories, *A Haunted House* (1943), collects earlier stories and some not previously published. She was also a tireless letter writer and diarist. Her letters are a dazzling, at times a malicious evocation of a world of literary and social friendships and intrigues. Her diaries are a unique record of the joys and pains of the creative process.

12.2. Background

12.2.1. Interior Monologue

Interior monologue is the technique of recording the continuum of impressions, thoughts and impulses. They might have been prompted by conscious experience or arisen from the well of the subconscious. The phrase is originated from an essay on James Joyce by Valery Larbaud. The term is often regarded as synonymous with 'stream of consciousness.' The term 'stream of consciousness' works on the

sensations of the mind into a more formal pattern – a flow of thoughts inwardly expressed, similar to a soliloquy. But 'interior monologue' attempts to portray the remote, preconscious state that exists before the mind organizes sensations. There is, however, some dispute as to which of the two is the larger term. Some critics argue that stream of consciousness includes all imitations of interiority. According to this view, the interior monologue is one method among many. To other critics, the interior monologue is the larger category and stands for all methods of self-revelation, including, for instance, some kinds of dramatic monologue. According to this view, the stream of consciousness refers to an uninterrupted flow, in which logic, conventional syntax and even at times punctuation are abandoned.

The interior monologue is certainly the case that the origins of this kind of fictional representation are in poetry, and specifically in the kind of 19th century poetry that is broadly dramatic in method. The English dramatic monologue, as used by Browning and Tennyson, purports to be spoken. But it is often the case that speech dissolves into reverie. Projections of interior musings, often deeply ambiguous are to be found in the poem of Laforgue, Mallarme, and Valery. They in turn influenced the fiction of Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, as well as the verse monologues of T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats.

12.2.2. Stream of Consciousness

Creative writers, in every literature, at one point or the other, have come out with certain theories and techniques in their work of art to convey their thoughts and feelings. One such theory is Freud's psychoanalytic theory that provided the modern writers a new subject matter which necessitated the invention of new fictional techniques and a refocusing of the old techniques. One such epoch making technique in the history of the English novel was arrived at, just on the eve of the World War I. This new kind of novel is known as the *stream of consciousness* novel. The term 'stream of consciousness' was coined by William James in his book entitled *Principles of Psychology* (1890). The phrase refers to the unbroken flow of thought processes in a waking mind. According to H.J. Muller,

> It is a withdrawal from external phenomena into the flickering half-shades of the author's private world i.e. consciousness is a stream that flows and cannot be seen as a static metaphor.

The stream of consciousness novel took its birth between 1913 and 1915 with three novelists namely Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, unknown to one another writing novels of similar type in different parts of Europe. Proust published the two volumes of *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913) just when Dorothy Richardson was half way through her *Pilgrimage* and James Joyce was beginning to publish in serial form his *A Portrait.* That is these writers were experimenting with the new mode of stream of consciousness novel or the novel of the silent or the modern analytic novel (as in French) which caught the very atmosphere of the mind. Thus three writers of different talent and temperament turned fiction away from external to internal reality. This journey of exploration into the realm of feelings and sensations relegated the importance of the traditional story to the background. The opening lines of Joyce's *A Portrait* clearly demonstrate a departure from the

traditional method of narration. *Pilgrimage* insists upon immediate consciousness as reality. These writers asserted that the presentation of inner reality was the primary job of a novelist. They felt that a story involves certain amount of conscious or unconscious falsification of our experience of life. Life is incomplete, chaotic, and confusion and does not fall into a pattern or a shape like a story. Hence these writers demanded that the story must die in order to enable the novel to gain a new lease of life. In the words of Virginia Woolf, "In this novel, the story might wobble, the plot might crumble, and ruin might seize upon the character."

The stream of consciousness novel presents character as a process on a state. It depicts life at free-speech level of consciousness, incoherent and disorderly. To Virginia Woolf,

> Life is not a series of Giglands, symmetrically arranged, life is a luminous hallow, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of the consciousness to the end.

Hence the novelists, art, aim at capturing the uncertainty, complexity, and the indefinite and unknown aspects of life in the novels. In order to achieve this and to make their novels intelligible, these writers provide explanatory clues in the form of symbols and figurative language to portrait the flux and privacy of human consciousness.

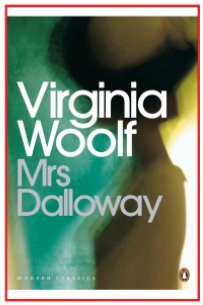
The stream of consciousness fiction is free from rigid notions of space and time. As introspection and anticipation (to think about future) constitute the very essence of present and the present holds the vision of the future. So consciousness becomes a jumble of vein memories, immediate preoccupations and dim aspirations. The time sequence is disrupted because memories and flashbacks mingle the past with the present. The mind also swings away in space to different settings and scenes. This concurrence of the past or present and scenes widely apart in space within the consciousness is known as time or space montage (thinking of one place, the very next moment thinking of some other place).

For instance, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* opens with an interior monologue of a middle-aged woman, Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway who walks through a London street early in the morning. She thinks of the preparations for the party in the evening and admires the fine morning. Then there is a memory and she thinks of her life twenty years ago away from London and recalls Peter Walsh, her one-time lover. This is an incident of space-montage where the past, present, and future and two different settings intermingle in her consciousness.

The stream of consciousness writers rely on musical structure and symbolism in order to provide some form and intelligibility to their work. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf adheres to unities of time and place as the action doesn't exceed 24 hours and takes place in London.

Though the stream of consciousness novel has often been criticized for disregarding the rational thought and commonly accepted syntax and diction, it cannot be disputed that this new novel has added a new dimension to the form of fiction by throwing light on the depths of human mind.

12.3. Summary



Mrs. Dalloway, a novel by Virginia Woolf, was published in 1925. The action of the novel is restricted to the events of one day in central London, punctuated by the chimes of Big Ben. It opens on a June morning in Westminster. At the very beginning of the novel, Clarissa Dalloway, wife of Richard Dalloway, MP (both had appeared briefly and enigmatically in an earlier novel, *The Voyage Out*), sets off to buy flowers for her party that evening. The party provides the culmination and ending of the book. Throughout the morning, she reflects on her past, including her decision to marry Richard Dalloway thirty years earlier, rather than Peter, her old suitor and friend.

The point of view shifts to Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked war veteran, out on the street with his wife, Lucrezia. He struggles with after-effects of the war, hearing voices and feeling that life has little meaning. A car backfiring paralyzes him, and he reflects on his life. He lost his good friend and commanding officer Evans in the war and continues to carry on conversations with his lost friend.

Clarissa has returned home and begins to remember a special friendship she shared in her youth with Sally Seton, a slightly scandalous young woman. They shared a special bond with each other. When she begins mending her dress for the evening, Peter Walsh comes to her house unexpectedly. The two have always judged each other harshly. Their meeting in the present intertwines with their thoughts of the past. Years earlier, she refused his marriage proposal. He asks her whether she is happy with her husband, Richard. But before she answers, Elizabeth, her 17-year-old daughter enters and Peter leaves the house.

Peter goes to Regent's Park where Septimus and Lucrezia are also walking. The couple gets into a heated discussion about suicide. Peter sees them as a love couple quarrelling. Lucrezia has made an appointment for Septimus to see a specialist, Sir William Bradshaw, who dismisses the complexity of Septimus' madness and suggests a rest in an asylum to get more perspective.

Meanwhile, Richard Dalloway has been invited to lunch with Lady Bruton. Clarissa is seen disturbed because Lady Bruton has invited only Richard but not her. During the lunch, Richard has realized that he wants to come home and tell Clarissa that he loves her. Unfortunately, he never finds the words, as he has gone so many years without saying them.

Septimus and Lucrezia go to their apartment, enjoying a moment of happiness together before the men come to take Septimus to the asylum. When they arrive, he fears that the doctors will destroy his soul. In order to avoid this fate, he jumps from a window and commits suicide.

The ambulance bearing Septimus' body passes by Peter Walsh. Later he goes to Clarissa's party, where most of the novel's major characters are assembled. Clarissa

works hard to make her party a success but feels dissatisfied by her own role and is acutely conscious of Peter's critical eye. Sir William Bradshaw arrives late, and his wife explains that one of his patients, the young veteran (Septimus), has committed suicide. Though she doesn't know him, she identifies with him, admires him for having taken the plunge and for not compromising his soul. The party nears its close as guests begin to leave. Clarissa enters the room, and her presence fills Peter with a great excitement.

12.4. List of Characters

Clarissa Dalloway - The protagonist of the novel. The novel begins with Clarissa's point of view. Clarissa cares a great deal about what people think of her. She is self-reflective. She often questions life's true meaning, wondering whether happiness is truly possible. She feels both a great joy and a great dread about her life. Throughout the novel Clarissa reflects on the crucial summer when she chose to marry her husband, Richard, instead of her friend Peter Walsh. Though she is happy with Richard she always feels that she made the wrong choice. She also thinks frequently about her friend Sally Seton, whom she once loved.

Septimus Warren Smith - A World War I veteran suffering from shell shock. He married an Italian woman named Lucrezia. Though he is insane, Septimus views the English society in much the same way as Clarissa does. He struggles to maintain his privacy and fulfill his need to communicate with others. He shares so many traits with Clarissa. He is pale and has a hawk-like posture. He wears a shabby overcoat. Before the war he was a young, idealistic, aspiring poet. After the war he regards human nature as evil and believes he is guilty of not being able to feel. At the end of the novel he commits suicide.

Peter Walsh - A close friend of Clarissa Dalloway. He was in love with Clarissa. Clarissa rejected Peter's marriage proposal when she was eighteen. Then he moves to India and returns to London after five years. He is highly critical of others. He is conflicted about nearly everything in his life. He has a habit of playing with his pocketknife. He frequently has romantic problems with women and is currently in love with Daisy, a married woman in India. He wears horn-rimmed glasses and a bow tie and used to be a Socialist.

Sally Seton - A close friend of Clarissa and Peter in their youth. Sally was a wild, handsome ragamuffin who smoked cigars and would say anything. She and Clarissa were sexually attracted to one another as teenagers. Now Sally lives in Manchester , is married and has five boys.

Richard Dalloway - Clarissa's husband. A Member of Parliament in the Conservative government. He plans to write a history of the great English military family, the Brutons, when the Labour Party comes to power. He is a sportsman and likes being in the country. He is a loving father and husband. While devoted to social reform, he appreciates English tradition.

Hugh Whitbread - Clarissa's old friend. He married Evelyn Whitbread. He is an impeccable Englishman and the upholder of English tradition. He writes letters to the *Times* about various causes. He never brushes beneath the surface of any subject. Many are critical of his pompousness and gluttony, but he remains

oblivious. He is, as Clarissa thinks, almost too perfectly dressed. He makes Clarissa feel young and insecure.

Lucrezia Smith (Rezia) - Septimus' wife, a twenty-four-year-old hat-maker from Milan. Rezia loves Septimus but is forced to bear the burden of his mental illness alone. She is a lively and playful young woman. She has grown thin with worry. She feels isolated and continually wishes to share her unhappiness with somebody.

Elizabeth Dalloway - Clarissa and Richard's only child. She is a seventeen-year-old who is gentle, considerate, and somewhat passive. She doesn't have Clarissa's energy. She has a dark beauty that is beginning to attract attention. She doesn't like parties or clothes. She likes being in the country with her father and dogs. She spends a great deal of time praying with her history teacher, the religious Miss Kilman. She is often busy in finding her career options.

Doris Kilman - Elizabeth's history teacher, who has German ancestry. Miss Kilman has a history degree and was fired from a teaching job during the war because of society's anti-German prejudice. She is over forty and wears an unattractive mackintosh coat because she does not dress to please. She became a born-again Christian two years and three months ago. Poor, with a forehead like an egg, she is bitter and dislikes Clarissa intensely but adores Elizabeth.

Sir William Bradshaw - A renowned London psychiatrist. Lucrezia consults him, on the advice of Dr. Holmes to cure her husband's sickness. Sir William believes that most people who think that they are mad suffer instead from a "lack of proportion." He determines that Septimus has suffered a complete nervous breakdown and recommends that Septimus spend time in the country, away from Lucrezia.

Dr. Holmes - Septimus's general practitioner. When Septimus begins to suffer the delayed effects of shell-shock, Lucrezia seeks his help. Dr. Holmes claims nothing is wrong with Septimus.Dr. Holmes likes to go to the music hall and to play golf.

Lady (Millicent) Bruton - A member of high society and a friend of the Dalloways. At sixty-two years, Lady Bruton is devoted to promoting emigration to Canada for English families. She has an assistant, Milly Brush, and a chow dog. She is a descendant of General Sir Talbot Moore.

Miss Helena Parry (Aunt Helena) - Clarissa's aunt. Aunt Helena is a relic of the strict English society which Clarissa finds so confining. A great botanist, she also enjoys talking about orchids and Burma. She is a formidable old lady, over eighty, who found Sally Seton's behavior as a youth shocking. She has one glass eye.

Ellie Henderson - Clarissa's dowdy cousin. She is self-effacing, subject to chills, and close to a woman named Edith. Clarissa finds her dull and does not want to invite her to the party.

Evans - Septimus's wartime officer and close friend. Evans died in Italy just before the armistice. But Septimus, in his deluded state, continues to see and hear him behind trees and sitting room screens. During the war, Evans and Septimus were inseparable. Evans was a shy Englishman with red hair.

Mrs. Filmer - The Smiths' neighbour. Mrs. Filmer finds Septimus odd. She has honest blue eyes and is Rezia's only friend in London.

Daisy Simmons - Peter Walsh's lover in India, married to a major in the Indian army. Daisy is twenty-four years old and has two small children.

Evelyn Whitbread - Hugh Whitbread's wife. Evelyn suffers from an unspecified internal ailment and spends much of her time in nursing homes. We learn about her from others. Peter Walsh describes her as mousy and almost negligible. But occasionally she says something sharp.

Mr. Brewer - Septimus's boss at Sibleys and Arrowsmith. Mr. Brewer, the managing clerk, is paternal with his employees and foresees a promising career for Septimus. Mr. Brewer promotes Septimus when he returns from the war. He has a waxed moustache and a coral tiepin.

Jim Hutton - An awful poet at the Dalloways' party. Jim is badly dressed, with red socks and unruly hair. He doesn't enjoy talking to another guest, Professor Brierly, who is a professor of Milton. Jim shares with Clarissa a love of Bach and thinks she is "the best of the great ladies who took an interest in art." He enjoys mimicking people.

12.5. Analysis

The 'stream of consciousness' is a phrase that can be applied to fiction writing in which the flux of the mind, its continuity, and its continuous change is seen. The artist is not seen, if the technique is perfect, behind the art executed by the author. In other words, in this technique the thoughts and feelings of the characters are much more important than action or external event. It is an exploration of the human consciousness of feelings and of thoughts, of the vague emotions and sensations fleeting through the mind. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* may be considered as one of the best example of this kind of technique. It follows Clarissa Dalloway throughout a single day in post-Great War England in a stream of consciousness narrative. In the words of David Daiches,

> *Mrs. Dalloway* is an impressive work, it shows a brilliance and fineness in execution that no critic can forbear to admire.

Mrs. Dalloway, the fourth novel by Virginia Woolf, follows the trend of complete break from conventional techniques that started with *Jacob's Room*. It carries all the traits of Woolf's novels – stream of consciousness, interior monologue, a poetic style, suppression of plot, suppression of objective character descriptions and camera-eye-technique.

The novel opens on a 'day in June' with the interior monologue of Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway, 51 year old, fashionable, worldly, wealthy, the 'perfect hostess' who possesses a 'virginity preserved through childbirth.' In the words of Margaret Drabble,

> Her interior monologue, interwoven with the sights and sounds of the urban scene, is handled with a technical confidence and bravura that herald a new phase in Woolf's mastery of the novel.

She walks through a London street early in the morning with a view of buying flowers for the party that she is hosting in the evening. Then there is a memory and she thinks of her life twenty years ago away from London and recalls Peter Walsh, her one time suitor. This is an incident of space-montage where the past, present, and future and two different settings intermingle in her consciousness.

Later, while mending her dress and hat for the party, Clarissa remembers Sally Seton and thinks about the contrast between the carefree life of Sally Seton and the conventional life of her own. She suddenly feels lonely and also happy because she had everything in life and was assured of Richard's companionship. She repeats a line from *Othello* and feels thus: "*If it were now to die,'t were now to be most happy.*" Clarissa's day is also contrasted with that of the shell-shocked Septimus Warren Smith, who hears the sparrows sing in Greek in Regent's Park, "*ee um fah um so // fooswee too eemoo*" and who at the end of the day commits suicide by hurling himself from a window; news of his death intrudes upon Clarissa's party, brought by the Harley Street doctor Sir William Bradshaw, whom he had uselessly consulted. Though she hated the reference to death in the middle of her party, she later comes to terms with the death and thinks that, "Death was defiance. It was an attempt to communicate, people feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre, there was an embrace in death." At this moment Clarissa discovers an essential identity with Smith whom she had never before seen or met. She begins to admire him instead of pitying him.

Thus, the novel is captured in Clarissa's many shifting moods and recollections, and contrasted with and seen through the eyes of many other characters, including Peter, her one-time suitor, Sally Seton, her girlhood friend, Miss Kilman, her daughte'sr tutor, and Lady Bruton, the political hostess.

Virginia Woolf insisted upon the mutual dependence of these two characters (Clarissa and Smith), noting in her work book, 'Mrs.D. seeing the truth. SS seeing the insane truth.'

12.6. Themes and Techniques

The Fear of Death

Thoughts of death lurk constantly beneath the surface of everyday life in *Mrs. Dalloway,* especially in the characters of Clarissa, Septimus, and in Peter sometimes. This awareness makes even mundane events and interactions meaningful. At times, those events even threaten the characters. At the very start of the day, when Clarissa goes out to buy flowers for her evening party, she remembers a moment in her youth when she suspected a terrible event would occur. Big Ben tolls out the hour. She repeats a line from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* over and over as the day goes on: "Fear no more the heat o' the sun / Nor the furious winter's rages.' This line is from a funeral song that celebrates death as a comfort after a difficult life. She, in her middle-age, experienced the deaths of her father, mother, and sister. Besides this, she has also lived through the calamity of war. As a result, she has grown to believe that living even one day is dangerous. Death is very natural in her thoughts, and the line

from *Cymbeline*, along with Septimus' suicidal embrace of death, ultimately help her to be at peace with her own mortality.

Septimus faces death most directly. Though he fears it, he finally chooses it over what seems to him a direct alternative. When people come to take him to an asylum, at the end of the novel, he fears the doctors and commits suicide, hurling himself from the window. Peter Walsh too feels insecure in his identity. He grows frantic at the idea of death and follows an anonymous young woman through London to forget about it.

The Threat of Oppression

Oppression is a constant threat for Clarissa and Septimus in the novel. Septimus dies in order to escape from what he perceives to be an oppressive social pressure to conform. It comes in many guises, including religion, science, or social convention. Miss Kilman and Sir William Bradshaw are the two major oppressors in the novel. Miss Kilman dreams of felling Clarissa in the name of religion. Sir William Bradshaw would like to subdue all those who challenge his conception of the world. Both of them wish to convert the world to their belief systems in order to gain power and dominate others. Their rigidity oppresses all who come into contact with them. They try to do harm by supporting the repressive English social system. Though Clarissa herself lives under the weight of that system and often feels oppressed by it, her acceptance of patriarchal English society makes her, in part, responsible for Septimus's death. Thus, Clarissa too is an oppressor of sorts. At the end of the novel, Clarissa reflects on the suicide of Septimus' death. She accepts responsibility and suggests that everyone is in some way responsible in the oppression of others.

Communication vs. Privacy

Clarissa Dalloway, Septimus Warren Smith and Peter Walsh are some of the characters in the novel who struggle to express their feelings on communication and privacy. They try to attain the balance between communication and privacy. But it becomes a difficult task for them. Clarissa in particular, struggles to open the pathway for communication. She throws parties in an attempt to draw people together and communicate with them. She feels shrouded within her own reflective soul. She thinks that the ultimate human mystery is how she can exist in one room. But the old woman in the house across from hers exists in another world.. Even as Clarissa celebrates the old woman's independence, she knows it comes with an inevitable loneliness.

Peter tries to explain the contradictory human impulses toward privacy and communication. He compares the soul to a fish that swings along in murky water and then rises quickly to the surface to frolic on the waves. The war has changed people's ideas of what English society should be. He feels that the understanding of English society is difficult between those who support traditional English society and those who hope for continued change. Meaningful efforts in this disjointed postwar world are not easy to make, no matter what efforts the characters put forth. Finally, Clarissa sees Septimus' death as a desperate, but legitimate act of communication.

Besides the above discussed themes, the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* is preoccupied with a number of issues. Foremost are 'feminism' and 'madness' displayed by the characters Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith. The disillusionment with the British Empire is another theme that one finds in the novel. As a commentary on inter-war society, Clarissa's character highlights the role of women as the proverbial 'Angel in the House' and embodies both sexual and economic repression. Septimus, as the shell-shocked war hero, operates as a pointed criticism on the treatment of insanity and depression.

Mrs. Dalloway opens with interior monologue of a middle-aged woman, Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway who walks through a London street early in the morning. She thinks of the preparations for the party in the evening and admires the fine morning. Then there is a memory and she thinks of her life twenty years ago, away from London and recalls Peter Walsh, her one-time lover. This is an incident of space-montage where the past, present, and future and two different settings intermingle in her consciousness. In the novel, Virginia Woolf adheres to unities of time and place as the action doesn't exceed 24 hours and takes place in London.

12.7. Summing Up

After reading this lesson we will be able to learn what is an interior monologue and what is stream of consciousness. We learn the characteristics of both the techniques apart from identifying the differences between an interior monologue and a stream of consciousness. We learn how the term became prominent in the hands of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf especially. We see how these two techniques are employed successfully in her novel *Mrs. Dalloway* which is the apt text for the techniques. We equally learn how the characters suffer from their psychological illness.

12.8. Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is an interior monologue?
2. Define Stream of Consciousness.
3. Differentiate interior monologue and stream of consciousness.
4. Consider *Mrs. Dalloway* as a stream of consciousness technique novel.
5. Comment on the thematic concerns in the novel.

12.9. Reference Books

1. Dinah Birch, *Oxford Companion to Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
2. J.A. Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, London: Penguin Books, 19912.
3. Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, London: Penguin Modern Classics, 1980.
4. *Mrs. Dalloway*, www.sparknotes.com.

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M.A. DEGREE EXAMINATION, APRIL 2022.

First Semester

English

Paper V — TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE – I

Time : Three hours Maximum : 70 marks

Answer ALL questions.

All questions carry equal marks.

UNIT I

1. (a) Write short notes on any FOUR of the following:
   (i) Modernism
   (ii) Naturalism
   (iii) Movement Poetry
   (iv) Symbolism
   (v) Imagism
   (vi) Psychological Novel
   (vii) Poetry of the Thirties

Or

(b) Write an essay on Stream of Consciousness Technique.

UNIT II

2. (a) Analyse the structure of *In Memory of W.B. Yeats*, highlighting the elegiac note.

Or

(b) How does Auden contrast reality and expectation in *The Shield of Achilles*?

UNIT III

3. (a) Explain what happens to Snowball in *Animal Farm*.

Or

(b) Comment on the prose style of Russel in *Conquest of Happiness*.

UNIT IV

4. (a) What is the main conflict in *The Cocktail Party* by T.S. Eliot?

Or

(b) The Inquisitor compares Joan to both Muhammad and John the Baptist. Explain.

UNIT V

5. (a) How is the theme of separation represented in *A Passage to India*?

Or

(b) Describe Miss Kilman in terms of her religious feelings?

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