


B.A. English
ENMJ 302/ ENGM 307
Introduction to Literary Form:
Poetry/ Study of Poetry



*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood*

*And looked down one as far as I could
To where it beat in the undergrowth
— Robert Frost*

Message for the Students

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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University
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B.A. English
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Introduction to Literary Form:
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:: STRUCTURE ::**1.0 Objective****1.1 Introduction****1.2 Poetry: Definitions**

- **Check Your Progress: 1**

1.3 Poetry: Various Forms

- **Check Your Progress: 2**

1.4 History of Development of Poetry

- **Check Your Progress: 3**

1.5 Let Us Sum Up**1.6 Key Words****1.7 Suggested Readings****Answers**

1.0 OBJECTIVE

After learning this unit, the students can understand the form of poetry, various definitions related to this term, various characteristics of poetry and how did the form of poetry originated and later developed.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

While studying the History of English Literature, we come across various types of literary genres based on various variable criteria. However, as M. H. Abrams in his work *Glossary of Literary Terms* notes that since the time of Plato and Aristotle, overall literary domain has been divided into three parts: *Lyric* (mostly uttered in first person), *Epic or Narrative* (in which the narrator speaks in the first person, then lets his characters speak for themselves); and *Drama* (in which the characters do all the talking) . From that Aristotelian period, there has been a shift to the modern age where this division has transformed into prose, poetry and drama. While

talking about the genre of poetry, there are lots of terms such as poetry, poem, lyric etc. which have indistinguishable meanings at first place but how they are closely connected would be discussed in the next unit.

1.2 POETRY: DEFINITIONS

The term poetry is defined in *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* as —a comprehensive term which can be taken to cover any kind of metrical composition. However this definition also says that poetry —is usually employed with reservations, and often in contradistinction to verse. Elaborating this contradiction it further says that Shakespeare’s sonnets are described as poetry, but Ogden Nash’s witty poems are known as verse. Light verse is more prevalent word than a light poetry. However, we all know that Chaucer, Ben Jonson, Donne, Marvell, and many others to this list have written popular humorous and witty poems. The same dictionary also notes a separate entry for the word poem. A Greek word *poiema* means something created and taking this as a basic, the word poem is defined as —A composition, a work of verse, which may be in rhyme or may be blank verse or a combination of the two (678). What it is that makes poem a different entity from other forms of literature? It is —the way the words lean upon each other, are linked and interlocked in sense and rhythm, and thus elicit from each other’s syllables a kind of tune whose beat and melody varies subtly and which is different from that of prose (678) makes poetry a poetry. However, different from this structural perspective. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Warren in their book *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students* provides different perspective of poetry as a discourse, but this discourse is not —prompted by purely practical consideration. rather is colored by —an attitude toward and a feeling about the information. This definition leads to one of the prominent views about poetry provided by the Romantic poets in the history of English Literature.

One of the canonical names of English poetry and a major Romantic poet William Wordsworth defines poetry as —the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. Connecting poetry with our emotions and feelings, he suggests that poetry —takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility. His good friend S. T. Coleridge provides clear distinction between prose and poetry. He writes: —I wish our clever young poets would remember my homely definitions of prose and poetry; that is prose; words in their best order; - poetry; the *best* words in the best order. Just as Wordsworth and Coleridge, their contemporaries in the

Romantic Age also catenates poetry with nature and feelings as Percy B. Shelley defines —Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds|. However, later part of History of English Literature brings about the Modern Literature marked by —persistent and multidimensional experiments in subject matter, form, and style| in various literary forms including poetry. T.S.Eliot, one of the central figures of Modernist literature and major poets of 20th century provides completely different approach to the form of poetry than his ancestors in Romantic Age. He says, —Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion. It is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality|. These definitions aid us in comprehending the multiple perspectives to understand poetry.

- **Check Your Progress: 1**

Q.1 Write an appropriate answer for the given questions.

1. What is poetry according to Romantic poets?

2. What is Eliot’s concept of poetry?

1.3 POETRY AND ITS FORMS

Understanding form of a poetry takes various perspectives as some groups of literary scholars consider form as a *genre* or literary type whereas the other group of scholars and critics refers to the structure of a poetry as a form. Sean Glatch includes the structural elements of poetry, such as "its line lengths and meters, stanza lengths, rhyme schemes (if any), and systems of repetition," in his examination of poetic forms. "Defined poetic structures employed across multiple poems, generally by multiple authors," is how he defines form. He has three things in common that are crucial to the poem’s structure: lineation – which means line breaks and stanzas, rhyme scheme and rules of meter. Lineation, or the

breaking of the line, varies from form to form in the poem. For ex. Sestet (six lines stanza) and Octet (eight lines stanza) are quite popular in sonnet form. Like this, rhyme scheme and meter (the method of stressing a certain sound) are crucial in the development of poetry form. Let us discuss about some of the forms of the poetry here.

1.3.1 Italian Sonnet: A poem of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter and involving intricate rhyme scheme is usually known as sonnet. This form of poetry is basically travelled from Italy where during a 14th century, an Italian poet Petrarch was famous for Italian or Petrarchan sonnet. It follows a specific pattern of —an **octave** (eight lines) rhyming *abbaabba* followed by a **sestet** (six lines) rhyming *cdecde* or some variant, such as *cdcc* (290). Some famous poems written in the form of Italian Sonnets are Wordsworth's *London, 1802*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *sonnet 43*, and Oscar Wilde's *The Grave of Keats*.

1.3.2 Elizabethan Sonnet: After arrival of sonnet in English literature, some experimenters including the Earl of Surrey brought some changes in the rhyme scheme of the form of Italian Sonnet. This new form which was greatly practiced by William Shakespeare among all the Elizabethan poets. And thus, this form became popular as Shakespearean or English sonnet which —falls into three *quatrains* and a concluding *couplet*: *abab cdcd efef gg*. Shakespeare contributed almost 152 sonnets during his lifetime. S. T. Coleridge's sonnet *Fancy in Nubibus* is an example of Shakespearean sonnet.

1.3.3 Spenserian Sonnet/ Contemporary Sonnet: One more type of sonnet became popular after the name of Spenser who used to write sonnets with rhyming structure of *abab bebe cdcd ee*. The contemporary sonnets, as per Glatch's opinion —do not have the same strict requirements. There are no metrical requirements, so the sonnet's tradition of iambic pentameter is optional. || Some contemporary sonnets are written by Alice Notley, Billy Collins, and Anthony Opal.

1.3.4 Limerick: One of the forms of light verse, Limerick was invented in the 19th century England. Mostly used as a humorous way to write about other people, this form follows five-line structure with *aabba* rhyme scheme. Edward Lear who is also known as creator of Limerick had written *Limericks*. Kipling's poem *There was a small boy of Quebec* is also an example of Limerick form.

1.3.5 Free Verse: Printed in short lines just as traditional verse, they are different in their rhythmic pattern. As their —rhythmic pattern is not organized into a regular metrical form—that is, into feet, or recurrent

units of weak- and strong-stressed syllables. Most free verse also has irregular line lengths, and either lacks rhyme or else uses it only sporadically (Abrams 105). Free Verse is a popular form of most of the modern American and British poets including T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound.

Check Your Progress: 2

True or False:

- 1) Elizabethan sonnet is also known as contemporary sonnet.
- 2) Free verse are different from traditional verse in content.
- 3) Lear was the founder of Limerick form of poetry.

1.4 HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT OF POETRY

It is challenging to page down the history of poetry in detail because it is an ancient art form in the history of literature. The history of poetry has seen many changes, beginning with the oral tradition of singing numerous narratives. Starting from various Old and Middle English oral narratives, it has progressed to Chaucer whose *The Canterbury Tales*, considered as a magnum opus by many critics provides the reflection of middle age British society with focus on various characters from different parts of the society. A colourful cast of characters—a carpenter, a cook, a knight, a monk, a prioress, a haberdasher, a dyer, a scribe, a merchant, and a very bawdy miller—are introduced to us by Chaucer. Chaucer has the opportunity to talk in a variety of voices since these characters represent all facets of society in the fourteenth century. The stories spoken by the characters range from moral and contemplative to funny, nasty, and impolite. The introduction of the sonnet form during the 16th century, which as we mentioned in the preceding unit, took on a different shape with Shakespeare and Spenser, caused a significant shift in the poetry of English literature after that. Shakespeare gave almost 154 sonnets including some of the popular sonnets like 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' and 'My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun.' 'The Faerie Queene, an enormous epic poem by Spenser, is his best-known work. Spenser intended the work, which was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth (herself represented by the title character), to consist of twelve books, each of which narrates a journey undertaken by a knight of King Arthur's court on behalf of Gloriana, the Faerie Queene. Before his death in 1599, Spenser was only able to complete the first six books (and start writing the seventh). Between Shakespeare- Spenser and Wordsworth, notable poets including John Milton, John Dryden, and Alexander Pope also had a great impact on the genre. Dryden and Pope came out with some of the brilliant satires of the age. Some important works of John

Dryden are his satires such as Absalom and Achitophel, Mac Flecknoe, and The Hind and the Panther. Pope who is a brilliant and incredibly witty writer, comes up with some great poems such as Ode on Solitude, An Essay on Criticism, Windsor Forest apart from his master piece The Rape of the Lock. Milton's literary epics *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain* are part of literary canon even today. They not only capture the human history but also mirrors the political scenario of Milton's time. The character of Satan which is acclaimed by many critics is viewed as a republican hero who is persuasive and articulate, far more so than the "tyrannous" and somewhat humourless character of God.

Romantic Age of English Literature is considered as a golden age of poetry as per the opinions of many scholars and critics. This age has given some of the greatest poets to the history of English Literature. Individualism and affection towards the nature are the major characteristics of Romantic age. Sonnet and ode are some of the popular forms of poetry during Romantic Age. Wordsworth, Shelly, Coleridge, Byron, Black and Keats are some of the significant names of this age. They produced work that expressed spontaneous feelings, found parallels to their own emotional lives in the natural world, and celebrated creativity rather than logic. Poetry of Victorian Age echoed the loss of love and nostalgia. Classic Victorian works generally pay close attention to rhyme, exhibit considerable tenderness, and frequently explore chivalric themes. Epic poems and theatrical monologues were popular forms of poetry during this time. The most prolific and well-regarded poets of the age are Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, and G. M. Hopkins. Under the umbrella term of modernism and with the cry of make it new, modernist poetry broke all the notions of previous ages with its fragmented, broken and disillusionary picture of an isolated individual and its society.

• **Check Your Progress: 3**

1. Find out the odd one among the given list.
a) Alfred Tennyson b) William Wordsworth
c) Matthew Arnold d) Robert Browning
2. Individualism was essence of poetry of _____ age.
a) Elizabethan b) Neo Classical
c) Romantic d) Victorian
3. _____ is a well-known work of Alexzander Pope.
a) Mac Flecknoe b) The Rape of the Lock
c) Paradise Lost d) Ode to Westwind

1.5 LET US SUM UP

Overall, the chapter examines the idea of poetry using various perspectives. It also provides the idea of form of poetry and ends with the brief historical background of English poetry.

1.6 KEY WORD

Form the shape and structure of something specifically in terms of poetry, it's the structure of poetry

Modernism An umbrella term for a series of literary and artistic movements took place during late 19th and early 20th century that break with the past and in search of new forms of expressions.

1.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students by Cleanth Brooks
2. A Glossary of Literary Terms by M. H. Abrams
3. The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry by Peter Howarth

Answers:

Know Your Progress 2:

- 1) false 2) false 3) true

Know Your Progress 3:

- 1) b) William Wordsworth
- 2) c) Romantic
- 3) b) The Rape of the Lock

:: STRUCTURE ::**2.0 Objective****2.1 Introduction****2.2 Components of Poetry****2.2.1 Rhyme and Rhythm****2.2.2 Form and Structure****2.2.3 Figurative Language****2.2.4 Poetic Device****2.2.5 Subject and Speaker:**

- **Check Your Progress: 1**
- **Check Your Progress: 2**

2.3 Types of Poetry**2.3.1 Lyric****2.3.2 Ballad****2.3.3 Blank Verse****2.3.4 Elegy****2.3.5 Epic**

- **Check Your Progress: 3**

2.4 Let Us Sum Up**2.5 Suggested Readings****❖ Answers**

2.0 OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this unit is to talk about the elements of poetry and the many forms of poetry. The learner ought to be aware of by the conclusion of the chapter:

- Components of poetry
- Types of poetry

2.2 INTRODUCTION

The preceding lesson introduced the fundamental concepts of poetry by talking about its numerous meanings, various forms, and brief history. Poetry's definitions miss out many times its components or what is many times known as elements of poetry. You might be surprised but form about which we have already discussed in the last chapter is also one of the components or elements in the study of poetry. As we continue with present chapter, we'll talk about a few components and genres of poetry to round out the picture of poetry as a whole.

2.3 COMPONENTS OF POETRY

Understanding the meanings in poetry is arduous task for anyone specially if does not understand how this intricate form incorporates sound pattern, poetic devices, images, figurative language, and many other substances. Following are the components that present unit takes up for the discussion.

- ❖ Rhyme and Rhythm:
- ❖ Form and Structure
- ❖ Figurative Language and Poetic Device
- ❖ Subject and Speaker

2.2.1 Rhyme and Rhythm

Poetry often uses rhyme, which is a pattern of repeated sounds. They are applied to strengthen a rhyme or pattern. The rhyme system is a crucial component of some types of poetry, including ballads, sonnets, and couplets. Let's discuss in brief about some of the rhymes:

Masculine and Feminine Rhyme: Rhyming between stressed syllables at the end of verse lines is usually known as masculine rhyme whereas within the same situation unstressed syllables is called feminine rhyme.

An example of masculine rhyme is:

"The dog barked *loud*, in a *crowd*"

An example of feminine rhyme is:

"The stars twinkle in the *night*, so *bright*"

End Rhyme: when the last word of two or more lines rhyme in poetry, it is called end rhyme. It's very popular type of rhyme especially with Children Literature. A famous poem Maggie and Millie and Molly and May by E. E. Comings is one such example.

—may come home with a smooth round stone

as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)

It's always ourselves we find in the sea. ||

Imperfect Rhyme: It is a type of rhyme that do not have an identical sound.

Internal Rhyme: It occurs in the middle of lines in poetry.

In poetry or prose, the placement of stressed and unstressed syllables, as well as the length of the syllables, convey movement or a sense of the movement known as rhythm. Let's understand some rhythm with **examples:**

Iamb: It is an extremely common rhyme patten with one unstressed followed by one stressed syllable.

Trochee: It is a rhyme patten with one stressed syllable followed by one unstressed syllable which is just reverse process from Iamb.

Spondee: In spondee rhythm pattern, you find two or more consequent stressed syllable.

It is significant to note here that the rhythm and rhyme in poetry become perceptible specially while reading them aloud.

2.2.2 Form and Structure

As discussed in the prior chapter in detail about various forms of the poetry and each form following the special structure, the repetition of the same would be needless here even though some highlighted points that is preferable to discuss with you are: various structural elements are stanza, verse and canto whereas based on it some forms of the poetry are sonnet, haiku, limerick and others.

2.2.3 Figurative Language

Figurative language deviates significantly from what speakers of a language typically understand as the standard meaning to convey a unique message or effect. Here are some figures of speech for our basic understanding.

Simile: Here a comparison between two completely different things gets possible using the words such as 'As' or 'Like'. For ex. My love is *like* a red red rose.

Metaphor: Here a phrase or expression that in its literal sense refers to one sort of item is used to describe another kind of thing that is clearly different from the first without making a comparison.

For ex. Someone with a heart of a gold or life is a stage. Shakespeare's famous sonnet 130 provides an example of metaphor

—If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun!

Metonymy: Metonymy, which means "a change of name" in Greek, is the application of the literal name of one item to another that has become close to it as a result of a frequent association in shared experience. For Ex. Crown represents the king. Metonymy has the effect of creating

concrete and vivid images in place of generalities. A familiar Shakespearean example is Mark Antony's speech in *Julius Caesar* in which he asks of his audience: —Lend me your ears.¶

Synecdoche: Synecdoche is the Greek word for "putting together," and it refers to the use of a part of anything to represent the whole or, less frequently, the entire to represent a part. For ex. Using synecdoche, Milton in his work *Lycidas* narrates corrupt and greedy clergy as blind mouths. One should realize that synecdoche is an important poetic device for creating vivid imagery. An example is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's line in —The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,¶ —The western wave was all aflame,¶ in which —wave¶ substitutes for —sea.¶

2.2.4 Poetic Device

The poetic devices are those literary devices which we use in the poetry for various purpose such as to enhance the meaning or to intensify the feeling and so on. Repetition refers to the usage of the same words, phrases, and imagery again throughout a poem. Enjambment is when a line is broken before it reaches its natural point. Famous metaphysical poet John Donne in his poem uses enjambment in his poem "The Good-Morrow".

"I wonder, by my troth, what thou and *I/Did* till we loved? Were we not weaned till then?"

Irony happens when a result differs from what is anticipated. Usually in literature, three types of irony we come across: Verbal, Situational and Dramatic. Jonathan Swift is known for his brilliant use of irony in his writings. Let's take an example from his famous text 'Modest Proposal' which refers to the sad state of poor orphan children during his time period in this way:

... whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the Commonwealth, would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

Personification is a poetic method in which inanimate objects are given human attributes. Here is an example from Dickinson's poem:

—*The Heart wants what it wants – or else it does not care*¶

Onomatopoeia is the imitation of a natural sound by a word. Look at this wonderful use of onomatopoeia by Shakespeare in one of his popular plays *The Tempest*

— Hark, hark!
Bow- Wow.
The watch-dogs bark!
Bow- Wow. ||

Hyperbole is when a sentence is exaggerated to achieve a particular poetic effect. Shakespeare's sonnet 147 is an example of the use of hyperbole where the poet uses this device to deal with the subject of infatuation and desire.

2.2.5 Subject and Speaker

Different poetic forms have different themes or contents. The poem is about a certain subject. Sonnets, for instance, often discuss sadness, separation, and love and admiration for one's lover. While the themes of divine sonnets cover worship of God, enlightenment, and salvation. Elegies are written in remembrance of the deceased. So, a deceased person is the subject of this poetry. The speaker of a poem is the narrator. We frequently assume that the poet is the speaker themselves when we read poetry. It's not always the case, though. Sometimes poets take on a fictional persona and write the poem from their point of view. Typically, a first-person or third-person speaker is used to tell the poem's story.

Check Your Progress: 1

Q.1 Answer the following questions.

1) Discuss types of rhyme.

2) Which poetic devices you are aware of? Explain with examples.

3) What's the role of speaker in the poetry?

Check Your Progress: 2

Match A with B

A	B
Onomatopoeia	The White House rejected the proposal.
Metaphor	The rustling leaves kept me awake for the whole night.
Hyperbole	Your argument is a slippery slope.
Synecdoche	I'm dying of thirst.

As we have already discussed the components of poetry, now moving further, we would study various types of poetry, and, in this unit, we would discuss some of the major types of poetry.

2.3 TYPES OF POETRY

2.3.1 Lyric

The word "lyric," which means "a song rendered to the accompaniment," is derived from the Greek language. It still conserve the idea of a song that is intended to be sung. However, the term "lyric" is defined as an expression by a single speaker, which expresses a state of mind or a process of perception, thought, and feeling in a short poem.

We must keep in mind, though, that Lyric's first-person narration (I) is not always the poet's I. Some exceptions are available in English Literature such as Coleridge's —Frost at Midnight|. Mostly the speaker of the lyric utters in solitude, many times we find lyrics uttered —in a public voice on a public occasion|. For ex. a famous ceremonial poem _O Captain My Captain' by Walt Whitman.

2.3.2 Ballad

Ooriginated and narrated orally, ballad is a song telling a story. This oral traditional song has no specific poet. Talking about the characteristic of popular ballad, Abrams writes:

Typically, the popular ballad is dramatic, condensed, and impersonal: the narrator begins with the climactic episode, tells the story tersely by means of action and dialogue (sometimes by means of the dialogue alone), and tells it without self-reference or the expression of personal attitudes or feelings. (18)

Romantic Age is known for the composition of some of the finest ballads in the history of English Literature. Walter Scott's "Proud Maisie," and Keats' "La Belle Dame sans Merci" are some of the examples.

2.3.3 Blank Verse

The term "blank verse" refers to lines of iambic pentameter (five-stress iambic verse) that are not rhymed. It was introduced by the Earl of Surrey when he translated the books 2 and 4 of *The Aeneid* by Virgil. Later, Elizabethan and other poetic drama adopted this form. Some popular examples of blank verse in English literature are *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* and Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book*.

2.3.4 Elegy

The present meaning of the term elegy means a lament song on someone's death or demise usually ending with consolation; However, the present meaning came into existence during 17th century. Originally, Elegy was a kind of poem written in Elegiac meter in Greek and Roman literature. Even in Old English, this form refers to the poems on —transience of all worldly things. Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam* is one of the famous elegies written on the death of his best friend Arthur Hallam; W. H. Auden wrote "In Memory of W. B. Yeats". Dirge, is also a kind of elegy poem but is less formal than elegy.

2.3.5 Epic

The epic, usually referred to as a "heroic poem," is a type of lengthy verse narrative with a serious subject matter, rendered in grand style, and primarily telling the tale of a heroic individual, on whose actions the fate of a tribe, nation, or humanity depends. Two types of epics are usually available in literature: traditional and literary where traditional epics mostly are the oral poems about the tribe or a national hero and his chivalric fights. For example, Homer's the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, *Beowulf* from the Anglo-Saxon Period, *The Ramayana*, and *The Mahabharata* in Indian Literature. Literary epic is a type of deliberate imitation by a specific poet. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is one of the examples of the literary epic.

- **Check Your Progress: 3**

Q.1 Fill in the gaps with an appropriate answer/word.

- 1) Ballad form mainly flourished during _____ age.
a) Romantic b) Victorian c) Neo Classical d) Puritan
- 2) _____ type of poetry highlights the element of singing.
a) Free Verse b) Ballad c) Lyric d) Epic

3) Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book* is an example of

a) Epic b) Free Verse c) Blank Verse d) Lyric

4) _____ is an example of Anglo-Saxon epic.

a) Beowulf b) Paradise Lost c) Ramayana d) Paradise Regain

2.4 LET US SUM UP

Overall, this chapter gets converged with the previous chapter to build up an entire construction of poetry as a concept. Now you understand not only about various definitions of poetry but also understands its nuances, its technicalities and of course its history. Now learning the devices and forms and types of poetry would make your reading of poetry more interesting and sensible in your future course.

2.5 SUGGESTED READINGS

A Glossary of Literary Terms by M. H. Abrams

Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory by J. A. Cuddon

Understanding Poetry by Cleanth Brooks

<https://org.coloradomesa.edu/~blaga/Theory/poetry_elements.html>

Answers:

Check Your Progress: 2

Match A with B

A	B
Onomatopoeia	The rustling leaves kept me awake for the whole night.
Metaphor	Your argument is a slippery slope.
Hyperbole	I'm dying of thirst.
Synecdoche	The White House rejected the proposal.

Check Your Progress: 3

- 1) Romantic
- 2) Lyric
- 3) Blank verse
- 4) Beowulf

:: STRUCTURE ::**3.0 Objectives****3.1 Descriptive Poetry****3.2 Introduction to the Poet****3.3 The Poem: “Smoke”****3.4 Critical Analysis****3.4.1 Critical Appreciation****3.4.2 “Smoke” as a descriptive poem****3.5 Lets sum up****3.6 Key words****3.7 Further reading****3.8 Check Your Progress****❖ Answers**

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall

- discuss descriptive poetry with special reference to the poem —Smokel
- critically analyze —Smokel

On completing this unit, you should be able to

- define and discuss descriptive poetry
- critically appreciate the poem —Smokel

3.1 DESCRIPTIVE POETRY

Descriptive poetry is a class of literature that belongs mainly to the 16th, 17th and 18th century Europe. From the earliest times, all the poetry which was not lyrical as far as the subject is concerned, would make use of beautification which can be termed as descriptive. But the critics of 17th century distinguished the ancients and the moderns on the basis of their representations. In descriptive poetry, the landscape, still life, architecture, nature and other such objects that the poet focuses on or uses

are not a tool or accessory, instead they are the central idea or interest. In other words, when description is just an accessory or tool, and not the focus of the poem, that kind of poetry cannot be termed as descriptive poetry. James Thomson's —The Seasons‡ is a beautiful example of descriptive poetry. Here the landscape is of main interest. Similarly, Drayton's —Polyolbion‡ is a descriptive poetry, where we can see the topographical movement through Britain. In other words, descriptive poetry is a poem which uses detailed words in order to create imagery of person, animal or inanimate object.

3.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE POET

Henry David Thoreau born on July 12, 1817 at Concord, Massachusetts, US, was an American essayist, poet, philosopher, naturalist, and historian. Best known for his book *Walden* which is a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings, and his essay "Civil Disobedience" (originally published as "Resistance to Civil Government"), Thoreau had keen interest in Western philosophy, Transcendentalism, Poetry, Religion, Politics, and History. Henry David Thoreau was a complex man with many talents and he worked hard so that he can shape his craft as well as his life. He did not differentiate between his art and his life. His work is very rich at the same time it is full of the complex contradictions that he explored. And these contradictions and complexities make his readers keep reshaping his image to fit their own needs. His literary style involves close and minute observation of nature, personal experiences, pointed rhetoric, symbolic meanings, and historical lore. He displays a vivid poetic sensibility, philosophical austerity, and a keen attention to practical detail typical of an American. He spent his life creatively, creating meaning for himself and others. He believed in rethinking about life and always asked questions and looked at nature for more intense and meaningful existence. Thoreau's writings influenced many public figures. Political leaders and reformers like Mahatma Gandhi, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., William O. Douglas, and Leo Tolstoy, all were strongly affected by Thoreau's work, especially by —Civil Disobediencel. Moreover, Thoreau was influenced by Indian spiritual thought. One can find many obvious references to the sacred texts of India in his seminal work *Walden*. He also followed many Hindu customs. Thoreau contracted tuberculosis for the first time in 1835 and suffered from it intermittently afterwards. In 1860, following a late-night expedition to count the rings of tree stumps during a rainstorm, he became ill with bronchitis and his health declined, with brief periods of remission, and he eventually became bedridden. He died on May 6, 1862, at the age of 44.

3.3 THE POEM: SMOKE

by Henry David Thoreau (1843)
Light-winged Smoke, Icarian bird,
Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,
Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,
Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form
Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;
By night star-veiling, and by day
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;
Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,
And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.

3.4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

3.4.1 Critical Appreciation

—Smoke|| was first published in *The Dial* in April 1843 along with another short poem —Hazel||, under a general title of —Orphic||s|. The title of the poem suggests the poet’s fascination for the qualities of a basic element in nature, smoke. Smoke is a transitional form that hovers between solid and gas, an intercessor between earth and sky, earth and the Sun. It is obvious from the first reading that the perspective of the poem is that of the poet. The poem is written in one sentence and describes a pillar of smoke that rises from the hearth of the poet and ends in a command to the smoke to rise upward as the poet’s incense and ask the gods to forgive his clear flame. The poem is written in free verse and does not follow any rhyme scheme. Imagery is the predominant tool that the poet uses here. The poem is divided into 3 parts as far the imagery of the poem is concerned. In lines 1-4 the image of journey of a bird is constructed. It shows the flight of the bird upwards. In the next 2 lines the bird image is developed further as the smoke rises like a bird and circles above its nest. In the second part of the poem the imagery changes from flight of a bird to a dark, shadowy undefined form, which is a contrast to the imagery of first 4 lines. Lines 9-10 make the final section of the poem. These lines are the command of the poet to the smoke that it should rise from the poet’s hearth and convert into a message to God to pardon poet’s clear flame. These lines are summation of the poem. In this poem, Thoreau is captivated by a very basic element of nature and that is smoke. Here we see Thoreau, the naturalist. In lines 1-4, where the image of an upward flight of a bird is created, the smoke becomes an —Icarian bird|| as it ascends. Icarus is a defiant boy of the Greek legend who,

disobeying his father, flew too close to the sun, due to which his wax wings got melted and he drowned into the sea. Thoreau makes a skillful use of paradox here, as smoke though seems to be in a melted form in the heat of sun, just like that of Icarus, does not fall down but rises up. It continues its flight towards the heaven. In these 4 lines, Thoreau's knowledge and keen interest in the Greek mythology is visible. Further, in the next 2 lines, Thoreau, the naturalist, comes to fore. And the image of Icarus is converted to that of bird. Icarus is now Lark, who rises above in the fashion of a bird circling its nest. The smoke is compared to a —lark without song|. Thoreau compares smoke to the soaring flight of a lark because its flight is very high and long-sustained. Words like —nest,| —song,| —lark,| —pinions,| —light-winged,| and —Icarian bird|| reinforce the symbol of bird and it is merged with the image of journey through the words like —upward flight,| —messenger,| and —circling|. The words suggesting vague ideas like —dream,| —shadowy,| and —vision| are used in lines 5-8 to contrast with the concreteness of first four lines. The poet creates contrast of darkness and light with the help of words like —midnight,| —night,| —darkening,| —blotting out| and —star,| —day,| —light,| —sun| respectively. The contrast gets a combined expression in the word —star-veiling|. The concluding lines of the poem are the central thought of the poem, where the smoke is asked to rise up from the poet's hearth in the form of message to the gods asking them to pardon his —clear flame|. The expression —clear flame| is highly suggestive and can be a reference to poet's work, the essence of his writings, his individuality which is on the earth. With the help of these lines the poet attains the —height|| of the poem, the highpoint that he intended to reach with the help of the imagery.

3.4.2 “Smoke” as a descriptive poem

A descriptive poem, as discussed above, is the one which uses detailed words to create an imagery of a person, animal or inanimate object and this imagery is the central interest of the poem. In the present poem, the inanimate element smoke is used as the central idea. The smoke which rises from the hearth of the poet travels upwards. Initially the image of —Icarian bird|| is created by the poet. As discussed earlier, Icarus is the defiant boy of Greek legend, who disobeyed his father and went too close to the sun which resulted into melting of his wings and consequent drowning in the sea. Here Thoreau, who was well-versed with classical literature, uses the image of Icarus not only to show melting quality of smoke when it goes up but also suggests the defiance of smoke, that rises up in any condition. As the poem progresses the image of Icarian bird shifts to the image of a lark. Lark is a bird well-known for its high-

soaring flights. Here we have a —lark without song|. Lark songs are audible even if the bird is at a great height, but as the bird is used as a symbol for the smoke, it is suggested that smoke attains great height like lark, but it does not have any song to sing or any sound for that matter. The image of the bird's journey is further strengthened by the use of words like —circling,| —messenger,| and —departing. It travels over the —hamlets| and rises above, towards its destination. The initiation of smoke's journey is definite but its travel is vague and hence in order to suggest this vagueness, the poet makes use of words like —dream,| —shadowy| and —vision|. In order to bring the combination of light and darkness which is so characteristically related to the greyness of smoke, the poet has used contrasting words like —star,| —day,| —light,| —sun| and —midnight,| —night,| —darkening,| —blotting out| respectively. The grey smoke also takes feminine form which is visible with the help of expressions like —gathering up thy skirts| and —night star-veiling. The final lines suggest the command given to the smoke to rise from the poet's hearth and reach heaven to ask gods' forgiveness for the poet's —clear flamel. Here —clear flamel may suggest the artistry of the poet which is now devoid of any impurities but initially was an act of defiance as suggested in the first few lines of the poem. Other tool used for reinforcing the image of smoke is the creation of verticality. The lines of the poem suggest a vertical movement; they successfully create a picture of smoke, in different images, rising upwards. The use of present participles like —melting,| —circling,| —departing,| —gathering,| —veiling,| —darkening,| and —blotting| give the poem a sense of interconnectedness and continuity, an image of movement. These words are used in the middle lines of the poem where the journey of smoke is described. The poem ends with the idea of smoke rising upward and the poet's flame on the earth. —Smokel primarily deals with the object smoke and it uses different symbols and imageries to create a picture of the journey of smoke towards the sky. The poem does not metaphorically stand for anything other than the smoke. It is definitely open to various interpretations on the basis of ones knowledge of Greek mythology, classical literature, nature and other related spheres, yet the focus of the poem does not change.

3.5 LETS SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt

- about the sub-genre of descriptive poetry
- to critically analyse and appreciate poetry

3.6 KEY WORDS

<i>critical</i>	using or involving careful judgement of good and bad parts of something
<i>descriptive poetry</i>	a poem which uses detailed words in order to create imagery of person, animal or inanimate object.
<i>imagery</i>	vivid and descriptive language which is used to create distinct and definitive pictures in the reader’s mind
<i>suggestive symbol</i>	being a sign of something a sign, object etc that represents something

3.7 FURTHER READING

- Gurudev, S. *American Literature: Studies on Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville and Whitman*, Atlantic, 2011
- Myerson, J. ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Henry David Thoreau*, CUP, 1995
- Van Doren, M. *Henry David Thoreau: A Critical Study*, Wentworth Press, 2016

3.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- **Descriptive questions:**

1. Comment on the use of imagery in the poem.

2. Discuss —Smokel as a descriptive poem.

3. What is the theme of the poem? Elaborate.

❖ **Objective questions:**

• **Fill in the blanks:**

1. The poem —Smoke is about an _____ object. (live/inanimate)
2. Thoreau uses _____ mythology in the image of —Icarian bird. (Greek/Christian)
3. The journey of smoke is _____. (horizontal/vertical)
4. The present participles used in the poem suggest _____. (movement/darkness)
5. The merger of dark and light is expressed through the expression _____. (star-veiling/clear flame)

• **State whether the statements are true or false:**

1. The poem is about light.
2. The poem describes journey of smoke.
3. The poet uses various types of images to create a visual picture of the journey of smoke from the earth towards sky.
4. According to Greek mythology Icarus was a defiant girl.
5. Descriptive poetry deals with nature only.

❖ **Answers**

- Objective questions:
- Fill in the blanks:
 1. Inanimate
 2. Greek
 3. vertical
 4. movement
 5. star-veiling
- State whether the statements are true or false:
 1. False
 2. True
 3. True
 4. False
 5. False

:: STRUCTURE ::

- 4.0 Objective**
- 4.1 Poem: the human seasons**
- 4.2 Introduction**
- 4.3 Keatsian Poetic Outlook**
- 4.4 Explication of the Poem**
- 4.5 Critical Reading**
- 4.6 Structure of The Poem**
- 4.7 Key Words**
- 4.8 Let Us Sum Up**
- 4.9 Check Your Progress**
- 4.10 Suggested Reading**
 - ❖ **Answers**

4.0 OBJECTIVE

- To paraphrase and clarify denotative meaning of the poem
- To understand Keats as a Romantic Poet with reference to his major poetic principle
- To explicate the poem with close reading and interpret it in terms of archetypes and stylistic analysis
- To understand the structure of the poem and devices used there in
- On completing the Unit, you should be able to elaborate on interpretations of the poem ‘The Human Seasons’ and evaluate its literary devices and structure.

4.1 POEM: THE HUMAN SEASONS

Four Seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear

Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honey'd cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminare, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

John Keats's 'The Human Seasons' is a reflective poem. Reflective poem means that the poem presents a thought as its subject matter instead of an event or action. Narrative poems, on the other hand, would majorly involve some past action or event in its content. Reflective poems tend to be philosophical in their outlook toward life, and the poet either observes or speculates about truth of persistent conditions of human life which may include inductive thinking. Besides, explicit or implicit generalizations in such poems often tend to give an abstract quality to the general import of the poem. There are a lot many other examples of reflective poetry, and to name a few, Shakespeare's 'All The World's A Stage', Emily Dickinson's 'Hope is the Thing with Feathers', W. B. Yeats's Byzantium poems, Robert Frost's 'Fire and Ice', Maya Angelou's 'Still I Rise' among others.

Like many poets writing in different times and traditions, Keats also takes an objective look at human life with a sense of detachment. With utmost economy of words, he sums up the kernel of significant phases of human life, which is, analogically speaking, reminiscent of ancient Indian concept of 'Purusarth Chatushtaya' or 'fourfold actions' set in four ashramas' of human life.

John Keats (1795-1821) was one central figure among the second generation of English Romantic poets along with Lord Byron and PB Shelley. His poems were noted for his forthrightness in subject matter, bold assertions celebrating physical and transient phenomena in the world and sensual imagery that took its society by surprise. 'The Human Seasons' is Keats's personal ruminations about life when he was at Teignmouth, a seaside town in the British county of Devon in the year of 1818. His first work on his collected poems, *Poems by John Keats* was

published in 1817. Soon after the promising poet was out in print with his poems so different in tone, style and content, his art was severely reviled by *Blackwood's Magazine* and *Quarterly Review*. One piece published in *Blackwood's*, 'On the Cockney School of Poetry' made him almost reluctant to publish his next major work 'Endymion', which was also doomed to be flaked by debasing reviews from the critics. More so, the year 1818 became a crucible for Keats concerning his own and his brother Tom's failing health and the latter's subsequent death in the same year. Despite the vagaries of time and dwindling health, Keats came to produce finest of odds, sonnets, long narrative poems, lyrics in short time which were sufficient to secure his name in the English literary history. Surprising though, harsh critical reception of his time made this 'bright star' though he was a failure when he breathed his last at the tender age of twenty-five.

4.3 KEATSIAN POETIC OUTLOOK

Keatsian writing differs from his fellow poets in terms of his choice of content, style and outlook to the world. The element of Romanticism is singularly marked in his poems by an undying optimism and projection of nature as a source of the 'beautiful' and 'changing reality' yet a steady source of them. In a letter to George and Thomas Keats that he wrote in December, 1817, he stated, —The excellence of every Art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeable evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth.‖ (John Keats: Letters, 370). This idea culminates into one of his major critical tenets that he contributes to the history of ideas which he called 'Negative Capability'. In another letter to his brothers George and Thomas (on 21 December 1817), he elaborates on his idea of 'Negative Capability' of the poet which enables the poet to live with the unlivable in the world without any conflictual impulse. He wrote: —...I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason...‖ It means that sometimes in the pursuit of aesthetic principle, the writer or the poet moves from intellectual certainties to something unknown or uncertain and the artist explores his or her own vision unbiased of readymade formula of thought and feeling prescribed by philosophy, religion and social ethics. All human endeavours, howsoever disparate they may be, should in the end converge in attainment of Beauty and Truth. His contemplation about art and life are to be seen in his poems and letters.

Keats majorly deals with the following themes in his poems such as eternal principles of truth and beauty, death or dissolution of existence,

sensual reality and art, music, ancient worlds, and musings about the beloved.

4.4 EXPLICATION OF THE POEM

Natural seasons, as perceived in Europe, namely, spring, summer, autumn, and winter correlate here with stages of life as in childhood, youth, maturity, old age or death. However, Keats takes this comparison further to a subtle level of states of mind that one experiences. And it is fairly possible to envision them by imagination and reasoning without as such having lived them physically.

In the first two lines, the poet introduces the idea of the poem. The following two lines speak of early phase of life, or a mindset that is innocent. The usage ‘lusty Spring’ stands for luscious and joyful time when the perception of the world is full of wonder, happiness and curiosity. It is this readiness to witness and participate in the abundance of joy that makes one marvel at the world. Such ‘fancy’ makes one behold everything in the world as beautiful and passes one’s time in this phase easily.

Summer is the buoyant phase of youthfulness or when the state of mind is chirpy. This phase signifies stepping into action. All that one had perceived with wonder and marvel, the youthful gaze on life loves to ponder about it; the faculty of imagination soars high. It is the time when the youthful take on life makes one embark on joyride of life with adventures, explorations, new ventures while the expectations are high. In such dreamy high-flying state of mind, one feels ‘nearest unto heaven’.

Autumn is marked by peaceful and steady poise. It is the state of mind where one feels the need to ‘furl close one’s wings’—withdraw from diverse fields of action. The person now takes the estimate of what one gained on roundabouts and what one lost on swings. It is the time when one is able to look back on actions and choices made and with hindsight one understands one’s participation in life. Having lived fully and seen much, now one feels content and responds to the charms of life with unaffected equipoise of mind. Autumn here stands for the maturity that comes after analyzing and understanding one’s experiences of life.

Winter is the final passage or a state of mind that completely withdraws from all sorts of engagement of body and mind. The sense faculties are no longer at service of the living being and even the slightest capacity of relishing the life diminishes.

4.5 CRITICAL READING OF „THE HUMAN SEASONS“

While at Teignmouth, Keats penned this sonnet and sent it along with a letter to Benjamin Bailey dated 13 March, 1818. He wrote:

'You know my ideas about Religion. I do not think myself more in the right than other people, and that nothing in this world is proveable. I wish I could enter into all your feelings on the subject merely for one short 10 Minutes and give you a Page or two to your liking. I am sometimes so very skeptical as to think Poetry itself a mere Jack a lanthen to amuse whoever may chance to be struck with its brilliance. As Tradesmen say every thing is worth what it will fetch, so probably every mental pursuit takes its reality and worth from the ardour of the pursuer—being in itself a nothing—Ethereal thing[s] may at least be thus real, divided under three heads—Things real—things semi-real—and no things. Things real—such as existences of Sun Moon and Stars and passages of Shakespeare. Things semi-real such as Love, the Clouds &c which require a greeting of the Spirit to make them wholly exist—and Nothings which are made Great and dignified by an ardent pursuit—which by the by stamps the burgundy mark on the bottles of our Minds, insomuch as they are able to "consec[r]ate whate'er they look upon". I have written a Sonnet here of a somewhat collateral nature—so don't imagine it an *a propos des bottes*.'

Young Keats makes a subtle point in that perceived reality consists of concrete objects or phenomena as could be felt and seen, objects not in direct contact or emotions that could be understood with a dash of imagination or sensation, and thoughts or mental pursuits which do not exist in real life yet they can be sublime to experience as much as one endeavors to fathom them. Writing and reading poetry belongs to this last category, especially when the poem is reflective and deals in some kind of idea. In this poem, 'The Human Seasons', the poet ideates about the passage of life and builds a fine symbolic abstract complex of ideas on it. Keats makes it explicit that the poem is about the seasons as are—in the mind of man. Seasons are transformational processes of nature and so is true about human lives. Over period of time, we do change with respect to our thoughts, feelings, priorities and goals and understanding of life. Human beings transform and there seems to be a pattern akin to nature's transformational processes.

Apart from apparent parallels between different seasons and psychosomatic realities of life, Keats underscores these parallels by his striking collocations of words. These collocations yield symbolic

overtones to meanings: lusty Spring, fancy clear, easy span, honied cud, quiet coves, threshold brook, pale misfeature, mortal nature. In the description of each seasonal correlation, these collocations leave space for different interpretations.

Let us look at some of these meanings. Calling Spring lusty draws attention to itself, which stands for a frame of mind and time in life where everything seems possible and one observes ‘all beauty’. ‘Easy span’ suggests certain courage born of innocence or naiveté where one marvels at this whole world with a sense of wonder. However, this time of childhood fancy lasts for a short time. ‘Honied cud’ evokes an imagery of cow and suggests the blithesome time spent in the phase of youth; reminiscing memories of ebullient joy that one experienced in living and doing. The grown-up mind in Summer can better assess the pleasantness of experiences. Man can reflect on his Spring (childhood) with better clarity in his Summer (youth). In Autumn, ‘quiet coves’ are man’s thoughtful reflections on his ‘honied cud’ of youth. There is a beginning of emotional and rational detachment from what made man lively. Keats employs the imagery of bird that furls close its wings to connote this withdrawal and ability to transcend to higher contemplative nature. More number of lines are devoted to Autumn, for this time stands for the culmination of man’s wisdom. One is seemingly at peace and considers not only the beautiful but also the oddities of life with equanimity. ‘Fair things’, which once drew out man’s enthusiasm now ‘pass by unheeded’. Here, man is aware of joys and calls of life, but no longer is he driven by them. Winter ushers in ‘pale misfeature’—it could be read either as incapacity born of old age or even death. One comes to terms with the ‘mortal nature’ of human life and that is the ultimate reality of every living being.

Interpreting the Seasons:

The human life is short lived; an ephemeral truth of existence while one walks and breathes in the world. The lives of individuals may vary, yet everyone unexceptionally pass through the same phases of life just as the reality of day and night may vary on every part of the day but the cycle of season permeates everywhere on the earth. By setting parallels between natural seasons and human conditions, Keats makes the entire poem symbolic and leaves open different possibilities to interpret it differently. Look into the table given below for possible interpretations.

Seasons	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
interpretation				
<i>Stages of growth</i>	Childhood	Youth	Maturity, procreation, sustenance	Old age, debility, nearing one's end
<i>Life as a journey</i>	Innocence, Inexperience	Growth; willingness to do	Observing experience; understanding things around	Withdrawal, passing out
<i>Emotional states</i>	Curiosity; desire to know and explore	Optimism; Liveliness	Contemplation; Objectivity	Sense of finality; completion
<i>Pastoral trope</i>	Sowing seeds, plantation	Cultivation; Nurturing	Ripening; Harvesting	Post-harvest cleaning
<i>Archetypes</i>	Birth	Growth	Decay	Dissolution
<i>Frye's archetypal scheme of genre</i>	Comedy	Romance	Tragedy	Irony

From the above chart, one can see that four seasons may be interpreted differently such as stage of growth in human life, life as a journey or series of experiences, emotional conditions, pastoral trope, or even archetypes or typical thought frameworks which many writers have used over centuries in their writings, and lastly, Northrop Frye's classification of literary genre or kinds of writing that correspond to the seasons. Frye used seasonal analogy to elicit major thematic concerns in given genres that correspond to the environmental changes. He also showed through his analogy how the archetypes of birth, growth, decay and dissolution recurred in most literary traditions in different literary and art forms and drew their symbolic import from the cycle of natural seasons.

4.6 STRUCTURE OF THE POEM

Keats's 'The Human Seasons' is an Elizabethan sonnet with the rhyme pattern of *ababcdcdefefgg* written in iambic pentameter. A sonnet typically has 14 lines. Here, the structure of the poem is carefully set. First, the natural order of seasons is preserved: spring, summer, autumn and winter. (Note that this is the order of fourfold season as perceived in England. In India, seasons are conventionally classified as six: *Vasanta* 'spring', *Grishma* 'summer', *Varsha* 'Monsoon', *Sharada* 'autumn',

Hemanta (Pre-winter, *Shishira* (winter)) Second, the order of seasons also correlates with natural order of aging. Moreover, number of words in lines spared for each season is in relevance to the significance of the phase of human life: spring is short; summer and autumn are long, and winter is short.

The innocent period of life stays for short duration and that is reflected by the use of only two lines spared for the Spring: 'He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear/ Takes in all beauty with an easy span:' The joyful time of summer is little longer and suggests man's ability to engage with life while one reflects on the past. The time of Autumn is the pinnacle of human understanding of life. The poet uses a greater number of lines in the description of Summer and Autumn. The final dissolution or death is treated in the last two lines. Besides, references to seasons per se become metaphorical in nature.

The poem makes use of refrains. A refrain is a repeated word, phrase or line that recurs in the composition to serve either thematic or mnemonic purpose. In this case, the recurring phrases are, 'He has his lusty Spring', 'He has his Summer', 'He has his Winter'. Refrain gives a tonal unity and makes reading easy. This poem carefully uses this device to single out different seasons in the poem.

Besides this, 'The Human Seasons' is a reflective poem, that is, the poem foregrounds an idea rather than an event or action. Stylistically speaking, action verbs are less preferred over passive verbs and more adjectival phrases are employed. In this poem, ten verbs are used. They are: 'fill', 'takes', 'loves', 'ruminates', 'dreaming', 'furleth', 'look', 'let', 'pass', and 'forego'. And all these verbs suggest passive or negligible movements in physical life, which will not be the case in a narrative poem full of action. Moreover, the seasons are qualified with unusual adjectival collocations:

Spring: 'lusty spring', 'easy span'

Summer: 'honed cud', 'youthful thought'

Autumn: 'quiet coves', 'mists in idleness', 'fair things pass by', 'threshold brook'

Winter: 'pale misfeature', 'mortal nature'

Thus, the poem presents a thought quite philosophical in nature and compels its reader to consider these analogies in earnestness.

4.7 KEY WORDS

Archetype	a model or first form. Thematic archetypes are such motifs that are frequently used by the writer. In Jungian psychology, archetypes are collectively inherited unconscious idea or image by the given society.
Collocation	conventional agreement of words in terms of meanings.
Refrain	recurring use of phrase or verse line.
Sonnet	a kind of poem that treats the subject or idea fully in 14 lines, usually in iambic pentameter with rhyme set according a definite scheme.
Stylistics	a branch of study that looks into linguistic choices made by the writer and literary devices used for achieving certain aesthetic or communicative effects or influencing meaning making process.
Jack a lanthen/ Jack O" Lantern	is a carved pumpkin, turnip or other root vegetable. Its image is:



4.8 LET US SUM UP

‘The Human Seasons’ is an Elizabethan sonnet and reflective in nature that presents the poet’s contemplation over the stages of life as reflected in one’s mental growth. The poet rests his idea on the metaphoric analogy of seasons which can be termed as archetypal use of natural cycle. In the process, striking adjectival collocations are used with a few passive verbs. The language of the poem is simple. The structure of the poem, however, is well thought of. The poet invokes natural imagery and archetypes to convey his thought which is characteristic of Romantic conventions. Although many writers have written on the passage of human life, Keats’s ‘The Human Seasons’ comes to us as one small piece of composition packed with careful observation and ripe understanding of the subject qualified with just use of linguistic and literary devices.

4.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Which were major thematic concerns in Keats's poetry?

2. What is 'Negative Capability'? Read and find out more about it.

3. What is Keatsian philosophy about the nature and function of the artist?

4. How many seasons are employed by the poet for comparison?

5. Read and explain the first two lines of the poem.

6. What is the significance of Spring and Summer in human life?

7. Which natural imageries are invoked in the poem?

8. How do you find ‘The Human Seasons’ as a Romantic poem?

9. In what different ways can you interpret four seasons in the poem?

10. What is noticeable about the season of Autumn in human life?

11. Why do you think Spring and Winter are dealt with most economically?

12. How do you perceive connection of each season with its previous counterpart?

13. Write in your words about the theme of the poem.

14. Find out number of lines spared in the poem for describing each season.

15. Do you think the poet describes stages of life in proportion to lines he uses? What is the significance of this?

16. What is the rhyme scheme of Elizabethan sonnet? What are other kinds of sonnets?

17. Stylistically analyze ‘The Human Seasons’ as a reflective poem.

18. Mention different literary devices used in the poem:

4.10 SUGGESTED READING

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❖ ANSWERS

Answer- 1: Major thematic concerns in Keats's poetry are the eternal principles of truth and beauty, death or cessation of existence, sensual perception, changing reality, permanence of art, music, ancient world, and address to the beloved.

Answer- 2: Keats's term 'Negative Capability' has been explained variously by the critics. It means to live harmoniously amidst existential uncertainties, mysteries, doubts even in absence of objective proofs or rational justifications. It is a psycho-emotive equipoise that sustains one amid apparent paradoxes and prompts one to be non-conflictual.

Answer- 3: Keats's idea of artist is that of seeker who is ever set on the journey of finding unifying principles of life, that is, truth and beauty. While the artist remains unperturbed by disparities or differences around him or her, the individual search of this unifying principle continues and asserts it even when philosophical or religious formulas of thought seem to be at variance.

Answer- 4: The poet mentions four seasons in figurative sense, namely, Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter.

Answer- 5: 'Four Seasons fill the measure of the year;/ There are four seasons in the mind of man:' First two lines of the poem introduce the subject of the poem. Just as four seasons make for the time of a year, four general mental states happen to characterize the span of human life.

Answer- 6: Spring and Summer stand for childhood and youth respectively. Spring in human life is full of the sense of wonder, curiosity and joy whereas in one's Summer one joyfully reflects on the pleasant memories formed in one's Spring time and feels energetic to participate in the world.

Answer- 7 Natural imageries such as 'lusty Spring', 'Summer', 'honed cud', 'Autumn', 'closing wings', 'brook' or natural stream of water, 'fair things' and 'Winter'. The poet employs both concrete and abstract imageries.

Answer- 8 'The Human Seasons' by Keats involves some characteristic traits of Romanticism such as analogical references to natural seasons and phenomena, perceiving nature as a source of joy, inspiration, and imagination and certain reflective take on life.

Answer- 14 This sonnet has fourteen lines of which first two lines introduce the topic. Season of Spring is shortly mentioned in two lines. Summer is described in four lines or quatrain, Autumn has the longest passage of five lines, and Winter has the last two lines. One could conjecture that the number of lines correspond to the length of phase that lasts in our life and the significance each phase holds in our life.

Answer- 15 Yes, the poet describes stages of life in proportion to lines used in the poem. It is suggestive of the fact as to where the poet wants to give more focus in his treatment of the subject. Summer and Autumn enjoy more detailing as they are crucial stages of human life. In youth continues from the childhood enthusiasm and begins to explore new possibilities that life offers; it is the time of engaging oneself with the world. Experiences gained in this phase give maturity of understanding that culminates as Autumn of one's life. If Summer is marked by the scope of action, Autumn is marked by the depth of understanding that resulted from passing through the previous phase. And like the short-lived Spring, Winter marks the end of one cycle; termination of this mortal life.

:: STRUCTURE ::

- 5.0 Objectives**
- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Robert Frost**
- 5.3 Poetry analysis**
- 5.4 Let us sum up**
- 5.5 Key words**
- 5.6 Check your progress**
- ❖ **Answers**

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we will talk about
Work and life of Robert Frost and
His poem *The Road not Taken*

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Road Not Taken is a narrative poem written by Robert Frost. It is first published in the August 1915 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, and later published as the first poem in the collection *Mountain Interval* (1916). The central theme of the poem is the divergence of paths, both literally and symbolically, though its interpretation is noted for being complex and potentially different.

5.2 ROBERT FROST

Robert Lee Frost (March 26, 1874 – January 29, 1963) was an American poet. His work first published in England before it was published in the United States. He was known for his rational depictions of rural life.

He often wrote about settings from rural life in New England in the early 20th century, using them to examine complex social and philosophical themes. He was born in San Francisco, California, to journalist William Prescott Frost, Jr. and Isabelle Moodie. His father descended from Nicholas Frost of Tiverton, Devon, England, who had sailed to New Hampshire in 1634 on the *Wolfrana*, and his mother was a Scottish immigrant. His father was a teacher and later an editor of the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*. After his death on May 5, 1885, his family moved across the country to Lawrence, Massachusetts, under the patronage of Robert's grandfather William Frost, Sr., who was an overseer at a New England mill. William Frost graduated from Lawrence High School in 1892.

He grew up in the city, and he published his first poem in his high school's magazine. He attended Dartmouth College for two months at early span of academic life. He returned home to teach and to work at various jobs, including helping his mother to teach in her class, delivering newspapers, and working in a factory. He did not enjoy these jobs, feeling his true calling was poetry. The poems in Frost's early books, especially *North of Boston*, differ drastically from late 19th-century Romantic verse with its view of nature. Lowell called *North of Boston* a —sad book, referring to its portraits of inbred, isolated, and psychologically troubled rural New Englanders.

Later, in other poems such as —Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening and —The Hill Wife, —The Road not Taken the benign surface of nature and death itself lurks behind dark and strange trees. Nature's others feature predominates in his poems such as —Birches, where a critical ice storm is recalled as a thing of memorable beauty. Frost is known to many as essentially a —happy poet. Frost established desirable adaptability of theme, but he usually investigated human contacts with the natural world in small encounters that serve as metaphors for larger aspects of the human condition. He often portrayed the human ability to turn even the slightest incident or natural detail to emotional profit, seen at its most economical form in —Dust of Snow

Legacy

Frost was the most admired and highly honoured American poet of the 20th century. His name ceased to be linked with New England, and he gained wide acceptance as a national poet. He was often able to give his rural imagery with a larger symbolic or metaphysical significance, and his best poems exceed the instant realities of their subject matter

to illuminate the unique combine of tragic survival, stoicism, and stubborn affirmation that marked his outlook on life.

Awards and recognition

He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature 31 times.

In June 1922, the Vermont State League of Women's Clubs elected Frost as Poet Laureate of Vermont. When a *New York Times* editorial strongly criticised the decision of the Women's Clubs, Sarah Cleghorn and other women wrote to the newspaper defending Frost. On July 22, 1961, Frost was named Poet Laureate of Vermont by the state legislature through Joint Resolution R-59 of the Acts of 1961, which also created the position.

Robert Frost won the 1963 Bollingen Prize.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

5.3 POETRY ANALYSIS

Structure

When we talk about structure of the poem, it consists of four stanzas of five lines each. The rhyme scheme is 'ABAAB', the first line rhymes with the third and fourth, and the second line rhymes with the fifth. The meter is basically iambic tetrameter, with each line having four two-syllable

feet, though in almost every line, in different positions, an iamb is replaced with an anapest.

Rhythm

The variation in the rhythm of poem gives naturalness, a feeling of thought taking place spontaneously, affecting the reader's sense of expectation. In the only line that contains strictly iambs, the more regular rhythm supports the idea of a turning towards an acceptance of a kind of reality: "Though as for that the passing there ... " In the final line, the way the rhyme and rhythm work together is significantly different.

Summary

The narrator/poet was walking down the road, when he found a diversion where two roads diverged in different directions. The narrator felt sorry that he could not travel on both the roads. He had to make one choice. He stood at the junction for the longer period of time and tried to look at the road, but unable to see beyond diversion as roads were curved and covered with tress.

In the stanza, the yellow wood refers to the forest with leaves, and indicates autumn season. Through the first stanza, the narrator wants to convey that in everyone's life there comes a time when we have to make choices. There are always options for things but we can only chose one at a time.

At that time, we see the pros and cons of the situation and take the time to decide which path to take. Similarly, the poet is also taking time before making any decision. After thinking on it for a long time, the narrator decided to take the other road which was grassy and wanted wear. He chose the road which was used very less.

Through this the poet conveys that, in our life whatever decision we take or choices we make, each choice has some pros and cons. So we have to be ready to face them. However, he knows that one way leads to another way and he could not go back and take the other path once he moved ahead with one. Similarly, in our life, when we make one decision, we can't go back. We have to move ahead with the same choice and face the consequences which come our way.

The narrator says that in the future, he will tell his grandchildren that he chose different road which made all the differences in his life. He chose the road which was less travelled by many, and that decision has changed his entire life. Through the poem, the poet sends a powerful message that people should decide wisely in their life because the decision they take will have an impact on the rest of their life.

5.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt about
Works and life of Robert Frost and his poem —The Road not Taken.

5.5 KEY WORDS

Divergence	the process or state of diverging
Depictions	the action of depicting something, especially in a work of art.
Spontaneously	performed or occurring as a result of a sudden impulse or inclination and without premeditation or external stimulus.

5.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Choose the correct options from given below.

1. The poem is written by.
a) Robert Frost b) Shakespeare c) Milton
2. What does the poem speak about?
a) about the plight of roads
b) about the people
c) about the choices made by people
3. Diverge mean.
a) to be separated and taking a different turn
b) to be torn
c) above all
4. What does the choice of road signify?
a) too many things
b) two paths
c) toughness of a choice and decision in life
5. What is the dilemma of the poet?
a) whether he will be able to come back to the second road or not
b) whether he will get time for himself
c) whether he will be able to walk

Answer the following questions.

1. Describe the theme of the poem in your own words.

2. Explain rhyming technique of the poem.

5.7 BOOKS SUGGESTED

- English Literature: Its History and Its Significance For the Life of the English-speaking World by William J. Long
- History of English literature by Edwards Albert

Answers: 1-a, 2-c, 3-a, 4-c, 5-c

:: STRUCTURE ::

- 6.0 Objectives**
- 6.1 Introduction**
- 6.2 Summary**
- 6.3 Analysis**
- 6.4 Critical Appreciation**
- 6.5 Check Your Progress**
- 6.6 Suggested Reading**

6.0 OBJECTIVES

1. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text
2. Understand figurative, connotative, and technical meanings
3. Analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Robert Browning

Much of Robert Browning’s (1812–1889) education came from his well-read father. He could read and write proficiently by the age of five. Browning learnt Latin, Greek, and French by the time he was fourteen. He also learnt music, drawing, dancing, and horsemanship. In 1833, Browning anonymously published his first major published work, *Pauline*, and in 1840 he published *Sordello*, which was a failure. His plays, including *Strafford*, and the *Bells and Pomegranates* series, were unsuccessful. However, his dramatic monologues—are his most important contribution to poetry, influencing major poets like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Robert Frost.

Context

The historical context of the poem has been speculated about since the poem was first published. There are many ideas about the poem but nothing which is actually known for sure other than the following details: Many of Browning's poems, including —My Last Duchess (1842), were set in Ferrara, a town in Italy. Browning seemed obsessed with the place, researching the medieval history of the area. This poem may be based on the true story of either Vespasiano Gonzaga, duke of Sabbioneta, or Alfonso II, fifth and last duke of Ferrara. Alfonso's first wife died in suspicious circumstances. According to Browning the Alfonso II issued commands to put her to death or shut her up in a convent.

Paraphrase

Original Poem

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

*Will 't please you sit and look at her? I
said
'Frà Pandolf' by design, for never
read
Strangers like you that pictured
countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest
glance,
But to myself they turned (since none
puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but
I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if
they durst,
How such a glance came there;*

so, not the first

Paraphrase

That's a painting of my last wife on the wall there,
It looks lifelike / like she is still alive. I would say
That painting is a very realistic portrait. A famous artist
Worked hard all day painting it, and there she is.

Will you please sit down and look at the painting? I name dropped
The famous artist on purpose, because people never look at it without wanting to
ask me how the passionate look on her face was arrived at. They always ask this question to me, because I am the only one who pulls back the curtain which covers the painting.
You are not the first person to ask (how the look was arrived at).

No, it was not only me (her

*Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, t
was not
Her husband's presence only, called
that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek:
perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, Her
mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,' or
Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:'
such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause
enough
For calling up that spot of joy.*

*She had
A heart -- how shall I say? -- too soon
made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked
whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went
everywhere.
Sir, t was all one! My favour at her
breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the
West,
The bough of cherries some officious
fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white
mule
She rode with round the terrace -- all
and each
Would draw from her alike the
approving speech,
Or blush, at least.
Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who
passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I*

husband) who could make her look
so happy.

It might be that the artist flattered
her in some way, perhaps saying
that her shawl was too long (and
should be pulled up a bit),
Or maybe he told her it would be
impossible for paint to reproduce
such a beautiful woman. She was
delighted to hear this and blushed.

She was a woman who was too
easily impressed by things.

She liked everything she looked at,
and she looked at everything.

It was all the same – the effect I
had on her was the same effect as
the sunset, or some cherries an
admire brought to her, or her horse
– everything impressed her and
made her happy, blushing with
delight.

Oh, sir, she smiled whenever I
passed her, but she gave the same
smile to everyone! This continued,
and I gave the commands.

<p><i>gave commands;</i> <i>Then all smiles stopped together.</i> <i>There she stands</i> <i>As if alive.</i> <i>Will <u>t</u> please you rise? We'll meet</i> <i>The company below then. I repeat,</i> <i>The Count your master's known</i> <i>munificence</i> <i>Is ample warrant that no just pretence</i> <i>Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;</i> <i>Though his fair daughter's self, as I</i> <i>avowed</i> <i>At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go</i> <i>Together down, sir. Notice Neptune,</i> <i>though,</i> <i>Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,</i> <i>Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in</i> <i>bronze for me!</i></p>	<p>Then there were no more smiles. But in this painting she looks alive.</p> <p>Will you please stand up? We'll meet the others downstairs. I repeat, the Count, your boss, is so rich that I'm sure he will give me a nice financial incentive for his daughter, But what I want is the daughter, not the money. See this statue? It's of Neptune, taming a sea-horse. It's a rare statue by another famous artist.</p>
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6.2 SUMMARY

The poem —"My Last Duchess" is probably inspired by a historical event about Alfonso, the Duke of Ferrara, who existed in the sixteenth century. The Duke is the narrator of the poem. He mentions that he has recently become a widower. He says that is attending to the representative (envoy) of another powerful nobleman, whose daughter the duke is all set to marry. The representative has come to discuss about the Duke's alliance. The Duke shows this guest his palace, he draws a curtain off a wall and shows him a beautiful portrait of the late Duchess. She was a charming, youthful lady. The Duke recalls the portrait sessions, and later thinks about the Duchess. The portrait of his previous duchess had been painted by Fra Pandolf, who was a monk and painter. The Duke is certain that the painter successfully represented the glance of the duchess. The Duke describes to his visitor that the greatly affectionate glance of his previous duchess was not reserved exclusively for her husband. The Duke claims that she was excessively warm and friendly with everyone. His thoughtful reflections show his disapproval on her shameful conduct: he points out that she was licentious with everyone and disregarded his —gift of a nine-hundred-years- old family name and its reputation. As the poem progresses the facts about the Duke and his Duchess become clear. The duke is certain that the painter successfully represented the glance of the

duchess. He further describes that she was "too easily impressed" or willing to be sociable with the others.

While his monologue continues, it gradually becomes harsh in tone. It reveals the shocking fact that when the Duchess did not follow his —lessons‖ of socially accepted behaviour, he issued he —command‖ to get her killed. This was the real cause of the sudden and early death of the Duchess. After disclosing the real cause of the death of his wife and Duchess, the Duke requests the visitor to accompany him back to the father of his prospective bride. On his way the Duke shows his guest other works of art in his palace including a bronze bust of Neptune —taming a sea-horse‖.

6.3 ANALYSIS

Duchess (n.) – the wife or widow of a duke (the male ruler of a duchy; the sovereign of a small state)

Frà (n.) – a title given to an Italian monk or friar (a Catholic man who has withdrawn from the world for religious reasons)

countenance (n.) – face

earnest (adj.) – serious in intention, purpose, or effort; showing depth and sincerity of feeling

durst (v.) – dared

mantle (n.) – a loose, sleeveless cloak or cape

laps (v.) – lays partly over something underneath

favour (n.) – a gift bestowed as a token of goodwill, kind regard, love, etc., as formerly bestowed upon a knight by his lady

bough (n.) – a branch of a tree, especially one of the larger or main branches • **officious** (adj.) – objectionably aggressive in offering one's unrequested and unwanted services, help, or advice; meddlesome

trifling (n.) – idle or frivolous conduct, talk, etc.

forsooth (adv.) – in truth; in fact; indeed

6.4 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE LITERARY WORK

Analysis

This is Browning's most popular dramatic monologue. The speaker, who is the duke seems monstrous, since he had his wife murdered based on his suspicions of her lack of loyalty to him. He has a great sense of beauty and is a good conversationalist. Robert Browning's main point is that the

Duke values art but cannot appreciate beauty in reality. He has a high urge to control his wife so he gets her killed. Her crime is barely presented as sexual. Other men could make her "blush,". The Duke was driven to murder by her refusal to save her happy glances solely for him. This demand for control is also seen in the way he treats his envoy. The envoy is his audience much as we are Browning's, and the duke exerts a similar control over his story just the way Browning uses control in crafting the ironic detachment. Browning represents the duke's incessant control of story by using a regular meter and also enjambment (where the phrases do not end at the close of a line).

This poem is inspired by real aristocratic events set in Renaissance Italy. The duke's moral ugliness comes from the social reputation for a "nine-hundred-years-old name." He is so blinded by his pride that when his wife upset him by being affectionate to others, he refuses to speak to her about it. He will not "stoop" to such ordinary domestic tasks as a compromise or discussion. Instead, when she taints his reputation, he gives commands and she is dead.

Another element of the aristocratic life in the poem is repetition. The duke's life is full of repeated gestures. His "nine-hundred-years-old name" shows his life full of repeated gestures, one of which he is ready to make again with the count's daughter.

The idea of money is also prominent here. The duke almost employs his own sense of irony when he brings up a "dowry" to the envoy. This final stanza suggests that his story of murder is meant to give proactive warning to the woman he is soon to marry. He does this through the envoy who would report it to the count who might tell the bride. The duke is too arrogant to speak to her himself. He ironically reminds the represented that he truly wants only the woman herself, but describes the significance of a heavy dowry.

The poem shows psychological, social expectations of human behaviour. The duke, who loved his "last duchess," is himself controlled by his social expectations, and his inability to bear insult to his aristocratic name by the licentious behavior of his duchess. The duke suspects that instead of flirtation, she might have physically or sexually betrayed him. The duke uses euphemism, to suggest it and so he gives the commands for her murder.

This poem is a commentary on art. The duke still loves her appearance even after her death, as represented through the painting. He loves the

ideal image of her rather than the reality. Browning captures contradiction, movement and psychological complexity in the poem.

Dramatic Monologue

—My Last Duchess is perhaps the best instance of Browning's dramatic monologue. Here, Browning projects a terrifying image of aristocracy, which shows more of the Duke's personality than Ferrara intends. By his criticism of his last duchess, the duke ironically reveals his own hateful personality.

In this dramatic monologue the only speaker is the Duke of Ferrara. The listener is the representative of a count and is helping to negotiate a marriage between the count's daughter and the duke. The time is probably the Italian Renaissance. The location is the duke's palace, probably upstairs in some art gallery, since the duke points to two nearby art objects. The two men are about to join the —company below (line 47), so the fifty-six lines of the poem represent the end of the duke's negotiating, his final terms.

This dramatic monologue by Browning is psychological self-characterization of the duke. He is a jealous and brags about the duchess's portrait made by Fra Pandolf. He hired a monk, obviously noted for his sacred art, to paint a secular portrait so that the duchess does not get romantically involved with the painter. He observed the whole enterprise and gave Fra Pandolf only a day to finish the expensive commissioned art. Yet, his description about her love of sunsets, the cherry bough with which she was presented, her pet white mule—suggests that she was a natural woman who preferred the simple pleasures.

The duke is proud, selfish and self-centered. He is very proud of his family name, for, as he describes his marriage to his last duchess, he states that he gave her the —gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name (line 33). Yet he never mentions his love for her or his willingness to emerge from his own ego. Instead, he emphasizes that it is his curtain, his portrait, his name, his —commands (line 45), and his sculpture. Within fifty-six lines he uses seventeen first-person pronouns.

He has a godlike desire for total control of his environment. He controls the envoy's perception of the last duchess. Everything that the listener hears about her is filtered through the mind and voice of the duke. The emissary cannot even look at her portrait without the duke opening a curtain that he has had placed in front of the painting.

The final artistic image is most revealing. The last word in the duke's negotiations is further evidence of his desire for control. He compels the emissary to focus attention on another commissioned objet d'art: —Notice Neptune, though, / Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity/ Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me! (lines 54-56). Once again, the commissioned art is a sort of Rorschach test—it reveals a great deal about the personality of the commissioner. The thrust of the art object is dominance—the duke desires to be Neptune, god of the sea, taming a small, beautiful sea creature in what would obviously be no contest. In other words, the duke sees himself as a god who has to tame his duchess. The duke has always associated his last duchess with beautiful things of nature. Like Neptune, the duke rules his kingdom, Ferrara, with an iron fist. When he grew tired of his last duchess, he says, —I gave commands (line 45), and her smiles —stopped together (line 46). Since the duke says that in her portrait the last duchess is —looking as if she were alive (line 2), the suggestion is strong that, like the god that he would be, the duke has exercised the power over life and death.

It is ironical that a man so strongly desiring marriage to the count's daughter reveal himself in such negative terms. He may be either —shrewd or —witless. Secondly the duke who has had so much trouble with his first duchess wants a second wife. The answers to both issues seem to lie in the duke's godlike self-image. Interestingly, for a man preoccupied with his nine-hundred-year-old name, nowhere does he mention progeny, and without children there will be no one to carry on the family name. Importantly, he uses a series of terminative images, all emphasizing the end of the cycle of life, to describe his last duchess—the sunset ends the day, the breaking of the bough ends the life of the cherry (also a sexual reference), the white mule is the end of its line (mules then could not reproduce within the breed), and whiteness as a colour associated with sterility. He probably uses these images, to employ his last duchess as a scapegoat and that he is the one who is sterile. Thus, his object in procuring the —fair daughter's self (line 52) is children. No doubt, for a man who likes commissioned artwork, the —dowry (line 51) will help defray his expenses. Perhaps the duke, like another Renaissance figure, Henry VIII, will run through a series of brides because he is unable to see the flaws in his own personality.

Stylistically the fifty-six lines are all in iambic pentameter couplets. The couplet form is quite formal in English poetry, and this pattern suggests the formal nature of the duke and control. Interestingly, unlike the traditional neoclassic heroic couplet, where lines are end-stopped,

Browning favours enjambment, and the run-on line suggests the duke's inability to control everything—his inability to be a god.

Theme

„My Last Duchess“ has many themes, but the most important theme is power.

There are many types of power described in the poem:

Political power – the Duke's political power can be seen through the ambiguous line „I gave commands“. The duke probably gave the commands to a socially inferior person or a servant of some kind.

Domestic power – the Duke asserts his power over his former wife, linking to themes of gender roles and sexism.

The poem explores that theme through apt use of language, structure and form:

„**Language**“ refers to the words which are used by the poet. This is the simplest type of analysis, and the one which most students write about first. Whether you are picking out language devices such as similes and metaphors, or just picking out words/phrases which seem important, it's all language analysis.

In the poem, much of the language is suggestive of what the words appear to convey. When the Duke explains that „her looks went everywhere“, he implies that his wife was flirtatious. His doubts about the artist show that all his suspicions are baseless.

In addition, Browning uses many instances of euphemism in the poem. Euphemism is a way of pleasantly conveying something unpleasant. For example, the "spot of joy" on her face (a blush) would be caused by instances apart from her "husband's presence".

The language is also ironical. Much of what is expected from the Duke and Duchess have been subverted. There is a contrast between the readers' expectations and what is depicted in the poem. For example, the Duke was disgusted with his previous wife, the Duchess. Ironically, the Duchess' faults were actually to exhibit qualities such as humility, gratitude and childlike innocence. She was pleased by the simple things in life such as 'the dropping of the daylight'. The Duke probably suggests that she impatiently waited for her carnal desires to receive gratification.

„**Structure**“ refers to the organization of a poem. It includes the study of where the verses break (if at all) and why, variations in verse length, use of enjambment, repetition, rhythm, changes in stress patterns, use of rhyme scheme, free verse and punctuation.

In terms of meter, this poem is written in *iambic pentameter*. Iambic refers to the rhythm that is based on two-syllable units in which the first syllable is . . . oh, drat, your eyes are glazing **over**. *This poem is structured as a collection of rhyming couplets*. Thus, every two lines ends with rhyming words. For example: —*That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands/Worked busily a day, and there she stands*||

Apart from the rhyme in the rhyming couplets, the poem has many examples of enjambment. An enjambment is a run-on line that ends in the middle of a thought without any punctuation.

Thus sentences and other grammatical units do not necessarily conclude at the end of lines. Consequently, the rhymes do not create a sense of closure when they come, but rather remain a subtle driving force behind the Duke's compulsive revelations. The Duke is an eloquent and persuasive performer: he imitates others' voices, creates imaginary circumstances, and uses the power of his forceful personality to make shocking information appear interesting.

„**Form**“ refers to the times when poets follow particular rules about the organisation of a text. For example, is the poem a sonnet, a dramatic monologue, a ballad etc.? Again, this needs to be linked to the theme of the poem (or exam answer). With *My Last Duchess*, the question would be how does the use of the dramatic monologue form help explore the theme of power?

The poem is written as a dramatic monologue. A dramatic monologue is a poem in which a person acts as a speaker of the poem. It's a fusion of a play and a poem – a "dramatic lyric."

Indeed, the poem provides an archetypal specimen of a dramatic monologue: the speaker of the poem is evidently distinct from the poet; a listener is suggested but never features in the poem.

Since the poem is a dramatic monologue, this poem is structured as a long dialogue, which is evident in its use of varied punctuation. All the commas (,), colons (:), dashes (-), and full stops (.) are used to give the impression of regular speech.

6.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Long/Descriptive Questions

1. What does the reader learn about the Duke through his description of the Duchess in lines 1–21 of the poem?

2. Reread lines 9–10 of “My Last Duchess” (“But to myself they turned / (since none puts by / The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)”) and answer the question: What does the reader learn about the portrait? How does this information develop the Duke’s character?

Short Questions

Read lines 1–2 (“That’s my last Duchess painted on the wall, / Looking as if she were alive”) and answer the following questions...

1. Which words and phrases does the narrator use to describe the Duchess?

2. What do these words and phrases suggest about the Duchess?

3. Who is the speaker of the poem? What words and phrases indicate the speaker of the poem?

Read lines 2–4 (—I call / That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf’s hands / Worked busily a day, and there she stands!) and answer the following questions...

1. What does the Duke mean by —that piecèll (line 3)?

2. How does the Duke describe the piece?

3. Who is Frà Pandolf (line 3)? What words and phrases in lines 3–4 indicate who he is?

4. Why might the Duke mention Frà Pandolf in line 3?

Reread line 5 (—Will ‘t please you sit and look at her?!) and answer the following questions...

1. To whom is the Duke speaking?

2. Who else speaks in the first five lines of the poem?

3. Describe the Duke's tone toward the listener in line 5. What words demonstrate this tone?

Read lines 5–8 (from —I said / _Frà Pandolf* by design, for never read|| to —The depth and passion of its earnest glance||) and answer the following questions...

1. What is —that pictured countenance|| in line 7?

2. Explain what the stranger —read[s]|| in lines 6–7: —for never read / Strangers like you that pictured countenance.|| What might read mean here?

3. To what does —its|| refer in line 8?

4. What are some words that the Duke uses to describe the —glancel?

5. What does the reader learn about the Duchess from the description of her portrait in the first 8 lines of the poem?

Reread lines 5–12 (from —I said / _Frà Pandolf* by design, for never readll to —if they durst / How such a glance came there!) and answer the following questions

1. To whom does the Duke refer in line 6?

2. What does by design mean in this context?

3. Why does the Duke claim in lines 6–12 that he mentions Frà Pandolf —by designll?

4. For what other reasons might the Duke mention Frà Pandolf twice in the first six lines of the poem?

5. In line 11, what do the words —if they durst suggest about the Duke's view of himself?

Reread lines 13–21 (from —Sir, 'twas not / Her husband's presence only to —For calling up that spot of joy) and answer the following questions...

1. What does the Duke imply when he uses the word only in line 14?

2. What does the phrase —that spot of joy suggest about the Duchess? What does the Duke imply in lines 15–21 might have caused such an expression?

3. What does the Duke mean by the phrase —such stuff in line 19? What does the Duke's use of the phrase —such stuff suggest about his attitude towards Frà Pandolf?

4. How did the Duchess respond to —such stuff (line 19)?

5. What does the Duke imply when he remarks that —such stuff / Was courtesy she thought, and cause enough / For calling up that spot of joy (lines 19–21)?

Reread lines 21–23: —She had / A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad, / Too easily impressed.¶

1. What is the effect of the repetition in these lines?

2. What is the effect of —how shall I say?¶

Read lines 25–31 (from —My favour at her breast, / The dropping of the daylight in the West¶ to —the approving speech, / Or blush, at least¶) and answer the following questions...

1. What does the Duke mean by —the dropping of daylight in the West (line 26)?

2. What does bough mean in the line —The bough of cherries some officious fool / Broke in the orchard for her (lines 27–28)? What words are associated with bough that can help to define it?

3. What is the connotation of the word officious? (line 27)? What words or phrases suggest this connotation?

4. What does the Duke mean when he claims the Duchess's —looks went everywhere (line 24)?

5. What does the punctuation in —Sir, 'twas all one (line 25) suggest about the Duke's tone and message? What inference can be made about how the Duke feels about what he is saying?

6. What inferences can be made about the Duchess based on lines 25–29?

Read lines 31–34 (—She thanked men,—good! but thanked / Somehow—
I know not how—as if she ranked / My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old
name / With anybody’s gift!) and answer the following questions...

1. What does the Duke mean by the —gift of a nine-hundred-years-old
name (line 33)?

2. From the Duke’s perspective, how does the Duchess value the gift of
the Duke’s family name?

3. How does this contrast with the Duke’s view of the gift of his name in
lines 31–34?

4. Evaluate the Duke’s reliability as a narrator in these lines. Support your
response with evidence from the text.

5. What does the reader learn about the characters of the Duke and the Duchess in lines 29–34? What is left uncertain about the Duke and Duchess in these lines?

Read lines 31–35 (from —She thanked men,—good! but thanked / Somehow to —Who’d stoop to blame / This sort of trifling?) and answer the following questions....

1. Consider the definition of trifling. To what —trifling (line 35) is the Duke referring?

2. How does the Duke describe his response to the Duchess’s —trifling (line 35)?

3. What does it mean to stoop? What does the word mean in this context?

4. What does the word stoop suggest about how the Duke views the Duchess?

Read lines 35–43 (from —Even had you skill / In speech—(which I have not) to —E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose / Never to stoop) and answer the following questions:

1. What does the Duke say about his own speaking ability?

2. What does the language of the poem suggest about the Duke's speaking ability? What specific details and examples illustrate his speaking ability?

3. What inference can be made about the Duke based on what he says about his speaking ability?

4. To whom does the Duke refer as —such an one in line 37?

5. What is the meaning of the word will on line 36?

6. What is the Duke's will? How does this contribute to the Duke's development as a character?

7. What is the meaning of lessoned as Browning uses it in line 40?

8. Paraphrase lines 35–43 (from —Even had you skill / In speech to —and I choose / Never to stoop).

9. How do specific words or phrases in the Duke's statement, —I choose / Never to stoop (lines 42–43) impact the meaning or tone of the text?

10. How does Browning further develop the character of the Duke in lines 34–43?

Short Notes

MCQs

1 How can the language used in "My Last Duchess" represent the duke as an ironic figure?

- A. It reveals his sadness despite his cocky attitude
- B. It reveals his anger despite his seeming calm
- C. It makes him stupid despite his education
- D. It makes him charming despite his arrogance and violence

2 Who is the audience of the "My Last Duchess" monologue?

- A. An envoy
- B. The painting of the Duchess
- C. The duke of Ferrara
- D. The new duchess

3 Who is the speaker of "My Last Duchess?"

- A. Duchess of Ferrara
- B. Duke of Ferrara
- C. An envoy
- D. The new bride's potential father

4 What is the primary effect of the dramatic monologue form?

- A. Unconventional rhymes
- B. Emotional hyperbole
- C. Dramatic irony
- D. Colourful settings

5 Which incident happens before the opening of "My Last Duchess?"

- A. The unveiling of a curtain
- B. A murder
- C. A heated argument
- D. A marriage proposal

Answers: 1-B; 2-A; 3-B; 4-C; 5-B

6.6 SUGGESTED READING

- Clyde de L. Ryals. The Life of Robert Browning. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993.
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- Sutherland Orr. A Handbook to the Works of Robert Browning. London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1937.
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:: STRUCTURE ::**7.0 Objectives****7.1 Introduction: Sonnet****7.2 Critical Assessment****7.2.1 Characteristics of sonnet****7.2.2 Origin of Sonnet form and its development****7.2.3 Types of sonnets****7.3 Lets sum up****7.4 Key Word****7.5 Check Your Progress****7.6 Suggested Reading**

7.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to:

- Critically examine and trace the history of the sonnet form
- Critically study the different types of sonnets written by several poets writing in English

7.1 INTRODUCTION: SONNET

The word sonnet is derived from the Italian word —sonetto which means —little song|. Sonnet is a form of poetry written in fourteen lines in iambic pentameter. The sonnet employs one of the several rhyme schemes and has structured thematic pattern.

7.2 CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

7.2.1 Characteristics

All the sonnets have few characteristics in common. Firstly, they are written in fourteen lines. Secondly, they have regular rhyme scheme and

follow strict metrical pattern. Most of the sonnets follow iambic pentameter where each line has ten syllables in five pairs where stress comes on the second syllable in a word.

7.2.2 Origin of Sonnet form and its development

The origin of the sonnet form dates back to thirteenth century in Italy. It was Francesco Petrarca famously known as Petrarch who raised the sonnet form to a greatest level of perfection through the poems he wrote admiring a woman known as Laura. However the sonnet form was introduced in England by Thomas Wyatt along with Surrey. Thomas Wyatt translated the Petrarchan sonnets in English and brought the form in England. But as time passed, the sonneteers of England made changes in the Italian whereas Wyatt did not follow this pattern and rather brought changes in the sonnet form where he took first twelve lines as a complete poem and emphasized the concept in concluding couplet. Thus the ending a sonnet with a couplet became one of the special feature of Elizabethan sonnet. This pattern was followed even by William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare wrote around 154 sonnets which were collected and published posthumously in 1609. William Shakespeare wrote sonnets on the theme of friendship, love, Greek mythology etc. Some of his sonnets are addressed to a young man with whom Shakespeare had deep friendship while some are addressed to a mysterious woman.

Henry Howard, a contemporary of Wyatt introduced another variation in the sonnet form where he divided the first twelve lines into three quatrains and ending the sonnet with a couplet. Henry Howard through his precision, handling of theme, perfection of meter and clarity of thought become a famous poet known especially for his sonnets. This format and division of lines into quatrain was retained by Shakespeare and other Elizabethan sonneteers and poets. George Gascoigne defined Elizabethan sonnet as —Sonnets are fourteen lines, every line containing ten syllables. The first twelve to rhyme in stanza of four lines by cross metre, and the last two rhyming together do conclude the whole“l (Cuddon, 644). There were many poets who started writing sonnets during Elizabethan age and famous among them were William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Henry Constable, Thomas Lodge and Sir Philip Sidney.

Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (published in 1591) is considered to be one of the greatest sonnets where Astrophel pines for Stella. After the Elizabethan age the love for writing sonnets faded away. Poets of Jacobean and Caroline age did not feel inclined towards writing the sonnets. However, in 1600s, John Donne, the metaphysical poet started

exploring the theme of faith and doubt in his collection titled *Holy Sonnets*. He wrote many sonnets which were part of his collection called *Songs and Sonnets*. He brought variations in the form where he wrote sonnets using eighteen lines. Later the poets in the Romantic age continued writing the sonnets. William Wordsworth wrote sonnets *'The Virgin'* and *'Nuns Fret Not at Their Convent's Narrow Room'*. He wrote several other sonnets on the English church. It is asserted that William Wordsworth wrote around 523 sonnets.

William Wordsworth wrote many sonnets on the history of the English church. Shelley wrote sonnets on politics and the frailty of pride. Yeats wrote the sonnet *Leda and the Swan* where he presents the impregnation of Leda by the swan where the swan represents the Zeus. In 20th century, Robert Frost mastered the sonnet form and wrote many sonnets like *'Acquainted with the Night'*, *'Design'* etc.

7.2.3 Types of sonnet

There are six types of sonnets namely:

- Petrarchan/ Italian Sonnet
- Shakespearean sonnet
- Spenserian sonnet
- Miltonic Sonnet
- Terza Rima Sonnet
- Curtal sonnet

Petrarchan sonnet: Petrarchan sonnet is considered to be the first type of sonnet, a form of poetry that was invented and popularized by the Italian poet Petrarch. It was Petrarch, an Italian poet who invented this sonnet form and made it popular.

The Petrarchan or the Italian sonnet is divided into two stanzas i.e. an octave and the sestet. The octave consists of eight lines and the sestet consists of six lines. The Petrarchan sonnet strictly follows the rhyme scheme abba, abba, cdecde or cdcdcd. Petrarchan has also used a volta (meaning: turn) that occurs between the eighth and ninth line. This is done with the intention of making a shift from an argument in the octave to counterargument or clarification in the sestet. Petrarch has written sonnets like *'If no love is, O God, what fele so I?'*, *'I'd Sing of Love in Such a Novel Fashion'*, *'Ways apt and new to sing of love I'd find'*.

Petrarchan sonnet greatly influenced Sir Thomas Wyatt. Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced Petrarchan sonnet to England in 16th century. He

translated many sonnets by Petrarch in English language and he himself wrote many sonnets that drew the attention of many poets in England.

Shakespearean sonnet: In the age of Renaissance, Shakespearean sonnets were written by William Shakespeare. Shakespearean sonnet also known as the English sonnet follows the rhyme scheme of ababdcdefef gg. The fourteen lines are divided into three quatrains followed by a couplet. The couplet brings out a sudden revelation towards the end of the sonnet. William Shakespeare wrote sonnets that were preoccupied with the theme of love, change, faithfulness, aging etc. It is asserted that sonnets from sonnet no 1 to 126 are addressed to a young man while sonnets from sonnet no 127 to 152 are addressed to a dark lady who caused great pain to the poet. One of the famous sonnet by William Shakespeare is sonnet no 116.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

The sonnet talks about the purest form of love that remains constant in spite of several barriers on its way. He defines true love as something that never changes or is shaken by the adverse storms in life. True love is not the victim of time and change. Rather it remains constant till the edge of the doom. In the concluding lines he asserts that if whatever he has said about love is wrong than his writing is futile nor any man has loved truly on this earth.

Spenserian sonnet: Spenserian sonnets were named after the 16th century poet, Edmund Spenser. Following the technique of Wyatt and Earl of Surrey, Spenser wrote his sonnets in three quatrains followed by a couplet. He used Sicilian quatrains (four line stanza of iambic pentameter abab) where he developed an idea or a conflict and concluded with a couplet that resolved the conflict. Following iambic pentameter,

Spenserian sonnets had abab bcbc cdcd ee rhyme scheme. Amoretti LXXV: One Day I Wrote her Name is a beautiful sonnet written by Spenser for his beloved. In the sonnet he expresses his love for the beloved and try to eternalize her through the verse. The poet believes that by eternalizing her through the verse, their love will remain immortal not only for the ages to come but till the end of the earth.

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Again I write it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.

Vain man, said she, that doest in vain assay,
A mortal thing so to immortalize,
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eek my name be wiped out likewise.

Not so, (quod I) let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse, your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.

Where when as death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.

Miltonic Sonnet: In the 17th century, John Milton wrote sonnets where he changed the traditional Petrarchan sonnet form by introducing an enjambment in the sonnet. Enjambment means the continuation of a sentence without a pause. In other words in a verse it a phrase or thought that does not come to an end at the line break, rather moves over to the next continuing line in the stanza. Milton rather than writing on the theme of love, wrote about political issues and social concerns prevailing in the society. The sonnet ‘On His Blindness’ is considered to be one of the best sonnets written by Milton.

On His Blindness

When I consider how my light is spent,
ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with the useless, though my soul more bent
to serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?

I fondly ask, but Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: God doth not need

Either man's works or his own gifts: who best
Bear his mild yolk, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

In the sonnet the poet, John Milton through the poem talks about his blindness. He expresses his anguish as his blindness has made him incapable of writing. Milton wished to serve the almighty by writing something for the God, but he feels paralysed in fulfilling his task. He questions God as to why God has placed him in such a condition where he cannot utilize his talent of writing. He further questions that does God still expect him to write in spite of his blindness. But towards the end of the sonnet, Milton gets the answer to the questions he has for God. He realises that God serves those who patiently surrender to the will of God without complaining. God serves the best to those who endure all hardships of life. Thus, the poet concludes the sonnet with a revelation that irrespective of any hardship, man has to remain loyal to the god and trusting the almighty is also a kind of service to him.

Terza Rima: Dante Alighieri is credited with the invention of Terza Rima sonnet form in the late 13th century. He used this form in his famous epic The Divine Comedy. Terza Rima consists of a stanza of three lines also known as tercets. These tercets are written usually in the iambic pentameter. . Thus it follows the rhyme scheme of aba bcb cdc ded... Terza rima as a form of sonnets was adopted by many poets like Byron, Shelley, Milton, W.H Auden, William Carlos William, T.S Eliot and many others. Robert Frost's poem 'Acquainted With the Night' is written in Terza Rima form.

Acquainted with the Night

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.
I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.
I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,
But not to call me back or say good-bye;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right
I have been one acquainted with the night.

Robert Frost, 1928

Curtal Sonnet: A curtal sonnet is a sonnet form that is curtailed or contracted. It is an eleven line sonnet with rhyme scheme *abcabc dcbdc* or *abcabc dbcdc*. It is a poem that consist of ten lines written in iambic pentameter followed by a eleventh line that consist of a spondee. It was Gerard Manley Hopkins in the 19th century who used this term to describe a sonnet that was curtailed to eleven lines. —*Pied Beauty*||, —*Peace*|| and —*Ash Boughs*|| by Gerard Manley Hopkins are examples of curtal sonnet. The poem *Pied Beauty*, a curtal sonnet praises God for his omnipotence. He appreciates the nature and its beauty and declares that the beauty of these natural things comes from the only one-God.

Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1877

7.3 LETS SUM UP

Thus to surmise it can be asserted that sonnet as a form of poetry has flourished over the years. Though, experimented in form by several poets, it enlightens the readers through his ideas and themes. The semantic, syntactic, rhyme and rhythm of the sonnets have always added charm to the reading experiences of the readers.

7.4 KEYWORD

Meter	A unit of rhythm in poem. It is also known foot where each foot has certain number of syllables. It can also be defined as the basic rhythmic structure of a verse.
Quatrain	A stanza in a poem having four lines
Octave	A stanza in a poem having eight lines
Sestet	A stanza in a poem having six lines

Iambic pentameter A line in a verse having five metrical feet where in each feet the first syllable is unstressed followed by the second syllable that is stressed.

7.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

❖ Multiple Choice questions

- 1) An iamb has _____.
 - a) One Stressed syllable followed by one unstressed
 - b) One unstressed syllable followed by one stressed
 - c) Two stressed syllables
 - d) Two unstressed syllables

- 2) Pentameter means a line having _____metrical feet.
 - a) Five
 - b) three
 - c) six
 - d) four

- 3) A quatrain consist of _____lines
 - a) 12
 - b) 4
 - c) 6
 - d) 8

- 4) A sonnet has _____lines.
 - a) 14
 - b) 20
 - c) 21
 - d) 18

- 5) ‘_On his Blindness’ is written by_____
 - a) John Milton
 - b) William Wordsworth
 - b) P.B Shelley
 - c) T.S Eliot

❖ Short Questions

1) What is a sonnet? Explain in detail the characteristics of a sonnet.

2) What is a Curtal Sonnet?

3) What is the contribution of Francesco Petrarca to the sonnet form?

4) Explain the Terza Rima sonnet.

❖ **Long/ Descriptive Questions**

1) How is petrarchan sonnet different from Shakespearean sonnet?

2) Explain in detail about Terza Rima and Curtal sonnet.

3) Critically analyse the sonnet no 116 by William Shakespeare.

4) How did the sonnet form originate and became popular among the English poets?

❖ **Short Notes**

- 1) Sonnet as a form of poetry
- 2) Petrarchan sonnet
- 3) Shakespearean sonnet

7.5 SUGGESTED READING

- 1) *The sonnet over time: a study in the sonnets of Petrarch, Shakespeare, and Baudelaire* by Sandra Bermann University of North Carolina Press, 1988
- 2) *Representative Sonnets by American Poets: With an Essay on the Sonnet, Its nature and history, Including Many Notable sonnet of Other Literature* by Charles Henry Crandall (editor)
- 3) *The Development of the Sonnet: An Introduction* by Michael R. G Spiller
- 4) *The Sonnets of Europe* by Samuel Waddington
- 5) —Glossary of Poetic Terms, Poetry foundation
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/sonnet>
- 6) —Sonnet. Literary Devices. Definition And Examples Of Literary Terms. <https://literarydevices.net/sonnet/>
- 7) The Sonnet. <https://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/sonnet.html>

❖ Answer

Key for Multiple choice questions:

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. A

UNIT : 8**SONNET AND TYPES OF SONNET-2**
(Shakespearean sonnet 116, “How do I love thee” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “On his Blindness” by John Milton)**:: STRUCTURE ::****8.0 Objectives****8.1 Introduction****8.2 Concept and Origin of Sonnet**

- Check Your Progress 1

8.3 What is a Sonnet?

- Check Your Progress 2

8.3.1 Form**8.3.2 Rhyme Scheme**

- Check Your Progress 3

8.4 Types of Sonnet

- Check Your Progress 4

8.5 Use of Figurative Language**8.6 Function of Sonnet****8.7 Example 1 Text Appreciation****8.7.1 About Sonnet**

- Check Your Progress : 5

8.8 Example 2 Text Appreciation**8.8.1 : About Sonnet**

- Check Your Progress : 6

8.9 Example 3 Text Appreciation**8.9.1 About Sonnet**

- Check Your Progress : 7

8.10 Let’s Sum Up**8.11 Further Reading**

8.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall discuss:

- The concept and definition of sonnet as a form of lyrical poetry
- Types of sonnet
- How poets have used different types of sonnet as an effective medium for their poetic expressions

On completing the unit, you shall be able to-

- Recognize and appreciate form of sonnet as type of lyrical poetry
- Distinguish between different types of sonnets
- Appreciate the use of sonnet as a form of lyrical poetry by poets

8.1 INTRODUCTION

You are familiar with many literary forms like novel, play or a poem. A sonnet is a specific form of poetry in English. It is a prominent form of lyrical poetry.

Do you know what lyrical poetry is? Any fairly short poem expressing the personal mood, feeling or meditation of a single speaker is called a lyric or lyrical poetry. In ancient Greece, a lyric was a song to be sung with the 1.lyre. In present time, a lyric often suggests a songlike quality in the poems. Lyrics may be composed in almost any 2.meter and on almost every subject. The most common emotions presented in a lyric are - love and grief. The major forms of lyrics are sonnet, 3.ode, 4.elegy, 5.haiku, and the more personal kinds of 6.hymn.

1. Lyre: A stringed musical instrument used in ancient Greece
2. Meter: It is a unit of rhythm in poetry, the pattern of the beats. It is also called a foot. Each foot has a certain number of syllables in it, usually two or three syllables. The type of meter is decided by the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a foot.
3. Hymn: a song of praise to God
4. Ode: a lyric poem usually marked by exaltation of feeling and style, varying length of line, and complexity of stanza forms
5. Elegy: a song or poem expressing sorrow or lamentation especially for one who is dead
6. Haiku: an unrhymed verse form of Japanese origin having three lines containing usually five, seven, and five syllables respectively

8.2 CONCEPT AND ORIGIN OF SONNET

The word *sonnet* is derived from the Italian word —sonetto which means a —little song or small lyric. This form originated in Italy in early 13th century. It is said that it is invented by Giacomo da Lentini, head of the Sicilian School under Emperor Frederick II. The sonnet was established by Petrarch in the 14th century as a major form of love poetry. This form of poetry was accepted and explored in Spain, France and England in the 16th century and in Germany in the 17th century. The sonnet form is widely used by the poets of different time.

Initially, the standard subject-matter of early sonnets was the hopes and pain of an adoring male lover but in the 17th century John Donne used sonnet for religious themes and Milton for political themes. The form was largely neglected by the poets in the 18th century. But it was revived in the 19th century by great English poets like Wordsworth, Keats, and Baudelaire and it is widely used in contemporary time.

Some poets have written linked series of sonnets, known as sonnet sequences or sonnet cycles such as Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591), Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595), and Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (1609), Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850) and W.

H. Auden's 'In Time of War' (1939). In this a series of sonnets are linked together by exploring various aspects of relationship between lovers.

- **Check Your Progress 1**

1. What is a 'Lyre'?

2. Which are the most usual feelings conveyed by lyrical poetry?

3. Write two examples of sonnet sequence.

8.3 WHAT IS A SONNET?

As said earlier, sonnet is a type of lyrical poetry. It has a specific format. It has 14 lines, and is written in iambic pentameter. Each line has 10

syllables. It has a definite rhyme scheme, and a *Volta*, or a specific turn. The form of a sonnet is explained in detail in 1.3.1.

The structure of a typical Italian sonnet consists of two parts that together put forward a solid form of argument. First, the octave (a stanza of eight lines), forms the "proposition", which depicts a problem or question followed by a sestet (a stanza of six lines) or two tercets (a stanza of three lines), which proposes a "resolution". For the most part, the ninth line begins with the "turn", or "volta", which indicates the shift from proposition to resolution. The turn or volta is a change in thought which solves the issue placed in the opening of the poem or defines the theme or central idea of the sonnet.

- **Check Your Progress 2**

In a poem, *stanzas* are visual groupings of lines. Think and fill the gaps in the given sentences:

1. A group of two lines is called a *couplet*.
2. A three line stanza is called a *tercet*.
3. A four line stanza is a _____ and a five line stanza is a *quintet*.
4. Two other common lengths are a _____ of six lines; and an _____ of eight lines.

8.3.1 Form: As said earlier, most of the sonnets are written in Iambic Pentameter. What is Iambic Pentameter? To understand this, first we need to understand what is meter. It is the main component of any kind of poetry. A meter is the regular pattern of strong and weak stress (emphasis) in lines of a poem.

Now what is a syllable? It is a unit of pronunciation having one vowel sound, with or without surrounding consonants, forming the whole or a part of a word; for example, there are two syllables in 'water' and one syllable in 'boy'. What is a stressed syllable? We stress or emphasize a part of word (syllable) by speaking it with more force or changing the pitch. It is the syllable that is emphasized part of the word by way of changing the pitch. The unstressed syllable is not emphasized part of the word.

A sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines, written in iambic pentameter. A line of a poem has many stressed and unstressed syllables. A simple grouping of two or three syllables - some stressed, some unstressed, is called a foot. An iambic foot has two syllables- an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Pentameter means there are five feet in the line. "Iambic Pentameter," then, means a line of ten syllables, which alternates unstressed and stressed syllables according to the iambic rhythm. Most of the sonnets have Iambic Pentameter as its form.

An example of an iamb would be *good BYE*. In its pure iambic form, the pentameter shows a regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, as in this line by Percy *Bysshe* Shelley:

Shall I / com PARE/ thee TO / a SUM / mer's DAY?

Thou ART / more LOVE / ly AND / more TEM / per ATE (Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare)

For understanding purpose, stressed syllabus is written in capital letters and unstressed syllable is written in small letters. A pair of two syllables is separated with the help of (/).

- **Check Your Progress 3**

Write the given lines as shown in the above examples which have division of five pairs of syllables. Identify stressed syllable and write in capital.

If winter comes, can spring be far behind?'

8.3.2 Rhyme scheme: The rhyme scheme of a sonnet refers to the pattern formed by the rhyming words at the end of each line. Each end-rhyme is assigned a letter, and the fourteen letters assigned to the sonnet describe the rhyme scheme. Different kinds of sonnets have different rhyme schemes.

Rhyme schemes may follow a fixed pattern, as in the sonnet and several other forms or they may be arranged freely according to the poet's requirements.

To understand the form of a sonnet and rhyme scheme better, have a look at Sonnet 130 by William Shakespeare given below:

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun; **A**

Coral is far more red than her lips' red; **B**

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun; **A**

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head. **B**

I have seen roses damasked, red and white, **C**

But no such roses see I in her cheeks; **D**

And in some perfumes is there more delight **C**

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks. **D**

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know **E**

That music hath a far more pleasing sound; **F**

I grant I never saw a goddess go; **F**

My mistress when she walks treads on the ground. **F**

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare **G**

As any she belied with false compare. **G**

1. This sonnet is 14 lines long. It is written in iambic pentameter.
2. This sonnet is the best example of the turn or 'volta' in the last two lines where the speaker changes the tone completely.
3. The first twelve lines rhyme in alternating pairs. To show how this works, we can assign a letter to each rhyme:
 My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun; **A**
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red; **B**
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun; **A**
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head. **B**
 So, for the whole poem, the rhyme scheme would be ababcdcdefefgg.
4. A Shakespearean sonnet always ends with two rhyming lines.

8.4 TYPES OF SONNET

(1) **The Italian sonnet:** It is also called the Petrarchan sonnet. It comprises of an 8-line 'octave' of two quatrains having the rhyme scheme abbaabba. It is followed by a 6-line 'sestet' usually rhymed cdecde or cdcdcd. The transition from octave to sestet is usually marked with a 'turn' or volta in the argument or mood of the poem. The Italian sonnet has remained the most widely used in English and other languages. The main exponents of Italian sonnet in English were Milton, Wordsworth, Christina Rossetti and D. G. Rossetti.

(2) **The English sonnet:** It is also called the Shakespearean sonnet as Shakespeare was its leading practitioner. It comprises of three quatrains and a final couplet, rhyming *abab cdcd efef gg*.

An important variant of this is **the Spenserian sonnet** (introduced by the Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser), which links the three quatrains by rhyme, in the sequence *abab bcbc cdcd ee*. In both the forms, the 'turn' comes with the final couplet.

- **Check Your Progress 4**

Fill the relevant details about form of a sonnet in the given table:

	Lines	Rhyme scheme	Division of Stanza	Volta Line	Chief Exponents
The Italian sonnet					
The English sonnet					
the Spenserian sonnet					

8.5 USE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Using figurative language is an effective way of communicating an abstract or complex idea. It is used to compare one idea to a second idea to make the first idea easier to visualize. It also is used to link two ideas to influence an audience to see a connection even if one does not actually exist. Writers of prose and poetry use figurative language to draw out emotion or help readers form mental images.

Figurative language takes many different forms in linguistics and literature. A simile is a comparison of two things using the words "like" or "as." A metaphor is a more direct comparison of two things. Personification imparts animate qualities to an inanimate object, as in the phrase, "the laughing brook." Periphrasis uses a descriptive phrase in place of a simple noun.

8.6 FUNCTION OF SONNET

The sonnet has become popular among different poets because it has a great adaptability to different purposes and requirements of poets of different time and language. It is an ideal setting for a poet to explore strong emotions.

8.7 EXAMPLE 1 TEXT APPRECIATION

Sonnet 116 by William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds (A)
Admit impediments. Love is not love (B)
Which alters when it alteration finds, (A)
Or bends with the remover to remove: (B)
O no; it is an ever-fixed mark, (C)
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;(D)
It is the star to every wandering bark, (C)
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken. (D)
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks (E)
Within his bending sickle's compass come; (F)
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, (E)
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.(F)
 If this be error and upon me proved, (G)
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved. (G)

8.7.1 About Sonnet:

Sonnet 116 is generally considered one of the most admirable love poems ever written. The poem is a regular English sonnet of fourteen lines arranged in three quatrains and a concluding couplet.

It is about love in its most ideal form. The first four lines reveal the poet's pleasure in love that is constant and strong, and will not "alter when it alteration finds." Lines five and six say that true love is indeed an "ever-fix'd mark" which will endure any crisis. In lines 7-8, the poet claims that love can be measured to some degree, but it cannot be understood fully. Love's real value cannot be known – it remains a mystery. Lines 9-12 confirm the nature of love that is unshakeable throughout time and remains so "ev'n to the edge of doom", or death. In the final couplet, the poet declares that, if he is wrong about the steady, unmovable nature of love, he must take back all his writings on love, truth, and faith. In addition, if he has judged love inappropriately, no man has ever really loved.

- **Check Your Progress : 5**

Read the sonnet 116 carefully and answer the following questions about it:

Analysis of the Sonnet:

1. The central theme of this Shakespearean sonnet is _____.
2. The type of this sonnet is _____.
3. Division of the stanza: _____
4. The rhyme scheme _____
5. Volta from the line _____.

8.8 EXAMPLE 2 TEXT APPRECIATION

When I Consider How My Light Is Spent (On His Blindness) By John Milton

When I consider how my light is spent,(A)
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,(B)
And that one Talent which is death to hide(B)
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent(A)
To serve therewith my Maker, and present (A)
My true account, lest he returning chide; (B)
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?" (B)

I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent (A)
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need(C)
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best(D)
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state (E)
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed (C)
And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:(D)
They also serve who only stand and wait.||(E)

8.8.1 : About Sonnet

John Milton's "On His Blindness" is a Petrarchan sonnet. About Sonnet "On His Blindness" refers to the struggles John Milton had after he lost his sight. The speaker of the poem feels he has lost the purpose of his life. Also he cannot work for God anymore and he asks God for guidance as to what he should do. At the end of the poem, he gets the response that God is happiest when people are obedient and do as best as they can. According to the poet, half of his life or sight or intelligence has been spent in serving humanity, but now he has lost his eyesight and so his other half-life is dark and challenging.

The poet laments over the loss of his eyesight and wonders what this talent means for him now as without eyesight he cannot use it.

In stanza two, the poet talks about his desire to serve his Maker but because of this blindness he cannot do so. He wonders if God still wants to serve Him in spite of the fact that his sight is gone. The poet says that this foolish thought often haunts him. In these lines, the poet says that when such foolish thoughts come into his mind, the patience at once comes to reply that the work of man does not please God, but the _who best bear his mild yoke' i.e. the one who remains patient and content with what he has is most liked by Him.

God has a huge Kingdom and there are thousands of angels who remain in motion to carry God's order. They never take rest. The poet compares them with those who have talent and use it to serve God. On the other hand, there are some other angels also who serve Him just by standing and waiting before God. According to him, their service is equally valuable to God as that of the first category angels. The poet compares himself with the later Angels who just keep patience. Thus, in the end, the poet is quite satisfied as he is also serving God just by keeping patience.

• **Check Your Progress : 6**

Read the sonnet „On His Blindness“ carefully and answer the following questions about it:

Analysis of the Sonnet:

1. The central theme of sonnet is _____.
2. The type of this sonnet is _____.
3. Division of the stanza: _____.
4. The rhyme scheme _____.
5. Volta from the line _____.

8.9 EXAMPLE 3 TEXT APPRECIATION

"How do I Love Thee" by Elizabeth Barret Browning"

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. (A)

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height (B)

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight (B)

For the ends of Being an ideal Grace. (A)

I love thee to the level of every day's (A)

Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight. (B)

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right; (B)

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise. (A)

I love with a passion put to use (C)

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith. (D)

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose (C)

With my lost saints, I love thee with the breath, (D)

Smiles, tears, of all my life! and, if God choose, (C)

I shall but love thee better after death. (D)

8.9.1 About Sonnet

The first line of this sonnet is remarkable. It is in form of a question asked in conversational manner. —How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. Here, the poet has challenged herself to compile reasons for her love. **The second, third and fourth lines** suggest that her love is all encompassing. She feels that her even if her existence and God's divine help - *Grace* -will end, her love will sustain.

In the fifth line, the poetess plainly says to the reader that, be it day or night, her love fills those quiet moments, those daily silences that occur between two people living together. Her love is unconditional and free. She doesn't want any thanks for this freely given love; it is a humble kind of love.

The sestet starts at line nine. The speaker now looks to the past and compares her new found passions with those of the old grief. Turning to religious feelings **in line eleven**, the speaker refers to her lost love for the saints. She suggests that this love has now returned and will be given to her husband. This returned love is her very breath. And, **in the final line**, if God grants it, she'll carry on loving her husband even more after she dies. So her love will go on and on, beyond the grave, gaining strength.

- **Check Your Progress : 7**

Read the sonnet “How Do I Love Thee” carefully and answer the following questions about it:

Analysis of the Sonnet:

1. The central theme of sonnet is _____.
2. The type of this sonnet is _____.
3. Division of the stanza: _____.
4. The rhyme scheme _____.
5. Volta from the line _____.

8.10 LET’S SUM UP

The sonnet is a form of lyrical poetry used extensively by poets of various era. It has a specific format. In this unit, we explored the form, themes, types, meter and rhyme scheme of a sonnet. We also studied three examples of sonnets by its very successful exponents. Web and print resources for further reading are suggested below:

8.11 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. Mabillard, Amanda. *Shakespearean Sonnet Basics: Iambic Pentameter and the English Sonnet Style*. *Shakespeare Online*. 30 Aug. 2000. < <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/sonnetstyle.html> >.
2. *Understanding Figurative Language: From Metaphors to Idioms*: Sam Glucksberg
3. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. New York: Oxford UP, 1990.
4. Abrams, M H, and Geoffrey G. Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Boston, Mass: Thomson Wadsworth, 1999. Print.

❖ **Answers**

Check Your Progress 1.

1. A lyre is a musical instrument like Indian Veena used in ancient Greece to accompany singing of songs.
2. The most usual feelings conveyed by lyrical poetry are love and grief.
3. Examples of sonnet sequence are: Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* and Spenser's *Amoretti*

Check Your Progress 2

3. A four line stanza is a **quatrain** and a five line stanza is a *quintet*.
4. Two other common lengths are a *Sestet of six* lines; and an **Octave** of eight lines.

• **Check Your Progress : 3**

Write the given lines as shown in the above examples which have division of five pairs of syllables. Identify stressed syllable and write in capital.

If WINter COMES, can SPRING be FAR behind?

• **Check Your Progress : 4**

	Lines	Rhyme scheme	Division of Stanza	Volta Line	Chief Exponent
The Italian sonnet	14	<i>Abbaabba cdecde or cdcdcd</i>	8-line 'octave'+ 6-line sestet	In ninth line	Petrarch
The English sonnet	14	<i>abab cdcd efef gg.</i>	three quatrains and a final couplet	with the final couplet	Shakespeare
the Spenserian sonnet	14	<i>Ababbcbccdcdee</i>	three quatrains and a final couplet	with the final couplet	Spenser

Check Your Progress : 5

Sonnet 116 by William Shakespeare

Read the sonnet carefully and answer the following questions about it:

Analysis of the Sonnet:

1. The central theme of sonnet is nature of true love.
2. The type of this sonnet is Shakespearean.

3. Division of the stanza: Three quatrains and a couplet.
4. The rhyme scheme is ababcdcdefefgg.
5. Volta from the line thirteen.

• **Check Your Progress : 6**

When I Consider How My Light Is Spent (On His Blindness) By John Milton

Read the sonnet carefully and answer the following questions about it:
Analysis of the Sonnet:

1. The central theme of sonnet is poet's blindness and his faith in God.
2. The type of this sonnet is Petrarchan.
3. Division of the stanza: An octave and a sestet
4. The rhyme scheme: abba abba cde cde
5. Volta from the ninth line.

• **Check Your Progress : 7**

"How do I Love Thee" by Elizabeth Barret Browning"

Read the sonnet carefully and answer the following questions about it:
Analysis of the Sonnet:

1. The central theme of sonnet is love.
2. The type of this sonnet is Petrarchan.
3. Division of the stanza: An octave and a sestet
4. The rhyme scheme: abbaabba cdecde
5. Volta from the ninth line.

:: STRUCTURE ::

- 9.0 Objectives**
- 9.1 Introduction**
- 9.2 Definition: Elegy**
- 9.3 Features of Elegy**
- 9.4 Check Your Progress**
- 9.5 Let's sum up**
- 9.6 Keywords**
- 9.7 Books suggested**

9.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall

- Discuss the form of Elegy
- Features of Elegy
- Critical appreciation of the form

On completing the unit, you should be able to

- Write about the form of elegy
- Critically analyse the work of art by Thomas gray: „Elegy written in the country churchyard“

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Poetry is writing in the view of the transaction of words and musicality. It regularly utilizes rhyme and meter (an arrangement of principles representing the number and game plan of syllables in each line). In poetry, words are hung together to frame sounds, pictures, and thoughts that may be excessively perplexing or unique, making it impossible to portray straightforwardly.

9.2 DEFINITION: ELEGY

Elegy is a form of literature that can be defined as a funeral poem, thoughtful verse sonnet bemoaning the demise of an open personage or a companion or adored one; by augmentation, any intelligent verse on the more extensive topic of human mortality. In established writing a requiem was essentially any ballad written in the elegiac meter (rotating lines of dactylic hexameter and pentameter) and was not limited as to subject. In spite of the fact that some traditional funeral poems were mourns, numerous others were love lyrics. Elegies are of two kinds: Personal Elegy and Impersonal Elegy. In a personal elegy, the poet laments the death of some close friend or relative, and in impersonal elegy in which the poet grieves over human destiny or some aspect of contemporary life and literature. In this way we get his philosophy of life and death.

It usually talks about a funeral procession, a description of sympathetic mourning throughout nature, and musings on the unkindness of death. It ends with acceptance, often a very positive justification, of nature's law. The outstanding example of the English pastoral elegy is John Milton's —*Lycidas* (1638), written on the death of a college friend, Edward King. Other notable pastoral elegies are P. B. Shelley's —*Adonais* written in 1821 on the death of the poet John Keats and Matthew Arnold's —*Thyrsis* written in 1867, on the death of the poet Arthur Hugh Clough.

Other elegies watch no set examples or traditions. Elegies have become a traditional poem which is meant for the morning and to bring consolation in the end. Elegy is a poem which talks about the life and death, the two opposites. In the eighteenth century the English "burial ground school" of writers composed reflections on death and eternal life, merge sombre now and then gruesome symbolism of human fleetingness with philosophical theory. Representative works are Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742–45) and Robert Blair's *Grave* (1743), but the best known of these poems is Thomas Gray's more tastefully subdued creation —*An Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard* (1751), which pays tribute to the generations of humble and unknown villagers buried in a church cemetery. In the United States, a counterpart to the graveyard mode is found in William Cullen Bryant's —*Thanatopsis* (1817). A wholly new treatment of the conventional pathetic fallacy of attributing grief to nature

is achieved in Walt Whitman's —When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd (1865–66).

In modern poetry, the epitaph remains an incessant and critical graceful proclamation. Its range and variation can be seen in such poems as A.E. Housman's —To an Athlete Dying Young, W.H. Auden's —In Memory of W.B. Yeats, E.E. Cummings's —my father moved through dooms of love, John Peale Bishop's —Hours (on F. Scott Fitzgerald), and Robert Lowell's —The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket.

9.3 FEATURES OF ELEGY

1. Imagination plays a very important role in writing an elegy. The writer mainly uses the first-person narrative.
2. There is often a comparison between the life of deceased and the poet.
3. This helps the writer to go beyond the main subject to the level where it reaches the metaphorical level.
4. The poet always raises the question about destiny, justice and fate.
5. Towards the end of the poem, the poet provides the reader with ease, happiness and consolation. Christian elegies usually proceed from sorrow and misery to hope and happiness because they say that death is just a hindrance in the way of passing from the mortal state into the eternal state.
6. An elegy is not always based on the plot.

Narrative, Lyric, and Drama are the three general literary forms into which writing, especially poetry, has traditionally been grouped. A narrative tells a story or a tale; drama is presented on a stage, where actors embody characters; lyric has been loosely defined as any short poem other than narrative and drama, where poets express their state of mind.

9.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

❖ MCQ

1. The poet was grief-stricken by the deaths of his eleven siblings, his friend Richard West, his aunt Mary and dismayed after an attack by highwaymen on his childhood friend Horace Walpole, all of which led him to meditate deeply on death. What was the poem's original title?
 - a. A Summer Evening Churchyard
 - b. Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey
 - c. **Stanzas Wrote in a Country Churchyard**

d. The Old Vicarage Grantchester

2. Other writers have taken phrases and lines from this poem and used them as book titles; children over the centuries have memorised it. Almost every line is a quotable quote, but what is the first line of the poem?

- a. I wandered lonely as a cloud
- b. Full many a gem of the purest ray serene
- c. **The curfew tolls the knell of parting day**
- d. Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,

3. Literary detectives have tried to identify the original churchyard that provided the inspiration for the poem. Incidentally, the poet himself is buried here. Which one could it be?

- a. The churchyard at Grantchester
- b. **Stoke Poges churchyard**
- c. Winchester Cathedral churchyard
- d. Westminster Abbey

4. Several 18th Century poets were known for their depressing meditations on dying. Images of funerals, last rites, urns and ashes filled their poems. Which one of these is not one of the "Graveyard Poets"?

- a. Thomas Warton
- b. **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**
- c. Oliver Goldsmith
- d. Christopher Smart

5. The poet began writing the "Elegy..." in 1741, finished it in 1750. It went through several revised versions after it was published. Which magazine was it first published in on 16 February 1751?

- a. **The Gentleman's Magazine**
- b. Blackwood's Magazine
- c. Magazine of Magazines
- d. The Quarterly Review

6. "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is a poem that was at one time a popular inclusion in textbooks and anthologies around the world. Many English poets have been influenced by the themes, language and setting of Elegy. Who was the English poet who translated part of it into Latin?

- a. Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- b. **Walt Whitman**

- c. William Butler Yeats
- d. Percy Bysshe Shelley

7. There are several rhyming schemes in poetry. The poet followed a classical scheme for this poem with its weighty theme. Which one of these is the rhyming scheme for "Elegy"?

- a. **ABAB**
- b. AABB
- c. 5-7-5
- d. ABBA

8. The selection of words and phrases in the poem is superb. Writers and artists down the years have been inspired by them. One of the lines was used as the title of a book by Thomas Hardy. Which one was it?

- a. Celestial Fire
- b. The Power and The Glory
- c. **Far from the Madding Crowd**
- d. Kindred Spirit

9. The poem "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" refers to power and glory that fade, and to illustrate these, three famous figures are named in the poem. Who are they?

- a. **Hampden, Cromwell, Milton**
- b. Wordsworth, Southey, Shelley
- c. Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth, Sir Walter Raleigh
- d. Dickens, Thackeray, Emily Bronte

10. Let's finish with the last line of the poem. It formed part of the Epitaph section. Which one was it?

- a. Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires
- b. **The bosom of his Father and his God**
- c. The paths of glory lead but to the grave
- d. Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

11. When was Thomas Gray born?

- a) 3 June 1688
- b) 1 January 1701
- c) 21 July 1714
- d) **26 December 1716**

12. Where was Thomas Gray born?

- a) Bristol
- b) Cardiff

- c) Liverpool
 - d) **London**
13. When was *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* published?
- a) **1751**
 - b) 1702
 - c) 1738
 - d) 1712
14. What was the name of Thomas Gray's most famous poem?
- a. *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*
 - b. *The Progress of Poesy*
 - c. *The Bard*
 - d. *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*
15. The verse form of Gray's —*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* is
- a. blank verse
 - b. alexandrines
 - c. rhymed couplets
 - d. **quatrains**
16. The reference to the —hoary-headed swain in —*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* suggests Gray's desire for recognition from
- a. poets
 - b. **the humble**
 - c. politicians
 - d. the proud
17. The opening lines of the —*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* are set at
- a. **twilight**
 - b. daybreak
 - c. midnight
 - d. noon
18. In the —*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, Gray's speaker stresses the
- a. laziness of the rural poor
 - b. shallowness of family life
 - c. **equalizing nature of death**
 - d. generosity of land owners
19. In —*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, which technique is used in the following lines?
- Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,

And all the air a solemn stillness holds

- a. paradox
- b. dissonance
- c. **inversion**
- d. internal rhyme

20. Gray frequently uses a poetic device whereby letters or sounds within certain words are omitted (e.g. "glimm'ring"). What is this device called?

- a. Simile
- b. Symploce
- c. **Syncope**
- d. Synecdoche

Question/Answers

1. Find out the themes in Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.
2. Comment on the rural ethos in Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.
3. Comment on the structure and diction of the poem Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.
4. How did Thomas Gray reveal death and decay in the poem?

❖ Short Notes

1. Explain in detail features of Elegy.
2. Sounds and sound patterns appeared in the poem Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

9.5 LET'S SUM UP

• Critical appreciation of the work: -

This poem is written by Thomas Gray which comprises of 32 stanzas. Every stanza comprises of four poetic pattern lines for which they are called heroic quatrains. The elegy is written in quatrains. Like other elegies dedicated to —particular person. Gray's elegy is about men or various men who lived and obscure life who died and were laid at rest in the country churchyard. The poem begins musically. It describes the setting of the poem that is, evening or probably night time. In the first part of the poem, the writer has chosen time of the day to mourn the death of his previous one. The poet chose night as the season of grieving. Night not only is a part of day but it symbolizes loneliness and grieving. Night not always means the end of the day to the poet but also the end of life.

The night additionally proposes the approaching haziness and night in nature, and anguish and despairing in human psyche.

The poet then intensifies the atmosphere by describing the scene plowman homeward plods his weary way'. The glimmering twilight is fading, and a solemn stillness' fills all the air. The only sound that the poet can hear is that of the beetles and the moping owls. The atmosphere expresses grief-stricken silence. Then the poet moves on to describe the church, the elm tree and the graves that were already weary laying there forever. The poet creates such a sad atmosphere by describing the story of rude forefathers whose tombs still lay there, each in his narrow cell. The reader is grief-stricken when the poet says by pointing out the graves that these people No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed', no more the blazing hearth shall burn, nor their wife will wait for them to return from their work waiting to entertain them. They will no longer be able to see the breezy morning or hear the shrill of the cock. No children run to lisp their sire's return or climb his knees the envied kiss to share. He perceives the basic existence of the individuals who lived close to the dirt identifying over their destiny with philanthropic energy.

The poet changes his tone to advising rich people by saying not to mock at these men who have died, suddenly he becomes philosophical and start talking about the grandeur of these men and comes to the harsh truth of life: -

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

No matter how many songs you write about the dead or how many monuments you build in their name, they are not going to rise from the ashes like phoenix. The men were poor and humble, but some had celestial fire in their hearts. Some would even make great rulers; some even were incredible authorities of lyre which filled them with rapture. But the chill penury spoiled their noble rage and froze their genial current of the soul, they did not have means to seek knowledge, and so their potentiality could not flourish, and they remain hidden in the darkness. If given a chance, some would have become Milton and Cromwell because they were normal people like us who avoided all the glory and did not take the path that leads to power. They were sober people who loved to live in peace, and they used to avoid fuss. When these men are buried in the churchyard their friend erected shapeless tom stones with epitaphs with uncouth rhymes to protect them from public shame. So, those who pass by these graves can pay their humble tribute to the innocent men.

The poor men have died, but they are still remembered by their loved who are left behind. The tone of poet becomes grimmer filled with pathos when he describes how these men died one after another. To an inquiry, an ancient headed swain would state that here was the man who might quickly stroll at the peep of daybreak through the dewy grass to meet the sun upon the upland garden. That man would occasionally extend his body at the foot of a gesturing beech tree to cool his worn-out nerves at twelve, and with ponder watch the rivulet that jabbered by. Now and again, he would be seen by the wood with a contemptuous grin all over, mumbling wayward likes. Whenever old, he was a hanging frame, a man beset with cares or crossed in hopeless love, a woeful wan, now abandoned by all. One morning he would miss from his most loved frequents – the heath, the tree, the slope, the yard or the wood. Rather, he would be seen being borne through the churchyard route way with grieverers singing laments. His body is presently in the grave under the stone covered with thorns.

An epitaph written on the stone describes a man who is now in the grave. He was a young man, all through his life he was unaware of fame and fortune, he has spent a difficult life, and he also lacked the benefits of ‘fair science’. But he was man who was good at heart, polite and a sincere soul whom God, gave him a friend that he wanted. According to the poet there is no meaning in talking about this man now as he is already dead and soon would be taken into the bosom of his father and his God.

The lyric in its endeavor to work in this manner in all-inclusive terms and in its unrivalled virtue, legitimacy and agreement of lingual authority is an extraordinary acknowledgement of the standards of its day: in its peaceful despairing and rural setting, it is maybe marginally sentimental. Despite the fact that in its treatment of the normal man it is gallant and even lofty, it has not the tone of Wordsworth. The lyric is minimal of what Tennyson called —divine truisms", and these are all around, assuming properly, influencing. Among poem exemplifying the honourable perfect of what was often thought by everyone but never expressed so well.

9.6 KEY WORDS

Elegy	(in modern literature) a poem of serious reflection, typically a lament for the dead.
Perplexing	completely baffling; very puzzling.

- Sonnet** A poem made up of fourteen lines using any of a number of formal rhyme schemes, in English typically having ten syllables per line.
- Mourning** the expression of sorrow for someone's death
- Epitaph** A phrase or form of words written in memory of a person who has died, especially as an inscription on a tombstone.

9.7 SUGGESTED READING

- —English Literature by R J Rees. Published by Macmillan.
- The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms by Mark Strand and Evan Boland. Published by Norton & Co.
- The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy edited by Karen Weisman. Published by Oxford University Press
- Elegy written in country churchyard by Thomas Gray.
- A Study Guide for Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" By Cengage learning Gale.
- "Introduction", in Harold Bloom, *Thomas Gray's Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, Bloom Harold (1987).
- A Criticism on the Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard by Young John (1783).

❖ Answers

1.	c	11.	d
2.	c	12.	d
3.	b	13.	a
4.	b	14.	b
5.	a	15.	c
6.	b	16.	b
7.	a	17.	a
8.	c	18.	c
9.	a	19.	c
10.	b	20.	c

:: STRUCTURE ::

- 10.0 Objectives**
- 10.1 Introduction**
- 10.2 About the Author**
- 10.3 About the Poem**
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- 10.5 Interpretation and Analysis**
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- 10.9 Check Your Progress**
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10.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall

- have biographical details of the poet
- have an interpretation of the poem

By the end of the unit, you should be able to

- learn about poetic elements
- analyse the poem critically

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This poem was written in 1819 when the poet himself experienced the autumnal rain with thunder and lightning at sunset in the forest of Arno, near Florence. The poetic beauty of the poem lies in its lyrical intensity and magnificent theme. The swift of the wild west wind is getting reflected in the energetic flow of the poem. Expression of personal

experience with prophetic passion dominates the entire lyrical charm of the poem. Harmony of the words turns into effective images of earth, air and ocean in this poem. West wind, as an element of nature, represents the free spirit of man. The inspired poet comes forward as a prophet with a very strong message to mankind. The west wind symbolises the law of life; namely creation and destruction. Shelley's belief in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth gets portrayed with a note of optimism for the rebirth of new world order. In this poem, Shelly prays the west wind to make him a messenger of nature to spread the wave of a new era of happiness and peace to the world. Ode to the West Wind is one of the most famous poems by Shelley and is considered as one of the finest lyrics in English literature.

10.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Percy Bysshe Shelley, a poet, dramatist, novelist and an essayist was born on Aug. 4, 1792, in England. In 1810, he matriculated from University College, Oxford. In 1811, he, along with his friend Hogg wrote an essay 'The Necessity of Atheism' which resulted in expulsion from Oxford University. Shelly's poetry is marked with romanticism, blasphemy and sedition as well. He was a rebellion by nature and sensitive by heart. Yearning for bringing change in the world and mankind was a dominant element of his poetry. He was a kind of rebel against the wrong in the system and society as well. His works truly depict his concern for the well-being of mankind. He was an aspirant of new era of just and sane life. He was a traveller of the path to sensitive society. Through satirical expressions of situation of his times, he revealed the dark side of the way of life, and through his works only he put forward new rays of hope which were targeted to optimistic view of life. Shelly was one of the major English Romantic poets. His famous classic poems include *Ozymandias*, *To a Skylark*, *The Cloud*, *When Soft Voices Die*. *The Cenci* is a remarkable work, a verse drama by Shelley. Visionary poems such as *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Adonais*, *Prometheus Unbound* are considered a masterpiece. Shelley's first publication was *Zastrozzi* (1810) was a Gothic novel in which he expressed his atheistic views. On July 8, 1822 while returning from Leghorn in sailing boat, Shelley died due to a sudden storm in the Gulf of Spezia. On his grave Latin inscription-*Cor Cordium* has been mentioned which means *Heart of Hearts*.

10.3 ABOUT THE POEM

Ode to the West Wind, an ode written by Shelley in 1819 was originally published in 1820 as a part of *Prometheus Unbound*, lyrical drama in four acts. The poem is divided into five cantos written in Terza Rima (three-line stanza) having four tercets in Iambic Pentameter following a specific pattern-ABA BCB CDC DED EE. Shelley wanted to spread his message of reform and revolution through this poem. The wind becomes a medium of change to happen, and the poet becomes the messenger of the change. It is also believed that this poem was written by Shelley in response to the loss of his son William in 1819. First three cantos of the poem describe the effect of the wind on Earth, Air and Ocean. In the remaining two cantos, the poet speaks to the wind and asks to make him companion in its wanderings. In the very first line, the poet addresses the wind, —O wild West Wind! and first three cantos end with the invocation —Oh hear! The poet asks the wind—Make me thy lyre! to drive his thoughts across the world. He wants the wind to spread his words among mankind. Shelley invokes the wind describing its impact as both ‘destroyer’ and ‘preserver’ and asks him to sweep him off as a wave, leaf or cloud with its magnificent power. In the last canto, the poet makes the wind a metaphor for his own art that removes the ‘dead thoughts’ as ‘withered leaves’ ‘to quicken a new birth’ to welcome the Spring. Here the season of Spring also becomes a metaphor for liberty, imagination and morals-that Shelley wants to spread in the world through his words. His poetic art, being a musical instrument would swell the sounds of new hope and optimism in the society-this is what Shelley expresses in the poem.

10.4 TEXT

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O wild West Wind; thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes:
O thou, Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,
Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thin airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head
Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might
Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them!
Thou For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightiest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be
The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

10.5 INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind' is the result of his personal experience of tempest near Florence. One storm outside caused another thunder inside, and this is how his poetic faculty was made work on composing this awe-inspiring ode. Similes and metaphors are taking the shape of myth in specific structural outcome, and the poet is being mastered by the words rather than to be a master of the words. A first-person address to the West Wind begins with uncanny ambience and ends with significant sanguinity. In the first stanza, the wind blows the foliage of autumn. In

the second stanza, the wind blows the clouds in the sky. In the third stanza, the wind blows across the waves of the ocean. In the fourth stanza, the first-person persona desires to be lifted up by the wind just like leaf, cloud and wave and feels *‘tameless and swift and proud’* like the wind. Finally, in the fifth stanza, the persona asks the wind to make him its lyre to spread the fierce spirit across the world, reawakening the world.

First Canto

The first Canto begins with alliteration *‘wild West Wind’*, and the poet addresses the wind; this is how it turns into personification in the poem. Here the season of autumn is described in a mystical manner where the wind has been called *‘breath of autumn’s being’*. Further in the season of autumn, dried leaves are driven away by the wind as if the ghosts are trying to escape because of the presence of enchanter. The wind is destroyer for *‘the leaves dead’, ‘pestilence-stricken’* which are *‘yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red’*. At the same time, the wind plays preserver for the scattered *‘winged seeds’* of trees which are blown to the safe place *‘dark wintry bed’* by the wind and preserved until the *‘azure sister of the Spring’*, means the east wind shall blow and regenerate new life on the earth. These new buds will fly all over the world like flocks and fill the earth with new colours and smell. In the last couplet of the first canto, the West Wind again has been addressed as the *‘wild spirit’* which moves all across the earth, destroys the rotten leaves by blowing them away and preserves the seeds by burying them at safer place for the winter and helps them grow with new possibilities and potentials when the spring arrives, and the earth becomes alive with new life. Shelley appeals to the West Wind to listen to him. Thus the first canto ends with another form of personification describing the effect of the wind on the earth.

Second Canto

The second canto deals with the impact of the wind on the sky. Stormy wind shakes the clouds in the sky, and it creates a horrifying picture of destruction. Due to the storm in the sky and the ocean, it seems as if clouds are the leaves being scattered from *‘the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean’*. The scene looks like as if some wild fairy (Maenad) lifts her hair up. The clouds are scattered all over the sky from horizon to zenith, and the sound produced by the storm seems to be a kind of lamenting noise on the death of the year. The arrival of the night looks like a dome of a vast tomb in which the ending year is to be buried. Clouds are also seen as angels of rain and the messenger that brings the message from

heaven to earth through rain and lightning. Shelley moves from earthly leaves to commotion of the sky. The clouds will bring rain, fire and hail on the earth. In this fearful atmosphere, Shelley appeals to the West Wind to listen to him.

Third Canto

The third canto illustrates the movement of the wind on the ocean. Here the West Wind awakens the blue Mediterranean from his summer dreams. The sea is lulled by the stream of rivers beside an island near Baiae's Bay (a place where Roman ruins are seen underwater). Now the stormy wind trembles the underwater towers and palaces which were lying peacefully. These palaces and towers are overgrown with moss and sea-plants. This symbolises the decay of the past decades and centuries with the passage of the time, and now the wind stirs the entire ocean with its swift and due to this the level of Atlantic's water increases and becomes more powerful. The turbulent wind divides the waters in deep chasms, and the sense faints describing it. Further Shelley describes the fear that these underwater ruins feel due to the terror of the tempest. They suddenly grow gray with fear and tremble and despoil themselves. Shelley appeals to the West Wind to listen to him regarding this.

Fourth Canto

In the fourth canto, Shelley turns to his own self. First canto begins with O wild West Wind and second and third canto begins with thou, but the fourth canto begins with If I were. Now the focus is on the poet himself and not the wind. With first-person pronouns I (line 43, 44, 48, 51, 54), my (line 48, 52) and me (line 53) here the poet recalls his own times when he also had the qualities that the wind possesses. He makes an earnest appeal to the West Wind to bring back those qualities to him. He wants to become wild, swift and proud just like the wind. The poet recalls his boyhood when he was as free as the West Wind and wishes to be lifted up by the West Wind like a leaf, cloud or wave. He feels the mightiest strength of the West Wind and says that his vigour is lost due to the burden of life. Shelley had seen very dramatic ups and downs during his life, and his stress gets reflected in the fourth canto. He bleeds on the thorns of life and a heavyweight of hours has chained and bow'd him. Shelly says, he would not have made this appeal if he were a dead leaf blown by the wind, or a swift cloud trembled by its might, being less free and uncontrollable compared to the West Wind. During his boyhood in his thoughts, he says, he could accompany the West Wind in its wanderings over the heaven and could also compete with its speed. This canto sounds like a confession and a prayer as well.

Shelley requests the West Wind to lift him up and to make him tameless, swift and proud again just like the West Wind.

Fifth Canto

The fifth canto sound like a demand put forward by the poet to the West Wind. He asks the West Wind to make him his lyre, a musical instrument as the wind makes the forest its instrument to play the sound of his might. Here in this canto, Shelley shifts from I to My, so it sounds the self-possessed part of the poem. After describing earth, water and wind, here he brings the remaining two elements-fire and universe (space). There is a kind of confrontation in this canto when Shelly uses —me thy| and —thou me| which clearly indicates restoration of the confidence of the poet in his capabilities. He strongly feels allied with the West Wind. In the first canto the wind was an enchanter, and nowhere it is incantation itself. The poet redefines himself and wants the wind to be through his lips to awaken the world. This canto is kind of conversation that the poet has with the West Wind. In the midst of the mixed feeling of sadness and sweetness, the poet requests the West Wind to drive away his dead thoughts like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth. Further he says that his thoughts through his poetic art will spread new ideas as if ashes and sparks are being spread from unextinguished hearth. This is how he wants his words to reach among mankind. The use of will in this canto indicates the possibilities of future, and it sounds like the trumpet of a prophecy. The poem ends with an optimistic note that may it be a very tuff time, but it will be all right afterwards. Darkest hours will end with new dawn always, and that is why he rightly says, If winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Conclusion:

As the poem is an ode, a harmonic celebration, consistent pattern and tone of expression include enthusiasm, delight, bliss and anticipation throughout the poem. Shelley's classic mastery over personification has been penned down blended with his philosophy in this ode. Lucid, lyrical ability is a further strength of Shelley's poetry. Evocative imagery, functional figures of speech, miraculous myth, careful craftsmanship, mystical metaphors, smooth similes and everlasting optimism are the noteworthy features of this ode. We find Shelley, the lyricist, the reformer, the idealist, the prophet expressing his poetic faculty enriched with philosophical blend in a very spontaneous yet harmonious manner in this poem.

10.6 PROGRESS TEST

Find out the correct answer from the given options.

1. The 'Thou' found throughout the poem always refers to
 - a) Autumn
 - b) The Poet's beloved
 - c) The West Wind
 - d) The Poet's soul

2. The time of year when this was written
 - a) Spring
 - b) Summer
 - c) Early Autumn
 - d) Late Autumn

3. The dominant imagery of Stanzas I & II is of
 - a) Death
 - b) Decay
 - c) Hope
 - d) Growth

4. The —pestilence-stricken multitudes are
 - a) Ghosts
 - b) Peasants
 - c) Leaves
 - d) Thoughts of the beloved

5. The —destroyer and preserver is
 - a) The beloved
 - b) The West Wind
 - c) Revolution
 - d) God

6. The —locks of the approaching storm are
 - a) Jails
 - b) The beloved's tresses
 - c) An angelic host
 - d) Clouds

7. The one —wakened from his summer dreams describes
 - a) The Poet
 - b) The blue Mediterranean
 - c) The West Wind
 - d) Baiae

8. —Cleave themselves into chasms|| describes
- a) Waves
 - b) England and France
 - c) Inlets
 - d) Well, it involves sexual imagery
9. —To outstrip thy skyey speed/ Scarce seemed a vision. . .|| indicates
- a) The beauty of the beloved
 - b) The Poet's limitless youthful exuberance
 - c) The poet's belief in the French Revolution
 - d) The Poet's youthful idolization of Wordsworth

10.7 LET US SUM UP

‘Ode to the West Wind’ is a poem that illustrates the role of the poet as the agent of the change. Shelley in his ‘Defence of Poetry’ writes, —Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpet which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.|| The imagery of this poem suggests a natural phenomenon that has been experienced by the poet. It was written near Florence, the city of Dante and probably that's why Shelley might have chosen Terza Rima pattern which was used in Dante's ‘Divine Comedy’ and rare in English ode. Thematic beauty of the poem is woven with pleasing structural symmetry. The technique using myth in poetry has been implemented in the ode. The West Wind is a spirit possessing great powers and because of this Shelley invokes the West Wind and prays for what he feels. He feels that ‘upon the thorns of life’ he bleeds; ‘heavyweight of hours has chained and bowed’ him. Shelley believed that poetry could appeal to imagination and stimulate action. For Shelley, this action leads to liberty, democracy and imagination which result in healthy and happy human consciousness. That is why Shelly ends the ode on an optimistic note- —If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind!!

10.8 KEY WORD

Literary Terms:

Ode	A lyrical poem addressed to a particular subject, which can be sung
Alliteration	the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of closely connected words.
Personification	the attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human
Simile	a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another
Metaphor	a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else
Myth	a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events

Difficult Words:

1-Pestilence:	26-Isle: Island
2-Multitudes:	27-Quivering: Shaking
3-Chariotest:	28-Intenser: Extreme
4-Corpse: Dead body	29-Moss: Sea-plants
5-Azure: Blue	30-Faints: loses consciousness
6-Clarion: Trumpet	31-Cleave: Seperate
7-Flock: Group of birds	32-Chasms: Deep curves
8-Hues: Shades	33-Blooms: Plants
9-Odours:	34-Oozy- Muddy
10-Steep: Upward	35-Sapless-Juiceless
11-Commotion: motion	36-Foliage: Leaves
12- Decaying: Flowing	37-Dispoil: Ruin
13-Tangled: Mixed	38-Comrade: Companion
14-Bough: Branch	39-Skiey: Of sky
15-Aery: Windy	40-Scarce: Insufficient
16-Surge: Flood	41-Sore: Painful
17-Verge: Border	42-Tameless: Wild
18-Dirge: Mourn	43-Lyre: Musical Instrument
19-Sepulchre: Tomb	44-Tumult: Uprising noise
20-Vaulted: Formed	45-Impetuous: Making arbitrary decisions
21-Congregated: Collected	

22-Hail: Ice drops
23-Lull'd: Rested
24-Coil: Spiral
25-Pumice: Light-weight

46-Wither'd: Dried
47-Incantation: Rhyming formula
48-Unextinguished: Not eliminated
49-Hearth: Stone
50-Prophecy: divine

1.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1: Write a note on the poem, 'Ode to the West Wind'.

Ans. 'Ode to the West Wind' is one of the most engaging odes in the English language. The poem is a forceful, mind-blowing description of the West Wind. Shelley, here, presents the West Wind both as a creative and destructive force. According to Shelley, it is a symbol of healthy change. It sweeps all that is dead and useless and marks the beginning of new life. The poet invokes the mighty West Wind to infuse in him poetic inspiration so that he may deliver his invaluable message to mankind. The poem is also remarkable for its revolutionary element. It, in a way, signals an end to decaying monarchies and dwindling autocracies. According to the poet, the winter season cannot last long. After every winter, there always comes the spring. Hence, the poem ends on a strong note of optimisms.

In 'Ode to the West Wind' Shelley shows his great love for liberty. He personifies the West Wind as a powerful and uncontrollable spirit. It is the breath of autumn's being. Its terrible power is felt by the trees which shed their leaves at its approach. The leaves fly away like the "pestilence-stricken multitudes". The West Wind sends the old seeds to their dark wintry beds. They come to life again in the spring season. In this way, the West Wind acts not only as a destroyer but a preserver as well.

The West Wind is not only powerful at the earth; it is powerful in the sky also. With its force, it spreads dark clouds all over the sky. They are the angels of rain. Even the ocean becomes helpless before the West Winds' power. It disturbs the calm surface of the ocean. When the West Wind comes the waves of the Atlantic divide themselves to give way. Even the plants growing at the bottom of ocean turn grey with fear when they find West Wind approaching.

The poet requests the West Wind to lend him some of its powers. At one time even the poet was like the West Wind. He was volatile and untamed, but now he feels weak and shackled because of his age. He finds himself fallen on the thorns of life and is bleeding. So, he requests the West Wind to come to his help. He wants it to lift him as he would lift a wave, a leaf, or a cloud.

The 'poet is a champion of liberty'. He wants to spread his message of hope through all mankind. His thoughts are like grey withered leaves. He is without hope. He wants the West Winds to revitalize him by making him its lyre. It should blow through his lips and bring cheer to all. The poet ends with a prophecy: "if winter comes can Spring be far behind?"

Answer the following questions:

Que 1: Why has the West Wind been called the 'unseen presence'?

Que 2: How are the dead leaves driven?

Que 3: How are the winged seeds described?

Que 4: How is the West Wind destroyer and preserver?

Que 5: What does the poet think about the West Wind's power?

Que 6: Is the poet happy about his life?

Que 7: What prayer does the poet make to the West Wind?

Que 8: What kind of help does the poet seek from the West Wind?

Que 9: Describe the effect of the West Wind on the leaves, the clouds and the sea waves?

Que 10: How is the West Wind harbinger of a new life?

Que 11: What effect does the West Wind have on the ocean?

Que 12: What is the effect of the West Wind in the sky?

Que 13: How does the poet compare himself to the West Wind?

Que 14: What message does the poem give at the end?

10.10 FURTHER READING SUGGESTED

- Maenad: Maenad, female follower of the Greek god of wine, Dionysus. The word maenad comes from the Greek maenades, meaning mad or demented.
- Baiae's Bay: Place situated at the northern end of the Gulf of Naples, where the underwater Roman ruins are visible

Books:

1-Percy Bysshe Shelley's Ode to the West Wind - A Discussion by Silvia Katzenmaier (Grin Publishing, September 2010)

2-How Shelley Approached the Ode to the West Wind by H Buxton (Harry Buxton) Forman (Hardpress Publishing, 10 January 2012)

3-Shelley: Poems (Everyman's Library Pocket Poets Series) by Shelley (Everyman's Library, November 1993)

4-The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley: With Notes by Shelley (Forgotten Books, May 2017)

5-Selected Poems and Prose (Penguin Classics) by Percy Bysshe Shelley (Author), Jack Donovan (Editor, Introduction), Cian Duffy (Editor, Introduction) (Penguin Classics, January 2017)

E-resources:

1-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k6L1t0bXGM>

2-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUGuIYT7irw>

3-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCxYl8mxc2o>

4-<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/ode-west-wind>

5-<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ode-to-the-West-Wind>

❖ ANSWERS

Answers of 1.6 Progress Test:

1-c, 2-c, 3-b, 4-c, 5-b, 6-d, 7-b, 8-a, 9-b

Answers of 1.9 Questions: (Ans.1 to 14)

- Ans. 1** The West Wind has been called the 'unseen presence' because it cannot be seen and its presence can be felt.
- Ans. 2** The dead leaves are driven by the West Wind as 'ghosts' run away from enchanter.
- Ans. 3** The seeds are flying in the air because of the wind so they are called the winged seeds.
- Ans. 4** The West Wind destroys the old vegetations, yet it preserves the seeds for the new vegetation. In this way the West Wind is both destroyer and preserver.
- Ans. 5** He thinks that the West Wind is very powerful and can sweep anything in the world.
- Ans. 6** No, the poet is not happy. He is in pain and suffers life.
- Ans. 7** The poet prays to the West Wind to lift him like a wave or a leaf or a cloud.
- Ans. 8** The poet wants to scatter his verses all over the earth like the leaves.
- Ans. 9** As the West Wind comes the leaves of trees turn pale in fear. They fall from the trees. They fly away like ghosts running away from an enchanter. Their hue turns yellow, black and hectic red. They look like pestilence-driven multitudes. The West Wind scatters the dark clouds which look like the bright hair uplifted from the head of fierce maenad. The West Wind disturbs the ocean also.
- Ans. 10** It destroys all that is dead. The dead leaves are taken away by the West Wind. Along with the dead leaves the seeds are also transported to new places for the right opportunity. These seeds sprout into new buds. In this way the West Wind becomes the harbinger of a new life.
- Ans. 11** The West Wind creates a storm in the ocean. It divides the waves of the ocean. Even the sea flowers at the bottom of the ocean are disturbed.
- Ans. 12** It scatters the clouds in the sky. It brings about rain. It comes near the end of the year and seems to be the mourning song for the dying ear. The poet feels that the West Wind brings rain, shiver and thunder.
- Ans. 13** The West Wind is very powerful. It cannot be tamed. The poet was also equally powerful when he was young. He was also untamed and wild. But now because of the burden of time he has become weak. He has fallen on the thorns of life and he is bleeding.
- Ans. 14** The poet wants to suggest that after grief there will be joy. After winter there will be spring. He seeks the help of the West Wind to bring a message of hope and joyful life..

:: STRUCTURE ::

- 11.0 Objectives**
- 11.1 Introduction**
- 11.2 About the Author**
- 11.3 About the Poem**
- 11.4 Text**
- 11.5 Interpretation and Analysis**
- 11.6 Progress Test**
- 11.7 Let Us Sum Up**
- 11.8 Glossary**
- 11.9 Check Your Progress**
- 11.10 Further Reading Suggested**
 - ❖ **Answers**

11.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall

- have biographical details of the poet
- have elucidation of the poem

By the end of the unit, you should be able to

- learn about poetic elements
- evaluate the poem significantly

11.1 INTRODUCTION

"My Imagination is a Monastery and I am its Monk"-Keats (in his letter to Shelley) rightly expresses his poetic spirit in his own words. Authoritative imagination and subtle sensibility are the central characteristics of Keats' poetry. Being a romantic poet, he has explored the empire of emotions in his works and has taken a voyage across the

very essence of life. As life leads to death, Keats has also portrayed the daintiness of death. He had gone through many spheres of life and had seen the face of life and death very closely and that is why he could recite his occurrences in pain and pleasure both through his pen. ‘*La Belle Dame Sans Merci*’ is an expression of his experiences of life shaped in the form of ballad, an ancient form of narrating a story in musical poetry consisting of rhyme and rhythm. It is a narrative entailing both pains and pleasures of life.

11.2 ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Keats (1795-1821)

John Keats was one of the most prominent romantic poets in English literature. He was one of the very famous trio of Romanticism: Keats, Byron, Shelley. Keats was born on 31 October, 1795 in London, England. His works got published just before four years of his death on 23 February, 1821 at the age of 25 only. Poetry of Keats became more popular after his death and by the end of 19th century he had been considered as one of the most treasured poets of English literature. Sensual imagery was the prime feature of his poetry.

John Keats was the eldest child of Thomas Keats and Frances Jennings in the family. He did his schooling at local Dame school and later was sent to John Clarke’s school at Enfield where his interest in classics was developed. Keats lost his father at the age of eight in 1804 and his mother got remarried but she left her husband afterwards and all the four children were sent to the house of their grandmother Alice Jennings at Edmonton. When Keats was 14, in 1810, his mother also passed away. Keats started his medical studies at King’s College, London in 1815 and by 1816 he decided not to go in medical profession. He had written ‘*An Imitation of Spenser*’, a poem in 1814 when he was 19. He was very much inspired by two poets: Leigh Hunt and Lord Byron. His first poem in print was ‘*O Solitude*’, a sonnet which was published in Leigh Hunt’s magazine ‘*The Examiner*’ in May 1816. His first collection ‘*Poems*’ was out in 1817 which did not get a huge success but could grab the attention of readers and arouse the interest of publishers. His first collection made him good friend to Richard Woodhouse, a learned lawyer of the time, later who documented and archived most of the works of Keats. Keats befriended Isabella Jones in 1817 and she had been an inspiration for many of his romantic poems. Later in 1819, Fanny Brawne came in his life and the relationship ended with disease and depression that got reflected in his

works such as *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* where love and death both are recited.

By September 1820, Tuberculosis took hold on Keats and he left for Rome and passed his last couple of months in Rome. John Keats died on 23 February 1821 and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery, Rome. As per his wish, it was written on his tombstone: Here lies One Whose Name was writ in Water. Keats's letters were published in 1848 and 1878. His other famous works include *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn* and *Ode on Melancholy*, *Endymion*. His very famous lines from *Ode on a Grecian Urn* are; —Beauty is truth, truth beauty' that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know".

11.3 ABOUT THE POEM

La Belle Dame Sans Merci was written by Keats in 1819 and published in 1820. Title of the poem was taken from *La Belle Dame Sans Mercy* by Alain Chartier (15th century). The title means *The Beautiful Lady without Mercy*. This poem is a ballad narrating a story of a knight and a lady. Poetic expression of love and death is at its peak in this classic masterpiece by Keats. It contains twelve stanzas of four lines in each having the rhyme scheme of ABCB. Iambic Tetrameter is the basic structure of the poem in which one iamb is an unstressed, followed by stressed syllable. Fourth line of each stanza does have only three stressed syllables where as in first three lines of each stanza there are four stressed syllables used. It is simple in structure and mysterious in mood. The original version and the published version of the poem are slight different and critics consider the original version more striking.

As the poem is written in the form of ballad, it does contain certain prosodic elements of the ballad, like the very first is *repetition* because ballad is the form of literature which is to be sung and told to the people so repetition keeps audience engaged with the flow of the ballad. Moreover, ballad belongs to oral tradition and that is why it uses simple and archaic language in which folktale can be narrated easily. Throughout the poem, tone of the ballad is interwoven with silence and death with the imagery of *no birds sing*, *wither'd plants* and *alone and palely loitering* knight. Metaphors are used to make the poem more lyrical and appropriate with the setting of the poem, like *lily on brow*—as the lady is associated with the flowers, it indicates the impact of the lady on the knight. Most of the time, flowers are presented in the poem in a very symbolic manner. Beginning and end of the poem reflect the season of autumn but the episode of fairy lady reflects the season of spring, such a shift in the cycle of the season adds the mysterious movement in the poem. Dreams, dew and water are the elements of romantic poetry which are used significantly by Keats in the poem. Rhyme pattern of ABCB and iambic meter of the poem maintains the rhythmic structure of the poem

which is also a characteristic of the poetry of Romantic age. Alliteration and assonance

Are also used several times in the poem: "For sidelong would she bend, and sing a fairy's song", "wept and sighed full sore, and there I shut her wild wild eyes with kisses four" The knight believes that the fairy lady loves him but he does not understand why she takes him to her grove and disappears-this sets the irony in the poem. Tone of the poem remains worshipful and sad at the same time. Nightmare of dead soldiers leads the poem to conflict and to climax further where the knight finds him alone and sick. The environment itself in the poem is personified as dying and gloomy.

As the poem is written during Romantic age (end of 18th century) by a romantic poet, John Keats, it does echo many of the elements of Romantic poetry such as sublime-thoughts and actions beyond ordinary experience. Further romantic poetry deals more with emotions rather than reason and intellect. Here also the swing of the situations in the poem excites emotions and not the intellect. Keats said, —I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination and the poem also significantly takes up the imagination as beauty and truth at its peak here. Imagination was considered as a spiritual force to make the world better especially through poetry during the Romantic age. Love for nature and relationship with external nature was seen as source of great inspiration in romantic poetry and in this poem too it stands true. Melancholy, nostalgic feeling and allusions intermingled with supernaturalism-these were few more prominent characteristics of romantic poetry and all these are significantly visible in the poem 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'.

11.4 TEXT

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever-dew,

And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.
I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.
I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan
I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.
She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
‘I love thee true’.
She took me to her Elfin grot,
And there she wept and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.
And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill side.
I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall!’
I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.
And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

11.5 INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

This ballad is written in three iambic tetrameter lines with the fourth diametric line. Simplicity of structure woven with supernatural elements is the distinctive feature of the poem as a ballad. Keats has narrated this musical story of love and death with the setting of austere winter. Last line of first stanza ‘no birds sing’ sets the mood of melancholy and it gets repeated at the end of the poem with a slight difference. Unfortunate fate of the Knight is emphasized by repeating few lines from the very first stanza at the end of poem. This poem is all about the experience of love and pains and pleasures caused by beloved. A knight forgetting his responsibilities falls in love with a beautiful lady having no mercy and finally this leads him to death-like situation. The lady in the poem is erotically attractive and seems to have supernatural powers. She attracts the knight with her wild eyes and ultimately it escorts him to the sensual pleasures resulting into death. To make it easy to understand, this ballad can be divided into four sections:

- 1-Stanza 1 to 3: Questions and observations of the stranger, speaker in the poem
- 2-Stanza 4 to 6: Reply given by the knight (I met, I made, I set)
- 3-Stanza 7 to 9: The knight further talks about the lady (She found, She took, She lulled)
- 4-Stanza 10 to 12: The knight expresses his experience (I saw, I saw, I sojourn)

Stanza-1 to 3:

In the very beginning of the poem, the speaker finds a ‘knight at arms’ nearby lake and tries to know what ails him, what is the reason of his painful state. The knight looks very pale as if he is dying. In the first stanza itself it has been mentioned that the sedge (plants) are dried and birds have migrated probably. This indicates the season of autumn or early winter. The opening of the poem reminds of medieval fairy tales and perhaps Keats intended to do so. This is how the poem begins with an inquiry of the unknown speaker to the knight.

In second stanza, the first line of the poem gets repeated, perhaps because the knight has not yet answered the question of the speaker. Here the unknown speaker narrates the situation of the knight with two more adjectives: ‘haggard’ and ‘woe-begone’ means the knight looks sick and depressed. As in the first stanza, dried plants and absence of birds, these two elements were mentioned, here in second stanza the speaker makes it clear that it is late autumn because crops have been harvested and the squirrel has filled his store with the food for winter.

Third stanza of the poem portrays the picture of pain-stricken knight with few more details. The speaker sees flower of lily on knight's brow and finds anguish on his forehead. The flower of lily stands for death. Further, the speaker says that knight's face looks so pale as if the rose is fading from his cheeks. Thus, first three stanzas create the setting for the poem to narrate the story further. In the season of early winter, in cold, nearby lake the knight is in the arms of the speaker and the sick and pain-stricken situation of the knight has been narrated by the speaker.

Here in line two, 'Alone and palely loitering', consonance of 'L' sound adds the musical element to the structure of the poem. The use of adverb 'palely' matches the internal rhyme with 'ail thee'. Lily and rose are also used as metaphors here to describe paleness of knight's face. This is how the poem opens up mysterious mood in first three stanzas.

Stanza 4 to 6:

In this part of the poem, the knight replies to the question of the speaker. He describes his meeting with fairy lady. In stanza one to three 'I' stands for the speaker but here 'I' represents the knight as he shares his experience of love with the beautiful lady. In fourth stanza, he says—I met a lady in the meads. He describes her as 'full beautiful' and 'fairy's child'. Further, he talks about her long hair, light foot and wild eyes. Sensuality enters into poem from this stanza. Eyes of that fairy lady are illustrated as 'wild' which indicates the erotic influence that she has.

Fifth stanza adds much more physical elements. The knight says that he made garland of flowers for her and bracelets too. A special remark of 'fragrant zone' is given here which signifies the female body part and further it has been said that she looked at him, loved him and made 'sweet moan'. This clearly portrays the physical pleasures of love that they enjoyed. So this is how the poem moves on adding substantial aspects of love-making. The influence of beauty's charm has won over the knight and he indulges into exotic phase of love.

Sixth stanza begins with 'I set her on my pacing steed' which apparently means that she enjoys the ride of knight's horse which is in motion but this can also be interpreted as the sexual pleasures as the horse symbolizes sexual power. The knight confesses here that after having such erotic moments with her, whole day he could not think of anything else. Here the lady sings the fairy's song. This part of the poem deals with two different elements: one is addition of sensuality and another is increasing supernatural impact of the lady.

Stanza 7 to 9:

This section of the poem portrays the activities of fairy lady with the knight. She found me..., She took me... and ...she lulled me-these are the pictures portrayed by the knight himself about the beautiful lady. In seventh stanza, the knight talks about what she did with him after their emotional encounter. She fed him with relish of sweet, honey wild and manna-dew. This manna has been referred to in Jewish scriptures as heavenly food. When Israelites were freed by Moses in Egypt, they ate this food in the state of wandering to find the promised land where milk and honey would flow. Israelites were freed from slavery and were looking for their peaceful destination. Here the knight has also been enslaved by the fairy lady under the sway of love and its consequences. The lady says something in strange language which was inferred by the knight as I love thee true. Here the supernatural element of the lady reaches far higher and the allusion becomes more intoxicating.

Eighth stanza takes the encounter of fairy lady and knight one step ahead. The lady drives the knight to her elfin grot means her supernatural inhabitant, cave and here she cries and sighs loudly. Seeing this, the knight does not understand the reason of her cry and sigh but being blind in her love, under the glamour of her beauty, he kisses her eyes four times. Here the eyes are described as wild wild, which was already mentioned earlier about her eyes but here the knight says wild twice, probably to show the rising impact of her eyes on him.

In stanza nine, the knight tells that the lady lulled the knight in the cave and made him asleep. Then he saw a dream during the sleep which was never seen by him earlier. He expresses his sufferings by saying ah! woe betide! because while it is horrible experience for him to recall this dream while talking to the unknown speaker. This particular expression adds the flavour of typical medieval romantic setting in the poem.

Stanza 10 to 12:

In tenth stanza, the knight recites his dream sequence. In the dream, he saw many other kings and princes who were death pale. Keats has used Pale three times in two lines, probably to indicate the reaching hands of death. A biblical reference from the Book of Revelation is reminded here because the fourth horseman of Apocalypse was death riding on pale horse. This refers back to the kisses four mentioned in eighth stanza. After these four kisses of knight on fairy lady's wild wild eyes, he moves on towards death and sees the dream of dead kings and princes which were seduced earlier by the beautiful lady. Describing his dream further, the knight says that in his dream all those pale faces of kings,

warriors were uttering —La Belle Dame Sans Mercil. Here comes the title of the poem which has been taken by Keats from 15th century work by Alain Chartier. This horrifying remark by pale warriors puts the knight in thrall and makes him feel bondage of alluring beauty. This French title translates the beautiful lady without mercy.

In eleventh stanza, the knight states that the starved mouths wide open were warning him about the lady. Here gloom means the dusk, the sun of the knight's glory also seems to be setting down and this makes the mood of the poem gloomy too. By the time, the knight wakes up from the dream and finds him alone suffering in cold by the side of hill. The fairy lady is disappeared all of sudden and the knight finds himself in tones of pains. So the entire sequence of the poem was dream like situation or what that is left over to the readers to interpret.

Last stanza of the poem proclaims the reason of knight's suffering. The knight says to unnamed speaker that this is why I sojourn here and this why he is palely loitering though the sedge is withered, dried up and no birds sing anywhere. The ending lines of the poem repeat almost the same words which began the poem and this is how Keats brings the reader back to the beginning with slight variation of the words at the end. The dismal outside signifies the dreary, bleak, and miserable inside of the knight and as the end of the poem revolves around the beginning of the poem, it may be a sign of a new start for a new victim of obsession in the form of merciless woman.

Conclusion:

The poem leaves the readers with a scope of interpretation on why the knight is dying but it makes a clear sense that due to his emotional encounter with fairy lady, he has been facing death-like situation. He has been left alone and palely loitering in the cold winter where no birds sing. The knight is facing the dangers of obsession, romantic and erotic fascination. Anyone can be at the fate of knight at arms, if one gets lured to neglect one's responsibilities with the intention of pampering obsession. Pleasures of moments in love may turn into consequences of pains at any time.

11.6 PROGRESS TEST

Find out the correct answer from the given options.

1. Meter used for La Belle Dame Sans Merci is _____.

- A. Trochaic B. Iambic C. Spondaic
2. Title of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' is taken from the work of _____.
A. Alain Chartier B. Alexander Pope C. Alain Prost
 3. 'Pale' warriors, it refers to the fourth horseman of _____.
A. Almighty B. Alice C. Apocalypse
 4. Reference of Apocalypse has been taken from _____.
A. Bible B. Jewish script C. English literature
 5. In the first stanza of the poem 'I' refers to _____.
A. Unnamed speaker B. Knight C. Fairy lady
 6. The knight makes _____ for fairy lady.
A. Path B. garland C. residence
 7. 'Wild wild eyes' of fairy lady stand for _____.
A. distraction B. attraction C. fear
 8. Most of the times the setting of the poem seem to be the season of _____.
A. Summer B. monsoon C. winter
 9. 'Elfin grot' means _____.
A. supernatural ocean B. supernatural lake C. supernatural cave
 10. 'Manna-dew' stands for _____.
A. Worldly food B. food for animals C. heavenly food

11.7 LET US SUM UP

The speaker in the poem finds 'knight at arms' alone in painful state and asks him for the reason of his 'loitering'. This speaker might be the poet or even the reader. The knight replies him and says that he fell in love with a fairy lady and forgot about everything in alluring, erotic charm of the lady. Further, he states that the lady invited him to her 'fairy cave' where he made love to her and got fascinated by her 'fragrant zone'. After this sensual encounter with the lady, she 'lulled' him asleep and he saw a nightmare where he found many kings and princes dead whom the lady seduced earlier. Then all of a sudden he finds himself alone in pains at the hillside somewhere. Throughout the poem, flowers are metaphorically used as symbols of love and death both. Moreover, with reference to flowers, 'fragrant zone' is used in 'euphemism' for fairy lady's feminine anatomical zone underneath belt. Setting of the poem more often seems to be autumn or early winter but the sequences with lady also seem to be spring or summer; this adds the supernatural end product in the presence of the fairy lady and it makes the story a fairy tale

in a sense. ‘_Granary’ of squirrel is also a kind of metaphor used in terms of personification of human activities. Use of ‘_elfin grots’ adds the fantasy in the story and ‘_lulled’ asleep brings onomatopoeia which is supposed to be meant in the poem. Consonance of the sound ‘_th’ in ‘_Hath thee in thrall!’ really makes anyone wake up when the knight narrates his experience of waking up from the dream. After this dream sequence, the knight is found nearby a lake which symbolizes the stagnancy of life if it is misled by the obsession. ‘_Moist’ and ‘_dew’ are also used to indicate the momentary existence of life perhaps. ‘_Manna-dew’ is also a metaphor used to indicate the search in obsession which goes in vain. ‘_La Belle Dame Sans Merci’ gives the feeling of an allegorical medieval kind classic fairy tale with desolate backdrop, knight, fairy and bizarre progression.

11.8 KEY WORD

Allegory	An extended metaphor in which objects, persons and actions stand for extended meaning
Ballad	Ancient form of story-telling in poetic form which can be sung
Consonance	Repetition of the same sound
Metaphor	When one thing is described as another thing
Onomatopoeia	Words that resemble in sound what they mean
Personification	Giving human traits to non-living objects

Difficult Words:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ➤ Ail- pain, suffering | ➤ Moan- sigh, utterance |
| ➤ Loiter- waiting, lingering | ➤ Steed- horse, pony |
| ➤ Wither- dry up | ➤ Elfin- fragile, weak |
| ➤ Sedge- a kind of plant | ➤ Grot- cave, grotto |
| ➤ Haggard- sick, pale | ➤ Thrall- Having been under influence |
| ➤ Woe-begone- depressed, sad | ➤ Gloam- sunset, setting down |
| ➤ Wither- dry, shrink | ➤ Sojourn- break, stop over |

11.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Que: Write a note on the poem,

Ans. ‘_La Belle Dame Sans Merci’ is a ballad written by one of the romantic poets John Keats (1795-1821). This ballad was originally written in 1819 and was published in 1820. The title of the poem has been taken from an ancient work of 15th century by Alain Chartier. It is written

in Iambic Tetrameter with rhyme scheme of ABCB. As a ballad, the poem narrates a fairy tale of the love between a knight and a fairy lady. The setting of the poem is early winter and it has 12 stanzas which can be further classified as inquiry of unnamed speaker, reply of knight, knight's encounter with fairy lady, fairy lady's action, and knight's dream sequence. The poem begins with unnamed speaker's question to the knight and in response to that the knight narrates the story of his love for fairy lady. The character of fairy lady remains mysterious throughout the poem. The knight does all his activities in the poem under the supernatural impact of beautiful lady. They make love to each other in a fairy cave where the knight has been driven by the fairy lady herself. She lulls him asleep and he sees a dream and in his dream he sees wide open pale faces of other warriors warning him about the beautiful woman. They utter the title of the poem *'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'* which means *'a beautiful lady without mercy'*. Ultimately, the knight wakes up from the dream and finds him in suffering with a dying pale face. The plants nearby the lake are dried and no birds sing over there. A dreary outside signifies the painful inside of the knight. Entire poem narrates the story of pains caused by pleasures of love and here love stands for obsession. It has been warned by repeating the beginning lines at the end of the poem that the unfortunate fate of the *'knight at arms'* can be of anyone else if one forgets one's responsibilities for certain obsessions. The poem in supernatural setting and mysterious mood deals with the theme of love, pain and pleasure of life, women and feminine allure, supernatural and realistic aspects of life and above all the theme of abandonment of obsession.

Answer the following questions:

Que 1: What is the central theme of *'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'*?

Que 2: Explain the significance of time in *'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'*.

Que 3: Where does the narrator meet the knight?

Que 4: What are the literary devices used by John Keats in this poem?

Que 5: How does this poem become a romantic poem?

Que 6: What are the mysterious elements used in the poem?

Que 7: Why is the knight loitering in the poem?

Que 8: Explain the significance of „Elfin Grot“ and „Manna-dew“ in the poem.

Que 9: In what manner metaphors of flowers are used in the poem?

Que 10: What is the significance of the knight's dream sequence?

11.10 FURTHER READING SUGGESTED

Books:

- Gittings, Robert (1964). *The Keats Inheritance*. London: Heinemann.
- Gittings, Robert (1987) *Selected poems and letters of Keats* London: Heinemann.
- Houghton, Richard (Ed.) (2008). *The Life and Letters of John Keats*. Read Books.
- The Complete Poetical Works of John Keats. Ed. H. Buxton Forman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907.
- The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats. ed. Horace Elisha Scudder. Boston: Riverside Press, 1899.
- O'Neill, Michael & Mahoney Charles (Eds.) *Romantic Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*. Blackwell. 2007.

E-resources:

- Recitation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBVjr-MjWgs>
- Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8lMp1Nl2Ow>
- Short film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Za8I78YkzqY>
- Movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xza6Xx73Gvc>

❖ **Answers**

Answers of 1.6 Progress Test:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
b	a	c	a	a	b	b	c	c	c

Answers of 1.9 Questions: (Ans.1 to 10)

Que 1: What is the central theme of ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’?

Ans. It is very difficult to decide one theme of the poem because this poem is a complex mixture of many themes. Pains and pleasures of love remains at the centre. Apart from this, theme of betrayal, feminine allure, inner and outer versions of reality, abandonment, and death philosophy are also interwoven. Medieval romance is at the centre.

Que 2: Explain the significance of time in ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’.

Ans. The poem begins with the present time when the knight is at arms of unnamed speaker and further it shifts to the past of the knight and once again it revolves around the present time at the end after the dream sequence of the knight. The setting of the poem seems to be early winter or autumn and while the knight is narrating his encounter with the fairy lady, it also seems to be the time of spring and summer too. Hence, it can be said that the changing time factor makes the entire poem sounds more supernatural in its atmosphere.

Que 3: Where does the narrator meet the knight?

Ans. The narrator meets the knight beside the lake on the side of a hill during early winter.

Que 4: What are the literary devices used by John Keats in this poem?

Ans. The main literary device used in the poem is repetition which is the prime feature of traditional literature like ballad. Moreover, to add poetic affluence, Keats has also used consonance, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification and allegory in the poem.

Que 5: How does this poem become a romantic poem?

Ans. As the poem deals with the theme of love and romance woven with certain supernatural sequences, it becomes a romantic poem by default. Moreover, it deals with elements of nature as metaphor and emotions along with imaginations. It portrays individual experience and self-expression too. To name a few more characteristics of romantic poetry, melancholy, medievalism, supernaturalism and sensuality can be mentioned and all these poetic elements are very much present in this poem.

Que 6: What are the mysterious elements used in the poem?

Ans. The poem is all about the fate of a knight who falls in love with a mysterious lady who allures him with her ‘wild wild eyes’. The knight

has been driven to fairy lady's 'elfin grot' by her supernatural impulsion and she lulls him asleep after love-making. The knight sees a dream just like a fairy tale in which he sees pale warriors warning him about the fairy lady. These pale faces are uttering the words —La Belle Dame Sans Mercil which means a beautiful lady without mercy. The lady in the poem leaves the knight alone loitering by the side of hill where the unnamed speaker finds the knight at his arms. The knight is having lily on his brow and the colour of his fading and getting pale as if he is about to die in grief of love. This is how the entire momentum of the poem becomes pretty mysterious.

Que 7: Why is the knight loitering in the poem?

Ans. After having a very sensual encounter with fairy lady, the knight has been betrayed by the lady and has been left alone. Before this the knight was brought to fairy lady's cave and she lulled him asleep. The knight saw a horrifying dream of other dead warriors warning him about the mystifying lady. Suddenly he wakes up and finds himself alone in the pains of betrayal.

Que 8: Explain the significance of 'Elfin Grot' and 'Manna-dew' in the poem.

Ans. The mention of 'elfin grot' and 'manna-dew' makes the poem more mystical because the place where little angel, supernatural being lives is called elfs and the lady brings the knight to her cave where some supernatural incidents happen with the knight. 'manna-dew' refers to heavenly food offered to Israelites in Jewish scripture and here the lady also feeds the knight with such supernatural food and then she lulls him asleep. After his dream sequence, the knight all of a sudden wakes up and finds him all alone. The fairy lady is disappeared and the knight is suffering from tones of pains for being betrayed by the beautiful lady without mercy. Thus, both the elements add some prominence to supernatural impact in the poem.

Que 9: In what manner metaphors of flowers are used in the poem?

Ans. Metaphor of flowers is used in two different ways. First, the knight mentions that he made flower-garland and bracelets for the beautiful lady and here he mentions 'fragrant zone' of the lady. This is how the knight talks about her anatomical feminine body part and it adds sensuality to the poem. Apart from this metaphor of flower is also used as 'lily', the symbol of death which is found on knight's brow and another flower is 'rose' which is used to indicate the fading face, paleness of the knight. So, metaphors of flowers are used to specify the shift from sensuality to sadness in the fate of the knight.

Que 10: What is the significance of the knight's dream sequence?

Ans. The knight's dream sequence makes the poem more supernatural by providing the evidence of mysterious role of the fairy lady. After a very erotic encounter with the lady, the knight is lulled to sleep by the lady and then the knight sees a dream in which he gets warning about the mysterious activities of the lady. Other dead warriors who were seduced and betrayed by the lady utters —La Belle Dame Sans Merci'. It is the dream sequence which provides a sudden shift from dream to reality and makes the knight aware of betrayal of the lady.

:: STRUCTURE ::**12.0 Objectives****12.1 Introduction****12.2 Greeks Gods & Goddesses (with their Roman Counterparts)****12.3 Plot of The Illiad****12.4 The Illiad Trivia****12.5 Thematic Concerns in The Illiad**

- **Check Your Progress (The Illiad)**

12.6 Plot of The Odyssey**12.7 Thematic Concerns in The Odyssey**

- **Check Your Progress (The Odyssey)**

12.8 Answer Key (The Odyssey)**12.9 Summing Up****12.10 Books Suggested**

12.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we shall

- study two great epic poems of Ancient Greece;
- examine the oral & bard tradition of poetry in their context;
- learn about Greeks, their Gods and Goddesses, and Graceo-Roman culture;
- get an idea of Greek myths and legends;
- identify war tactics of the ancient times;
- understand the administration of regions and monarchy;
- know about Greek places and geography; and
- discover the significance of universal values such as responsibilities and duties towards nation, righteousness and patriotism.

On completion of the unit, you should be able to

- develop insight into epic and oral traditions of poetry;
- become proficient in Greek culture;
- identify different perceptions of beauty, heroism and hero worship;
- shape thoughts about statesmanship and administration;
- learn the value of suffering; and
- build a better character and personality by the ingraining of universal values depicted in the poems.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The incredible stories of epic poems like *The Illiad*, *The Odyssey* and *The Aeneid* address universal issues like friendship, suffering and betrayal. In spite of being written centuries ago, their relevance in time and place is unquestionable. They are still as fresh and intelligible today as they were when they were composed. All these three classics are interlinked to one another. However, *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey* are very different from *The Aeneid* historically as well as culturally. And hence, the first two have been chosen here for your perusal and study. *The Illiad* delineates the war between the Greeks and the Trojans that took place over the disappearance of the Spartan queen Helen by the Trojan Prince Paris. It is a prequel to *The Odyssey* as well as to *The Aeneid*. *The Odyssey* is the story of the Greek warrior Odysseus's adventurous expedition to his home after the Trojan War.

The Illiad and *The Odyssey* were oral traditions. However, when they were penned down, it was in the early form of Greek language. They have been translated into so many languages all over the world for the study and analysis of scholars everywhere. The names of many places as well as characters are now available in their accepted Latin forms. This evolution of names has been a result of the centuries of handing down of these epic poems from one generation to another and their wide acceptance in and similarity with Latin culture.

The blind Greek poet Homer is said to have composed these poems orally in the 8th century BCE. Not much information is available about Homer except that he was blind and perhaps from the island of Chios. Singing poems with stories narrating heroic feats may have been Homer's profession. He used traditional backdrop and events to compose his poems. He may not have committed to his memory such long poems and hence, there may be a different version of them every time he himself sang them. Scholars reproduced these poems in 600 BCE at the Great

Library of Alexandria. And again, as a result of multiple retelling, these tales must have changed a bit from Homer’s original creation.

12.2 GREEK GODS & GODDESSES (WITH THEIR ROMAN COUNTERPARTS)

Literature, art and philosophy blossomed beautifully in the Golden Era of Ancient Greece (500 – 300 BCE). Romans, especially emperors like Augustus, were highly inspired by Greek culture & history and hence established inseparable connections with them. One of the most remarkable influences on Romans was that of Greek religious beliefs. Romans worshipped the same Gods and Goddesses as the Greeks though they sometimes changed their and dispositions. In order to understand Homer’s works completely, it is essential to be familiar with the following Gods & Goddesses and their roles.

Sr. No.	Greek God / Goddess	Roman God / Goddess	Role
1	Apollo	Apollo	God of the sun, music, and poetry
2	Aphrodite	Venus	Goddess of love and beauty
3	Ares	Mars	God of war
4	Artemis	Diana	Goddess of the moon and the hunt
5	Athena	Minerva	Goddess of wisdom and strategy in war
6	Demeter	Ceres	Goddess of the harvest
7	Dionysus	Bacchus	God of wine
8	Eros	Cupid	God of love
9	Hades	Pluto	King of the Underworld
10	Hebe	Juventas	Goddess of Youth
11	Hephaestus	Vulcan	God of Fire and Metal
12	Hera	Juno	Queen of the Gods
13	Heracles	Hercules	God of Strength
14	Hermes	Mercury	Messenger of Gods
15	Hestia	Vesta	Goddess of the Hearth & Home
16	Kronos	Saturn	God of Time
17	Persephone	Proserpina	Queen of the Underworld
18	Poseidon	Neptune	King of the Sea
19	Zeus	Jupiter	King of the Gods

12.3 PLOT OF *THE ILLIAD*

The Illiad tells the tale of the city of Illium, commonly referred to as Troy. It recounts the last six weeks of the war that took place between the Greeks and the Trojans. The war went on for ten long years. It has been historically proven that Troy actually existed and a war, such as that depicted by Homer, did take place there. The subject matter of Homer's epic are the Trojan War, the delineation of the moving scenes of the bloody battle, the wrath of Achilles and the arbitration of the Gods to aid the cause of justice. *The Illiad* is the legend that eulogizes glory, wrath, homecoming and fate. It has provided a backdrop for various other Greek, Roman and Renaissance works.

The epic is laid out in the context of the Trojan war that was sparked owing to the capture of Helen, considered to be the most beautiful woman in the world. She is the wife of Menelaus, the King of Sparta. A young man named Paris steals Helen with the help of Goddess Aphrodite (the goddess of love) and loots the palace treasure while Menelaus was away on a trip. On discovering the events that took place, Menelaus, with his brother Agamemnon, launches an attack on Troy where Paris had taken her. The epic commences in the timeline of around ten years into the siege of Troy by the Greek armed forces, steered by Agamemnon, the Emperor of Mycenae. The Greeks are in a dilemma regarding the returning of Chryseis, a Trojan captive of Agamemnon, to her father Chryses. Chryses being a priest of Apollo, the powerful God plagues Agamemnon's camp with an epidemic when he is reluctant to return the priest's daughter to him.

The Greeks, prompted by the warrior-hero Achilles, persuade Agamemnon to return Chryseis to her father so that Apollo may be pacified and the epidemic may end. The king unwillingly does so but he takes away Briseis, Achilles's own war prize concubine, to compensate for his loss. This arouses the wrath of Achilles who drops out from the war himself as well as retreats his Myrmidon warriors. This weakens Agamemnon's army significantly. Achilles also requests his mother, Thetis (the sea goddess), to plead with Zeus to assist him in vindicating the wrong. Zeus consents to help Trojans against the Greeks, thus opening the eyes of Agamemnon concerning the inevitability of Achilles in the war.

In the meantime, during a brief accord between the hostility and war, a duel between Paris (Trojan Prince who had started the war by stealing Menelaus's wife Helen) and Menelaus is agreed upon for the

determination of war and deciding the fate of Helen. In spite of the intervention of the Goddess Aphrodite, Paris loses the duel to Menelaus. This should have ended the war but Goddess Athena (who is on the side of the Greeks) prompts the breaking of the truce leading to the renewal of the battle.

In the absence of Achilles and his warriors, the Trojans seem to be getting the advantage. Agamemnon, Odysseus, Ajax, Phoenix and Nestor all seek his help but their pleas are not heeded by the offended Achilles. No temptation is able to lure him back. Agamemnon is injured in the course of the battle. Hector breaks into the fortified Greek camp and wounds Odysseus and Diomedes too. He intimidates the Greeks by warning that he would burn down their ships.

Motivated by his loyalty, but still angry at Agamemnon's conduct, Achilles ultimately sends his friend and lover, Patroclus, to fight in the war, disguised as Achilles himself by giving him his own armour. Hector from the enemy camp seeks out Patroclus and battles him thinking him to be Achilles. With the help from Apollo, Hector is able to kill him. The Greeks, with a lot of effort, ultimately succeed in recovering the corpse of Patroclus. Achilles's indignation gets diverted towards Hector and he reconciles with Agamemnon to rain his fury on the Trojans. His mother brings him a magnificent suit of armour, created by smith-god Hephaestus. He wreaks havoc by slaying lots of Trojans. He spots Hector and kills him ruthlessly. He then ties Hector's corpse to his chariot, dragging it around with the intention of throwing it to the dogs and birds of prey. On the other hand, a splendid funeral is planned and executed for Patroclus.

Ultimately, King Priam, Hector's father, redeems Hector's corpse and holds a funeral in the duration of a twelve-day truce allowed by Achilles. King Priam and his daughter Polyxena receives Hector's body for a ransom of gold. Achilles is also touched to know about the pain of Polyxena, Hector's sister. The King offers to get her married to Achilles who agrees, and the engagement takes place. However, Achilles decides to keep it a secret till he talks about it to Agamemnon.

Achilles starts liking Polyxena and meets her at the Apollo temple to talk and share his life. All of a sudden, Paris appears there and shoots an arrow at Achilles' heel, the only spot in his body that can kill him. This leads to the death of the glorious Greek warrior. A poll is planned by Athena to decide who should get Achilles' armour. Odysseus and Ajax, being the best Greek soldiers, are announced as the candidates. The goddess who favours Odysseus ensures that he secures the most votes.

Ajax is shocked and hence to stop him from reacting, Athena confers temporary insanity over him under the influence of which, Ajax kills pigs in a pen. When his senses are restored, he is so remorseful that he kills himself by falling on his sword. The Greeks are dismayed over losing two of their best warriors. However, Odysseus thinks of a brilliant plan. He commands for an enormous wooden horse to be built to which wheels are attached. He hides in it with a group of soldiers and the rest of the Greek army sails off in the ships to a nearby island.

The Trojans are happy to see that the Greeks have left and they think of the wooden horse as a gift. King Priam orders the horse to be brought into the kingdom through the gates of the city. Thinking that the war is over, there are celebrations in the city after which the tired citizens go to a peaceful, deep sleep. When everything is calm, Odysseus leads his men out of the horse, slains the citizens and destroys the city. The Greeks are victorious and Menelaus receives his wife, Helen who is reunited with him. This marks the end of the epic poem *The Illiad*.

12.4 THE ILLIAD TRIVIA

Some facts about *The Illiad* would help to understand it better. It is not just one entire poem, but a collection of ancient poems, called the **Epic Cycle**. Many of these poems are not available to us now. These lost fragments are assumed to have dealt with the history of the Trojan War. It is also uncertain whether these fragments were ever written down. The poems of the **Epic Cycle** were sung and recited at celebrations and ceremonies by singers who were termed ‘rhapsodes’. The events revolving around the kidnapping of Helen by Paris - the Trojan Prince, the death of Achilles and the fall of Troy have been omitted and they form segments of other poems of the **Epic Cycle** that were not composed by Homer.

The Illiad comprises of twenty four scrolls and 15693 lines. The meter used is dactylic hexameter. In accordance with the oral tradition of the times, it was written in a rhythmic manner to make it sound interesting and also to make it easier to memorize. The repetition of the phrases, lines and passages through the epic also conforms to the established oral tradition. Connecting the language of *The Illiad* to the present times, there are many phrases that have found their way into the modern language, such as ‘Achilles’ Heel’, meaning ‘a person’s weakness that an enemy may attack’, ‘Helen of Troy’ meaning ‘a very beautiful woman’, ‘beware of Greeks bearing gifts’ meaning ‘a deadly gift’, ‘Odyssey’ meaning ‘a

long and difficult journey‘ and ‘_spartan‘ meaning ‘_exact yet uncomfortable‘.

The mention of gods and goddesses require familiarity with Greek culture and religious beliefs. They also are many times used in an allegorical way to represent certain ideas. Their relationship to the human characters is complex and call for a psychological study and insight. They sometimes provide comic relief amongst the bloody descriptions of the war. Their favouring certain characters and parodying the humans seems funny.

12.5 THEMATIC CONCERNS IN *THE ILLIAD*

War and peace stand out as the main theme of the epic poem. The entire portrayal of the war and fights is remarkable and lays out before the mind’s eye. Though it builds an atmosphere of violence and awe, the heroic feats of the brave warriors and glory associated with war are also remarkably recounted. The concept of beauty pictures throughout the work with the physical beauty represented by Helen and internal beauty symbolized in heroism and ethical values. Fidelity of the heroes and warriors are time and again brought to question. Friendship that leads to peace and friendship that gives rise to fights and battles indicates how this human value was the core of relationships and events. The opening word of the epic, ‘_menin‘ or ‘_menis‘ means ‘_anger‘ or ‘_rage‘, and a leit motif in the poem is the anger of Achilles and his letting go of this anger gradually and behaving in a way that is advantageous to his country. All these themes are worth exploring keeping the chief events and characters of The Illiad in mind.

• Check Your Progress (*The Illiad*)

Q1 Match the following:

Sr. No.	Column A	Sr. No.	Column B
1	Zeus / Jupiter	a	Queen of the Gods
2	Hermes / Mercury	b	Goddess of Love & Beauty
3	Hera / Juno	c	King of the Sea
4	Athena / Minerva	d	God of War
5	Ares / Mars	e	God of Love
6	Apollo / Apollo	f	God of Speed / Messenger of Gods
7	Aphrodite / Venus	g	God of Strength
8	Eros / Cupid	h	King of the Gods
9	Herakles / Hercules	i	Goddess of War & Wisdom
10	Poseidon / Neptune	j	God of the Sun, Music & Poetry

Q2 Fill in the blanks:

- 1 Troy is also known as _____.
- 2 _____ is the ancient Greek story teller who narrated the story of the Trojan War.
- 3 *The Illiad* tells the story of _____, considered to be the most beautiful woman in the world.
- 4 _____ steals Helen with the help of Goddess _____.
- 5 _____, who was on his way back from a trip, discovers that Paris had stolen his wife.
- 6 Menelaus asks his brother _____, to launch an attack on Troy where Paris had taken Helen.
- 7 Achilles' best friend _____, borrows his armour and goes to war in his stead.
- 8 _____ is Achilles' mother and the sea goddess.
- 9 Thetis orders _____, god of fire and metal, to create a special suit of armour for her son Achilles.
- 10 Achilles agrees to get married to Hector's sister, _____.

Q3 Choose the correct option:

- 1 _____ is the leader of the Greek forces.
A Priam
B Agamemnon
C Menelaus
D Achilles
- 2 _____ is the King of Troy.
A Agamemnon
B Menelaus
C Achilles
D Priam
- 3 The proud soldier who dies on his sword is _____.
A Ajax
B Odysseus
C Achilles
D Paris
- 4 Odysseus' plan is to build a _____.
A ship
B fort
C gigantic wooden horse
D temple

5 Achilles is killed by _____.

- A Agamemnon
- B Menelaus
- C Paris
- D Ajax

6 A poll is planned by _____ to decide who should get Achilles' armour.

- A Athena
- B Aphrodite
- C Thetis
- D Polyxena

7 _____ wins maximum votes and gets Achilles' armour.

- A Ajax
- B Paris
- C Agamemnon
- D Odysseus

8 Athena confers temporary insanity over _____.

- A Ajax
- B Odysseus
- C Priam
- D Achilles

9 The _____ are happy to see that the Greeks have left and they think of the wooden horse as a gift.

- A Italians
- B Trojans
- C Ethiopians
- D warriors

10 _____ is reunited with Helen.

- A Paris
- B Menelaus
- C Agamemnon
- D Achilles

12.6 PLOT OF *THE ODYSSEY*

Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey*, chronicles the story of Odysseus (also known as Ulysses)'s expedition to Ithaka, his home and island kingdom. The time frame is the last six months of his ten-year long journey. He commences this journey after the end of the Trojan War. He was the ingenious Greek warrior whose plan to trick the Trojans by building a gigantic wooden horse with soldiers hidden in it brought victory to the Greek forces against the Trojans. The brave warrior confronts lots of challenges on his way to home. Penelope, his wife, calmly awaits his homecoming. She is as brilliant as her husband which is seen in the way in which she outwits the suitors (as many as 108) who woo her everyday and want to get married to her.

Poseidon, the god of the sea, had been displeased by Odysseus in the past. He therefore, stacks up many obstacles in Odysseus's path to prevent him from going home. Obtaining aid from Goddess Athena, Odysseus sets off for home with his crew in three ships. The ships are laden with jewelry, precious metals, silks and fur secured from Troy after its fall. The weight of the ship poses the problem of their starting to sink in the sea. The gemstones are discarded in water to lighten the ships. The glitter of the ornaments attracts the Naiads, the gorgeous sea nymphs, who gather around the ship, and sing and laugh with delight. This again instigates Poseidon who assumes that Odysseus and his men are trying to steal his nymphs. He asks his son, Aeolus, to send in a powerful storm to punish the Greeks since the Aeolus is the keeper of the winds.

Tired, tossed and starved, the Greeks anchor off the island of Sicily. This island is home to the one-eyed giants called Cyclopes. The most savage of them is Polyphemus, who beguiles Odysseus and his men with the aroma of the roasting lamb. The dexterous Odysseus blinds the monster with a fiery poker and gets away with his men by ambushing under the sheep bellies. The courageous men with their determination go ahead and reach an island palace, where they are bathed and refreshed with oils by invisible hands. They then meet King Aeolus and his wife at a grandiose banquet.

The King tells Odysseus to disclose his story. He is full of admiration on listening to the amazing adventures of the warrior and rewards him with a sack of wind, at the same time warning him that the sack must not be opened unless in an emergency. Odysseus guards the sack but the greedy sailors open it while he was sleeping. The wind is unleashed and steers the ships far away from home. Odysseus and his men keep sailing north

and ultimately anchor themselves on an island in search of food and water. The island is inhabited by a sorceress, Circe, who feeds the men and is very hospitable. But after the dinner, she uses her magic to transform them into pigs. Odysseus seeks the help of Hermes, the messenger god. He is given a magical flower that changes the pigs back to men but in return, he has to love the sorceress till he lives there. The men stay there for quite a time until they become nostalgic and are reminded of their homes. They resume their excursion after receiving guidance and gifts from Circe.

The gifts confer momentum and protection to the Greeks, but not for long. Alluring sirens cross their path to charm them and draw them away from their ships and to their deaths. However, the men insert the soft wax given by Circe to ignore the bewitching songs of the sirens. Having successfully overcome this deadly trap, they go ahead, but again to encounter a deadlier obstacle.

They pass through the Straits of Messina, located between Sicily and Italy. This place is occupied by the monsters, Scylla and Charybdis. Scylla has six heads with razor-like teeth. Charybdis swallows the sea three times a day, only to spit it up all again, causing the ships to wreck and sailors to drown. Odysseus, recalling Circe's advice, pushes his crew to steer the ship straight between these two creatures. This bears no fruit and Scylla captures six crew members with its six heads. The rest of the crew members are seized in the whirlpool created by the second monster. Odysseus emerges as the sole survivor of Ithaca's warriors that fought in the Trojan War.

Odysseus then stays with the nymph Calypso who enchants him with her singing. She wishes to make him her immortal husband and keeps him at the island of Ogygia for seven years. Her healing presence and place makes Odysseus happy but finally, he realizes that he should return to his home, his wife and sets out again.

He proceeds homeward in the sea for nine nights and days. It is then that a violent storm lashes the raft and wrecks it completely. Completely immersed in water, Odysseus is almost drowned but ultimately thrown ashore on an island. He lies collapsed on the island of Scheria where he is discovered by Princess Nausicaa and her servants. She rejuvenates him by providing food and care. She then sends him to King Alkinoos and Queen Arete, her parents. Odysseus presents his life story to them and they are fascinated as well as compassionate to hear it. They are more than willing to facilitate him with whatever he needs for his return. The King

furnishes him with a ship and a crew. Odysseus resumes his prolonged, arduous journey towards home.

After putting in ten years in war and then another ten years in expedition, the warrior at the end arrives at his beloved homeland, Ithaka. On Athena's advice, he disguises himself as a beggar after learning about his wife's suitors that she had been stalling for some time, awaiting his return. On reaching the palace guided by his old hunting dog, Argus, Odysseus is mocked at by the suitors. Penelope commands them to treat the guest respectfully. Meanwhile, Telemachus, the son of Odysseus and Penelope, has returned after a massive and far-reaching quest to find his father. He is asked by the suitors to persuade his mother for a second marriage.

Tired of being pursued, Penelope announces a competition wherein the suitors have to string Odysseus's bow and shoot an arrow through twelve axe handles. The winner would get married to her. Odysseus, still a guest, is identified by his old nurse, Eurykleia, on seeing a scar on his knee. She extends her full support to him whenever and wherever needed. The next morning, the suitors turn up at the grand hall where the contest is planned and all elaborate arrangements are made. Women are asked to step out of the hall. All the suitors try their luck but miserably fail. At last, Telemachus asks the beggar to try his hand at it. Odysseus effortlessly does the task. Athena reveals the true identity of the beggar and transforms him into the brave Odysseus. Odysseus and Telemachus wipe out all the suitors after which Odysseus commands the cleaning of the palace and the bringing of Penelope to him. Penelope has doubts about the identity of Odysseus and lays a trap by expressing that Eurykleia would prepare Odysseus's bed outside her chamber. At that moment, the astonished Odysseus exclaims that he had carved his bed from an ancient olive tree whose roots still exist in the earth. It was not possible to shift such a bed. This is the moment of truth wherein Penelope realizes that the man in front of her is the real Odysseus as only he would be aware of such a thing. She rushes to his arms and welcomes him home.

12.6.1 Thematic Concerns in *The Odyssey*

Unwavering determination and dedication is the principal theme of *The Odyssey*. Odysseus's long journey home tells volumes about his strong will to return to Ithaka. The indignation of the gods, the constant impediments, even the temptations fail to change his unfaltering resolution to go on with the seemingly unending and extremely painful expedition. The epic poem is a tale of the perseverance of his wife, Penelope, too. She never lets her hope fade away that her husband will

surely return to her, though 108 suitors are ardent to please her and get married to her. Her unflinching fidelity makes her a perfect example of a devoted wife. The devotion of a son towards his parents is also glorified in the character of Telemachus.

War is one the themes and the backdrop of *The Illiad*; but *The Odyssey* is set amidst a sequence of social and domestic situations. So, the domestic and matrimonial life is also a theme of the epic poem. Narratives by Odysseus and other characters brings forth the charm of story-telling. Fantasy lands and strange, imaginary and sometimes horrifying creatures are intended to present an atmosphere of mystery and awe. Journey and difficulties or obstacles surrounding it are also a leit motif in the work.

- **Check Your Progress (The Odyssey)**

Q1 Match the Following:

Sr. No.	A	Sr. No.	B
1	Poseidon	A	secured a Greek victory with the Trojan horse
2	Nausicaa	B	the clever wife of Odysseus
3	Odysseus	C	the god of the sea
4	Ithaka	D	lured sailors to their deaths
5	Scylla	E	one-eyed giants
6	Penelope	F	the Cyclops who was blinded by Odysseus
7	sirens	G	kingdom of Helen and Menelaus
8	Polyphemus	H	island home of Odysseus and his family
9	Sparta	I	the princess who found Odysseus washed ashore
10	the Cyclops	J	sea monster with six heads

Q 2 Sequencing

Arrange the following statements into the correct sequence in which they happen in the story:

- 1 Odysseus is found by servants and gracious Princess Nausicaa, who feeds him and directs him to her father’s palace.
- 2 The crew live an enchanted life on Circe’s island for a long time.
- 3 Poseidon, the god of the sea, determined to keep Odysseus from his homeland, places many obstacles in his path.

4 Penelope, shining among women, rushes to Odysseus' arms and welcomes him home.

5 Beautiful sirens appear to tempt them from their ships and to their deaths.

6 Odysseus, still disguised as a beggar, is recognized by his old nurse, Eurykleia, when she sees a scar on his knee while pouring hot water for his bath.

7 King Alkinoos gives him a ship and a crew.

Q 3 Fill in the blanks

1 _____, also known as Ulysses, is the cleverest of the Greek warriors.

1 Odysseus faces many obstacles on his way home to _____.

2 _____ outwits the suitors (as many as 108) who woo her everyday and want to get married to her.

3 Odysseus receives help from the goddess _____ on his way to Ithaka.

4 The glitter of the gemstones attracts the _____, the gorgeous sea nymphs.

5 _____, the keeper of the winds, sends in a powerful storm to punish the Greeks.

6 _____ wishes to make Odysseus her immortal husband and keeps him at the island of Ogygia for seven years.

7 _____, the son of Odysseus and Penelope, goes for a massive and far-reaching quest to find his father.

8 Odysseus had carved his bed from an ancient _____ tree whose roots still exist in the earth.

9 Odysseus, still a guest, is identified by his old nurse, _____, on seeing a scar on his knee.

12.7 SUMMING UP

Homer's epic poems *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey* present a world that may seem alien to our eyes but the themes and emotions are as alive and relevant as they were then. The fight for territory, power and love are an intrinsic part of the human nature. And in that way, war makes sense to those who wage it. But the destruction and barbarism that it brings about in cities and civilizations just to satisfy one or a group of individuals renders it unintelligible. Attachment to home is another idea that Homer dwells on. Any success, wealth or power cannot compensate the contentment and happiness that one attains from the company of the loved ones. The epic poems take us on a roller coaster to an altogether

new world and scenario in pursuit of such themes portrayed through the eyes of the mighty warriors and heroes.

12.8 BOOKS SUGGESTED

- Lattimore, Richmond. *The Illiad of Homer*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.
- Lattimore, Richmond. *The Odyssey of Homer*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
- Fagles, Robert. *The Illiad*. New York: Penguin, 1990.
- Grimal, Pierre. *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988.
- Oliphant, Margaret. *The Atlas of the Ancient World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.

❖ Answer

Check Your Progress (*The Illiad*)

Q1 Match the Following:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10
h	f	a	i	d	j	b	e	g	c

Q2 Fill in the blanks:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Illiun	Homer	Helen	Paris, Aphrodite	Menelaus
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
Agamemnon	Patroclus	Thetis	Hephaestus	Polyxena

Q3 Choose the correct option:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10
B	D	A	C	C	A	D	A	B	B

• **Check Your Progress (*The Odyssey*)**

Answer Key (*The Odyssey*)

Q1 Match the Following:

1 - C	2 - I
3 - A	4 - H
5 - J	6 - B
7 - D	8 - F
9 - G	10 - E

Q 2 Sequencing

3, 2, 5, 1, 7, 6, 4

Q 3 Fill in the blanks

1 Odysseus 2 Ithaka 3 Penelope 4 Athena
5 naiads 6 Aeolus 7 Calypso 8 Telemachus
9 olive 10 Eurykleia

:: STRUCTURE ::**13.0 Objectives****13.1 Introduction to stanza forms****13.1.1 Couplet****13.1.2 Tercet****13.1.3 Quatrain****13.1.4 Quintain****13.1.5 Sestet****13.1.6 Octave**

- Check your progress 1

13.2 Introduction to the various forms for poetry**13.2.1 Blank Verse****13.2.2 Sonnet****13.2.3 Spenserian Stanza****13.2.4 Terza Rhyma****13.2.5 Heroic Couplet****13.2.6 Free Verse**

- Check your progress 2

13.3 Let Us Sum Up**13.4 Key Words****13.5 Books Suggested**

- ❖ Answers

13.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall

- Describe the various types of stanzas that are employed by poets to express their emotions and feelings, and

- Discuss their form and structure in detail by giving various examples from the world of poetry.

On completing the unit, you should be able to

- Identify the different forms of stanzas in poetry, and
- Differentiate them based on their form and structure in a given poem.

13.1 INTRODUCTION TO STANZA FORMS

A stanza is a set of lines in a poem which are commonly arranged in a rhythmical unit. Each stanza has the same number of lines, the same metrical pattern, and usually the same rhyme scheme. These rhymes are indicated by identical letters. Thus, abab indicates that the first and third lines rhyme with each other, while the second and fourth lines are linked by a different rhyme. An unrhymed line is denoted by x. Because of these fixed number of lines and rhyme scheme, any poem can have following kinds of stanzas:

13.1.1 Couplet:

A couplet comprises of two rhyming lines having the same meter. Look at the following couplet stanza examples:

What poet would not grieve to see,
His brethren write as well as he?

(Jonathan Swift - *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift, D.S.P.D.*)

Or

Two principles in human nature reign;
Self-love to urge, and reason to restrain.

(Alexander Pope - *Essay on Man*)

The first example uses iambic tetrameter and the second example uses iambic pentameter. Here is another example of pentameter couplets:

By day the bat is cousin to the mouse.
He likes the attic of an aging house.
His fingers make a hat about his head.
His pulse beat is so slow we think him dead.

He loops in crazy figure s half the night
Among the trees that face the corner light.

But when he brushes up against a screen,

We are afraid of what our eyes have seen:

For something is amiss or out of place
When mice with wings can wear a human face.

(Theodore Roethke - *The Bat*)

In this poem, the rhyme scheme is aabbccdde. Moreover, each of couplet stanzas in this poem is end-stopped. An end-stop occurs when a line of any poem ends with a period or definite punctuation mark, such as a colon. When lines are end-stopped, each line is its own phrase or unit of syntax. So when you read an end-stopped line, you'll naturally pause.

13.1.2 Tercet:

A tercet comprises of three lines following a rhyming scheme in the pattern of aaa, or aba. Tercet was introduced by Sir Thomas Wyatt in the 16th century. A special variety of this stanza is also known as terza-rhyma which we will discuss separately. Tercet is also called triplet as it has three-line unit. See the following examples:

He clasps the crag with crooked hands:
Close to the sun it lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, it stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

(Alfred Tennyson - *The Eagle*)

Or

My mother's maids, when they did sew and spin,
They sang sometimes a song of the field mouse,
That for because their livelihood was but so thin.

Would needs go seek her townish sister's house.
Would needs she thought herself endured to much pain:
The stormy blasts her cave so sore did souse...

(Thomas Wyatt - *Second Satire*)

While Tennyson employs the rhyme scheme of aaa, Wyatt follows aba scheme in his poem.

13.1.3 Quatrain

A Quatrain is a stanza of 4 lines, usually with rhyme schemes of aaaa, aabb, abba, or abab. This form of stanza was popularized by a Persian

poet, Omar Khayyam, who called it a Rubai. Following is the example of a quatrain from —Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

(Thomas Gray)

Here the rhyme scheme is abab. Notice the following example which follows a different rhyme scheme i.e. aabb:

Was it for this I uttered prayers,
And sobbed and cursed and kicked the stairs,
That now, domestic as a plate,
I should retire at half-past eight?

(Edna St. Vincent Millay - —Grown-up

13.1.4 Quintain/Quintet:

A quintain, also referred to as ‘quintet’ or ‘cinquain,’ is a stanza of five lines, which may be rhymed or unrhymed, and generally has a unique stress pattern. Following is the example of quintain:

Go, lovely rose,
Tell her that wastes her time and me
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young
And shuns to have her graces spied
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die, that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee:
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

(Edmund Waller - *Go, Lovely Rose*)

The LIMERICK is a special use of the five-line stanza form; it is a single unit, with a fixed metrical pattern and rhyme scheme, and a final line that has a witty turn of thought. See the following example:

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared Two
Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!

(Edward Lear - *Book of Nonsense*)

13.1.5 Sestain / Sestet:

Sestain or Sestet is a stanza of six lines. It forms the second division of Italian sonnet which was popularized by Petrarch, following an octave which is the first division comprising eight lines. In a sonnet, a sestet marks a change of emotional state of a poet. This will be explained in detail when we will discuss the structure of various forms of Sonnet. Look at the following example of Sestet:

So answerest thou; but why not rather say:
Hath man no second life? – Pitch this one high!
Sits there no judge in Heaven, our sin to see? –
More strictly, then, the inward judge obey!
Was Christ a man like us? Ah! Let us try
If we then, too, can be such men as he!

(Mathew Arnold - *The Better Part*)

13.1.6 Octave:

Octave is a stanza of eight lines and comprises the first division of Italian sonnet. More about Octave will be discussed in the section of sonnet.

- **Check your progress 1**

Below are few examples of poetic stanzas. Identify the types of stanzas and write whether they are the examples of couplet, tercet, quatrain, quintain, sestet or octave. Also mention the rhyme schemes that these stanzas follow. Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

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

(S.T. Coleridge — *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*!)

2. A little learning is a dangerous thing
 Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring
 (Alexander Pope - *An Essay on Criticism*)
3. Helen, thy beauty is to me
 Like those nicean barks of yore
 That gently, o'er a perfumed sea
 The weary way, way worn wanderer bore
 To his native shore (Edgar Allen Poe —To Helenl)
4. O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing
 (P.B. Shelley —Ode to the West Windl)
5. CAPTAIN, or Colonel, or Knight in Arms,
 Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
 If deed of honour did thee ever please,
 Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
 He can requite thee; for he knows the charms
 That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
 And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
 Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
 (John Milton - —When the Assault was Intended to the Cityl)
6. And on the pedestal these words appear:
 _My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.
 (P.B. Shelley —Ozymandiasl)

13.2 INTRODUCTION TO VARIOUS STANZA FORMS OF POETRY

In the last section, you got a fair idea of how a stanza comprises of several lines and give different form and structure to a poem. Now we will discuss the different forms of stanzas that poets employ to give meanings and emotions to their poems.

13.2.1 Blank Verse:

Blank verse is written in the form of iambic pentameter. Iambic Pentameter is one kind of meter which contains five feet per line in which each foot consists of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. This verse is called 'blank' because it does not rhyme even if it is in meter. Since blank verse is close to the rhythms of ordinary English speech and yet quite flexible and adaptive to various kinds of themes and subject matter, this verse form has been more frequently and variously used than any other form of poem. Blank verse was introduced into English poetry by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, in his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* in 1540.

Characteristics of Blank Verse:

- Blank verse does not have fixed number of lines. They vary from stanza to stanza.
- It has a conventional meter that is used for writing poetic drama or long narrative poems.
- It is often used in descriptive and reflective poems and also the dramatic monologues where a single character delivers her thoughts in the form of a speech.
- It is mostly written in iambic pentameter though some poets write it in trochee, spondee and dactyl also.

Some of the finest examples of blank verse are:

1. We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
= Stay where you are until our backs are turned!
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'

(Robert Frost - *Mending Wall*)

2. Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul: see, where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be sack'd;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
O, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appear'd to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour!

(Christopher Marlow - *Dr. Faustus*)

13.2.2 Sonnet

Sonnet is a lyric poem and usually written in a single stanza comprising of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter. Based on the rhyme scheme, the sonnet is generally classified of two types:

1. Italian or Petrarchan sonnet
2. English or Shakespearean sonnet

1. Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet:

Named after the fourteenth-century Italian poet Petrarch, this sonnet consists of two main divisions: an opening octave (a stanza of eight lines) rhyming abbaabba followed by a concluding sestet (a stanza of six lines) rhyming cdecde or some other variant like cdccdc or cdcdcd. Petrarch's sonnets were first introduced in English poetry by Sir Thomas Wyatt in the early sixteenth century. This Petrarchan form was later used by the English poets like John Milton, William Wordsworth, Christina Rossetti, D. G. Rossetti, and other sonneteers who introduced a new pair of rhymes in the second four lines of the octave.

The structure of the meaning and the theme in a sonnet follows the division of the parts. The octave in a Petrarchan sonnet generally describes a situation or a dilemma or raises a certain kind of question, for

which the sestet provides an answer or some kind of commentary or resolution. The turn in the mood, also called as volta in Italian, arrives at the start of the sestet. See the following poem by William Wordsworth as a nice example of Petrarchan sonnet:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

In this poem, the poet employs the rhyme scheme – abbaabbacddcd. The octave opens with a kind of complain that we are too insensitive to appreciate the beauty of nature. The sestet marks a turn in the mood of the poet and offers a solution declaring that the poet would rather be a pagan who followed a primitive religion and would be able to appreciate nature for the rest of his life.

2. English or Shakespearean sonnet:

The Earl of Surrey and other English experimenters in the sixteenth century developed another variant of sonnet which was called the English sonnet, or the Shakespearean sonnet, as William Shakespeare frequently wrote his sonnets using this structure. This sonnet consists of three quatrains and a concluding couplet: ababcdcdefeg.

The structure of the Shakespearean sonnet is different from that of Petrarchan sonnet as far as the internal logic of both the forms are concerned. The three quatrains generally deal with parallel images or variations on a theme. The turn or volta arrives in the concluding couplet, which either reverses the position expressed in the earlier quatrains or provides a brief summary of it. One of the finest examples of this kind of sonnet is the following poem of Shakespeare:

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
 Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
 And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,
 And moan the expense of many a vanished sight;
 Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
 The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
 All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

(Shakespeare – —Sonnet 30||)

The rhyme scheme of this sonnet is abab cd cdefefgg. The three quatrains of the poem depict the nostalgic recollection of the past and poet's lament over the long past woes. The concluding couplet marks an abrupt shift in the attitude marked by the word but. The speaker's sudden remembrance of a —dear friend|| addressed by the pronoun thee completely alleviates his despair. Thus, the shift in the poet's mood in this form of sonnet occurs in the concluding couplet unlike the Petrarchan sonnet where this shift occurs in the opening line of sestet.

13.2.3 Spenserian Stanza:

Spenserian stanza is a longer form popularized by Edmund Spenser in his classic *The Faerie Queene* (1590–96). Spenserian stanza consists of nine lines, in which the first eight lines are iambic pentameter and the last line is iambic hexameter (also called as Alexandrine). It has a rhyme scheme of ababbcbcc. The first eight lines produce an effect of formal unity, while the hexameter completes the thought of the stanza. Spenserian stanza owes its origin to the Old French ballade (eight-line stanzas, rhyming ababbcbc), the Italian ottavarima (eight iambic pentameter lines with a rhyme scheme of abababcc), and the stanza form used by Chaucer in his —Monk's Tale|| (eight lines rhyming ababbcbc). The other examples of Spenserian stanza are James Thomson's —The Castle of Indolence|| (1748), John Keats's —The Eve of St. Agnes|| (1820), and the narrative section of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's —The Lotus-Eaters|| (1832). The following is an example of a stanza from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* 1.1.41:

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

Another popular use of Spenserian stanza can be traced in the following poem of the romantic poet John Keats:

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
 The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
 Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
 Like pious incense from a censer old,
 Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith. (*The Eve of St. Agnes*)

13.2.4 Terza Rima:

Terzarima is composed of tercets which are linked by a pattern of shared rhymes i.e. the first and last lines of each stanza rhyme, and the middle line rhymes with the first and third lines of the following tercet: aba, bcb, cdc, and so on. The series ends with a final line (or sometimes two lines) that constitute a separate stanza and rhymes with the middle line of the last tercet: yzy, z (z). Terzarima was invented by Dante in his *Divine Comedy* (early fourteenth century). After Dante, terzarima was employed for allegorical and didactic poetry by Petrarch and Boccaccio in the 14th century, and for satire and burlesque, notably by Ariosto in the 16th century. However, although Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced the form to early in the sixteenth century, it has not been a common meter in English, in which rhymes are much harder to find than in Italian. Shelley, however, used it very effectively in —Ode to the West Wind! (1820):

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
 What if my leaves are falling like its own!
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
 Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,

Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
 My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
 Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
 Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
 And, by the incantation of this verse,
 Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
 Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth
 The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
 If winter comes, can spring be far behind?

13.2.5 Heroic Couplet:

Heroic couplet consists of lines of iambic pentameter which rhyme in pairs: aa, bb, cc, and so on. It is called —heroic because they are frequently used in epics and heroic plays. This verse form was first introduced into English poetry by Geoffrey Chaucer in his works like *The Legend of Good Women* and *The Canterbury Tales* which were written at the end of the fourteenth century. It got the highest level of popularity in the late seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century. The neoclassical poets like John Dryden, Samuel Johnson and Alexander Pope used it so extensively that they almost ignored the other metrical forms in their poetry. These poets wrote closed couplets, in which the end of the rhyme in the second line coincides with the end of the clause or sentence. The sustained employment of the closed heroic couplet meant that two lines had to serve something of the function of a stanza. Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* is one of the finest examples of this form:

Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
 And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
 Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
 Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:
 If to her share some female errors fall,
 Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.

The purpose of using the closed couplet is to give the verse a witty tone. These closed couplets can be compared with the open couplets which are more fluent and run on freely with the rhyme not as insistent and not stopping the verse. An example of this form of couplet can be seen in the following dramatic monologue by Robert Browning:

Sir, 'twas not
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps

Fra Pandolf chanced to say, —Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much,|| or —Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat.|| Such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
 A heart—how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
 Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.

(My Last Duchess)

13.2.6 Free Verse

Free verse is also referred to as —open form|| verse, or verslibre in French. Like the traditional verse, it is also written in short lines instead of continuous lines of prose. However, it can be distinguished from traditional verse in the sense that its rhythms are not organized into a regular metrical form i.e. into feet, or recurrent units of weak- and strong-stressed syllables. Most free verse also has irregular line lengths, and lacks rhyme. Blank verse differs from unrhymed free verse in that it is metrically regular i.e. unrhymed iambic pentameter. Free verse is distinguished from prose in that the division of lines in such verse is deliberately done. This division may consist of very long units or of single words, and which may be divided in mid-sentence or even mid-word. Thus it can have a form or pattern of its own often which is largely based on repetition and parallel grammatical structure. One fine example of free verse is Walt Whitman's poem

—When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer||:
 When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
 When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
 When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and
 measure
 them,
 When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much
 applause in the lecture-room,
 How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
 Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
 In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
 Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

Another example of free verse can be seen in the following poem of Stanley Kunitz:

My mother never forgave my father
for killing himself,
especially at such an awkward time
and in a public park,
that spring
when I was waiting to be born.
She locked his name
in her deepest cabinet
and would not let him out,
though I could hear him thumping.
When I came down from the attic
with the pastel portrait in my hand
of a long-lipped stranger
with a brave moustache
and deep brown level eyes,
she ripped it into shreds
without a single word
and slapped me hard.
In my sixty-fourth year
I can feel my cheek
still burning. (—The Portrait!)

Both the examples suggest that, free verse does not have definite rhyme scheme and comprises of irregular lines.

- **Check your progress 2**

For each of the following poems or passages:

- Name the poetic form exemplified – Sonnet (Petrarchan or Shakespearean), Blank Verse, Heroic Couplet, Terza Rima, Spenserian Stanza etc.
- Identify the characteristics of the Poetic Form.
- Explain how the poetic form contributes to the tone and meaning.

1. I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you. I loafe
and invite my soul,
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.
(Walt Whitman - —Song of Myself)

2. WHEN I consider how my light is spent
E're half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide,
Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, least he returning chide,
Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd,
I fondly ask; But patience to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
Bear his mildeyoak, they serve him best, his State
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o're Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and waite.

(John Milton - —On his Blindness)

3. Like as the waves make towards the pebb'l'd shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

(William Shakespeare)

4. A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,

Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
 For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
 With the green world they live in; and clear rills
 That for themselves a cooling covert make
 'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
 We have imagined for the mighty dead;
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
 An endless fountain of immortal drink,
 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

(John Keats - —Endymion!)

5. To be, or not to be, that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
 And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
 To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause—there's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life.
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's
 contumely, The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's
 delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin? Who would fardelsbear,
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have

Than fly to others that we know not of?

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

(William Shakespeare *Hamlet*)

13.3 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt:

- To identify various stanza forms that occur in a poem
- To identify various poetic forms and how they affect the mood in a poem.

13.4 KEY WORDS

Hexameter	a verse line having six metrical feet.
Iambic	a metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.
Meter	the accent in a metrical foot of verse.
Pentameter	a verse line having five metrical feet.
Rhyme	correspondence in the sounds of two or more lines (especially final sounds)
Stanza	a fixed number of lines of verse forming a unit of a poem
Syllable	a unit of spoken language larger than a phoneme.

13.5 BOOKS SUGGESTED

- Abrams, M.H. & Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2015.
- Hamilton, Sharon. *Essential Literary Terms*. Norton, 2007.
- Miller, Ruth & Robert A. Greenberg. *Poetry: An Introduction*. Macmillan, 1981.

❖ ANSWERS

1. Check Your Progress 1:

1. Quatrain
2. Couplet
3. Quintain
4. Tercet
5. Octave
6. Sestet

2. Check Your Progress 2:

1. Free Verse (no fixed rhyme scheme)
2. Petrarchan or Italian sonnet (it has an octave and sestet with a rhyme scheme - abbaabbaccddcdd)
3. Shakespearean or English sonnet (it is divided in three quatrains and a couplet with a rhyme scheme of abab cd cdefeg)
4. Heroic Couplet
5. Blank Verse

:: STRUCTURE ::

- 14.0 Objectives**
- 14.1 Background**
- 14.2 Introduction**
- 14.3 What is a figure of speech?**
- 14.4 Definition of figures of speech.**
- 14.5 How to use figures of speech in English?**
- 14.6 Classification of figures of speech**
- 14.7 Figures of speech in English**
- 14.8 Suggested books**
- 14.8 Let us sum up**

14.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit,

- We will learn about numerous figures of speech,
- The present unit focuses on their meaning and definition.
- The Unit will try to employ them effectively in sentences.

14.1 BACKGROUND

A word or phrase that purposefully deviates from the routine use of language to achieve a rhetorical effect is known as a figure of speech or a rhetorical figure. Are you working like a bee? Why not take a break from your hectic schedule to discover how to do your writing and speaking extraordinary and compelling? There are various methods to add creativity and excitement to words. Using metaphorical language is one of the best methods to do it.

A figure of speech is any deliberate departure from a literal statement or accepted use that highlights, clarifies, or embellishes both written and spoken language. Most figures in ordinary speech are created by expanding the vocabulary of what is already familiar and better known. Figures of speech are a fundamental language component and can be found in spoken literature, well-crafted poetry and prose, and ordinary speech. Figures of speech are frequently used in greeting card rhymes, commercial slogans, newspaper headlines, cartoon captions, and family

and institutional mottoes, usually for amusing, mnemonic, or attention-grabbing effects. Figurative language is abundant in sports, jazz, journalist commerce, politics, and other specialised groups' vernacular.

14.3 INTRODUCTION

A figure of speech is a word or expression used not with its original meaning but in an imaginative way to make a special effect.

Most numbers used in ordinary speech are created by adding less commonly used words to the lexicon of already recognisable and better-known words. The expressions "the mouth of a river," "the snout of a glacier," "the bowels of the earth," or "the eye of a needle" are examples of metaphors (implied resemblances) that are frequently extended to nature or inanimate objects based on human physiology.

On the other hand, analogies to natural occurrences are commonly used to describe other events, such as "a storm of insult," "a ripple of excitement," or "a wave of enthusiasm." "We were crowded in the room like sardines," and "He is as slow as molasses" are examples of similes, which are comparisons commonly denoted by the words "like" or "as." Most numbers used in ordinary speech are created by adding less commonly used words to the lexicon of already recognisable and better-known words.

Thus, other typical examples of figurative speech include hyperbole (deliberate overstatement for effect), as in "I am so mad I could chew nails," rhetorical questions (asked for effect with no expectation of an answer), as in "How can I express my thanks to you," litotes (a conscious understatement in which emphasis is achieved by negation), as in "It is no fun to be sick," and onomatopoeia (impersonation of natural sounds by words). However, their use in serious poetry and prose is more fully conscious, more artistic, and much more subtle; as a result, it has a more powerful intellectual and emotional impact, is memorable, and occasionally adds a range and depth of association and suggestion far beyond the scope of the casual, colloquial use of imagery.

The Bible's Old and New Testaments, which contain several parallelism-heavy passages (familiar in Hebrew poetry), similes, metaphors, and personifications, are a significant literary influence.

14.3 WHAT IS A FIGURE OF SPEECH?

A figure of speech is a phrase designed to elicit a stronger reaction from the reader or listener. Making contrasts, associations, exaggerations, and

comparisons are all included. Additionally, it paints a much clearer image of your message.

14.4 DEFINITION OF FIGURES OF SPEECH

According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, —a word or phrase used in a different way from its usual meaning in order to create a particular mental picture or effect.¶

The Cambridge Dictionary defines a figure of speech as —an expression that uses words to mean something different from their ordinary meaning.¶

The Collins Dictionary defines a figure of speech as "an expression or word that is used with a metaphorical rather than a literal meaning."

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a figure of speech as —a form of expression (such as a simile or metaphor) used to convey meaning or heighten effect often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a meaning or connotation familiar to the reader or listener.¶

According to the Macmillan Dictionary, a figure of speech is defined as —an expression in which the words are used figuratively, not in their normal literal meaning.¶

14.5 HOW TO USE FIGURES OF SPEECH IN ENGLISH?

Learning the many figures of speech is relatively easy; it knows when, where, and how to employ them. However, it can only be used in some places we want. It will only improve our language if it is used correctly and in relevant and essential contexts. We are not advised to use figurative language in formal writing, such as essays, since figures of speech are intended to convey information sparingly. We must understand how to employ each figure of speech because they do not convey literal meanings.

14.6 CLASSIFICATION OF FIGURES OF SPEECH

The sorts of speech figures can be identified based on their work in sentences. As a result, the primary categories are made up of those that:

Display a Bond or Similarity

Display Phonological Similarities and Represent Sounds

Display Emphasis or Irrelevance

Display a Bond or Similarity:

This category comprises figurative language used to compare things in order to highlight a connection or certain similarities. The figures of speech employed include metaphors, personification, euphemism, metonymy, and synecdoche.

Display Phonological Similarities and Represent Sounds:

Alliteration, assonance, and onomatopoeia are examples of figures of speech in this category.

Using words with similar sounds or words that begin with the same consonant and vowel sounds as other words, the first two figures of speech are employed to produce a specific impact.

Display Emphasis or Irrelevance:

These types of figures of speech are employed to emphasise points or convey a concept's relative importance. The figures of speech hyperbole, antithesis, oxymoron, irony, and litotes can be employed for this.

14.7 FIGURES OF SPEECH IN ENGLISH

Simile:

A simile plainly compares two different things. A simile is introduced by words such as like, so and as.

- 1) While all of us panicked just before the results declaration, Meeta was as cool as a cucumber.
- 2) She looks like a queen.
- 3) The soldier was as brave as a lion while fighting the war.
- 4) The clothes Sneha wore were as white as snow.
- 5) You still look as fresh as a daisy after finishing all the work!

Metaphor:

It is an informal or implied simile in which words like, as, and so are omitted. For example, "He is like a lion (Simile) "and "He is a lion (metaphor)".

- 1) Her Eyes are diamonds.
- 2) Time is money.
- 3) The calm lake was a mirror.
- 4) All the world's a stage, and all the men and women are merely players.
- 5) All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.

Personification:

Personification gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas a human personality, intellect, or character.

- 1) Little sorrows sit and weep. (Boccaccio)

- 2) The dish ran away with the spoon. (Blake)
- 3) Chaos is a friend of mine.
- 4) Conscience is man's compass.
- 5) You are my sun.

Metonymy:

Metonymy is meant for a change of name. It is a substitute for the thing names for the thing meant.

The pen is mightier than the sword.

From the cradle to the grave. (From childhood to death.)

I have never read Milton. (The works of Milton.)

Apostrophe:

It is a direct address to an inanimate object, an abstract concept, or an absent someone as though they were there. It is an exclamatory speech. It happens when a speaker interrupts their address to the audience (during a play) and turns their attention to a person who is sometimes not present in the scene, such as an adversarial litigant. A personified abstract attribute or inanimate object is frequently the addressee.

For example,

- 1) The boy's mother loved him very much.
- 2) O Romeo, O Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
- 3) O my friend! There is no friend.

Hyperbole:

A statement conveyed emphatically by overstating it is called hyperbole.

- 1) Virtues as the sands of the shore.
- 2) Rahul is skinny as a toothpick.
- 3) Mumbai is a city that never sleeps.
- 4) Usha runs like the wind.
- 5) Soham talks a mile a minute.

Synecdoche:

Understanding one thing through the use of another is known as a synecdoche.

In this case, either the whole or a part is used to designate the other.

- 1) The ship was lost with all hands.
- 2) He has many mouths to feed.
- 3) Lend me your ears.

Transferred epithets:

As in phrases, the qualifying target in transferred epithets is changed from a person to a thing.

For example, —sleepless night‡, —sunburn mirth‡, and —melodious plain‡.

1) They were an unhappy marriage.

(This implies that the couple in the marriage is unhappy, but the word "marriage" is given the adjective "unhappy" to reflect the result.

2) Vishal had a sleepless night.

(There can be no sleepless nights. However, the word "Night" is given the epithet in order to emphasise how sleepless people are.)

3) Riya and Hasan had a wonderful day.

(The day was not great; instead, it reflected the speaker's mood at the time.)

Euphemism:

By using the euphemism, we speak in agreeable and favourable terms of some person, object or event which is ordinarily considered unpleasant and disagreeable.

He is telling us a fairy tale. (a lie)

He has fallen asleep. (He is dead)

Irony or Sarcasm:

The words employed in this speech style differ from their intended meanings.

1) The child of cobbler has no shoes.

2) Supriya is flight attendant but she is terrible of heights.

3) A fire station burns down.

Pun:

This consists of a play on the various meanings of a word. Its effect is often ludicrous.

For example,

1) That was an emotional wedding; even the cake was in tears.

2) Never write with a broken pencil because it is pointless.

3) Fishes are the most educated animals because they live in schools.

Epigram:

Epigram combines phrases that contradict one another. It is a succinct, precise saying. The epigram's language is notable for its succinctness.

1) No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

2) If we don't end war, war will end us.

3) If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything.

Antithesis:

In an antithesis, emphasis is gained by creating a strong opposition or contrast of terms inside the same sentence.

1) To err is human, and to forgive is divine.

2) Give every man thy ear, few thy voice.

- 3) Man proposes, God disposes.

Oxymoron:

It is a figure of speech combining two words at odds or unrelated for strong emphasis or effect.

- 1) Many fighters were killed in friendly fights.
- 2) We will have to agree to disagree on the subject.
- 3) We saw a comedian last night, he was seriously funny.

Litotes:

In Litotes, a negative of the opposite is used to indicate an affirmative.

- 1) Her singing is not bad.
- 2) He is known to behave badly.
- 3) The painting was good but it was not Da vinci.

Climax:

It is an arrangement of a series of ideas in the order of increasing importance.

- 1) Since concord was lost, friendship was lost; fidelity was lost; liberty was lost—all was lost.
- 2) Let a man acknowledge his obligations to himself, his family, his country, and his God.

Anti-climax or Bathos:

This is the opposite of climax and signifies a ludicrous descent from the higher to the lower.

- 1) She is a great writer, a mother and a good humourist.
- 2) He lost his family, his car and his cell phone.

Alliteration:

Alliteration is the practice of using the same letter or syllable at the start of two or more words.

- 1) Each day **b**ringing new **b**eginning.
- 2) **B**ring out the **b**est in me.
- 3) **B**lack **b**ug **b**it a **b**ig **b**lack **b**ear.

Onomatopoeia:

The process of creating a word with a sound intended to allude to or reflect the sense, as in cuckoo, bang, growl, and hiss.

- 1) The bird's **chirp** filled the empty night air.
- 2) Those **clucking** chickens are driving me crazy.
- 3) The flag **flapped** in wind.

Circumlocution:

Instead of outright stating anything, this involves communicating a truth or notion in a circumstantial manner.

- 1) The viewless couriers of the air. = (the wind)
- 2) That statement of his was purely an effort of imagination. = (a fiction)

Tautology or pleonasm:

Tautology is the practice of using different terms to express the same truth or notion. A tautology is a phrase or expression that repeats the same idea more than once but in a different manner.

For example,

- 1) It is the privilege and birth right of every man to express his ideas without any fear.
- 2) She was a dark-haired brunette.
- 3) The hotel room was not great, but it was adequate enough.
- 4) The storm hits at 2 p.m. in the afternoon.
- 5) The Gobi is very dry desert.

14.8 LET US SUM UP

A figure of speech is a term or phrase that deliberately deviates from the everyday use of language to have a particular rhetorical impact. Figures of speech add beauty to the language by enhancing the verses' visual, aural and sensory appeal. The reader is made to use his imagination to build brilliant mental pictures. They give freshness of expression and clarity of meaning. They can be used in both poetic and common language. Language of speeches and debates can also be optimised with figures of speech. In short, figures of speech make the language more colourful, descriptive and exciting.

14.9 KEYWORDS

Brunette	a person with dark brown hair
Connotation	an idea or feeling which a word invokes for a person in addition to its literal or primary meaning.
Embellish	make (something) more attractive by the addition of decorative details or features.
Inanimate	not alive
Lexicon	the vocabulary of a person, language, or branch of knowledge.
Ludicrous	so foolish, unreasonable or out of place to be amusing
Occurrences	an accident or event
Succinct	(especially of something written or spoken) briefly and clearly expressed

14.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Fill in the blanks with appropriate options:

(Bathos or anti-climax, Litotes, antithesis, rhetorical effect)

- 1) The opposite of climax and signifies a ludicrous descent from the higher to the lower is called_____.
- 2) In _____, a negative of the opposite is used to indicate an affirmative.
- 3) A word or phrase that purposefully deviates from the routine use of language to achieve a _____is known as a figure of speech.
- 4) Emphasis is gained by creating a strong opposition or contrast of terms inside the same sentence is called_____.

Answer in brief:

- 1) Explain simile and metaphor.

- 2) What is Transferred Epithet?

Write Short Notes:

- 1) Write a detailed note on Classification of Figures of speech.
- 2) How to use figures of speech in English?

14.11 SUGGESTED BOOKS

- Peake, Mervyn. *Figures of Speech*. Candlewick Press, 2003.
- Pisano, Falke, and Will Holder. *Figures of Speech*. JRP Ringier, 2010.

:: STRUCTURE ::**15.0 Objectives****15.1 What is Scansion?****15.2 Purpose of Scansion****15.2.1 Steps in Scanning a Line**

- **Check Your Progress I**

15.3 Meters**15.3.1 Syllable–stress or accented syllabic metres****15.3.2 Strong-stress Metres****15.3.3 Syllabic Metres****15.3.4 Quantitative Metres**

- **Check Your Progress II**

15.4 Practice

- **Check Your Progress III**

15.5 Let Us Sum Up**15.6 Books Suggested****15.7 Other Helpful Poetry Terms**

- **Answer**

15.0 OBJECTIVES

After completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- define 'scansion'
- identify the elements related to scansion in poetry

15.1 WHAT IS SCANSION?

The metrical structure of a poem is analysed and shown visually through scansion. English prosody's scansion technique, which was adapted from the traditional approach of studying ancient Greek and Roman

quantitative verse, uses a set of symbols to show how a poem is structured - specifically, the main foot style, the number of feet per line, and the rhyme system. Scansion aims to heighten the reader's awareness of the various ways that rhythmic elements in poetry convey meaning. Variations in a poem's metrical structure are frequently important to understanding its content.

The graphic, musical, and acoustic varieties of English scansion are the three main categories. In graphic scansion, the most popular kind of scansion, the main symbols are:

Symbol	Name of the symbol	Purpose
/	The acute accent	Metrically stressed syllable
U or ×	The brave	Metrically weak syllable
	A single line	Division between feet
	A double line	Caesura or pause in the line
^	A rest	A syllable metrically expected but not actually present.

With the use of these symbols, graphic scansion first marks the accented syllables before moving on to the unaccented ones in accordance with the natural rhythm of speech. However, it is unable to capture the tiny differences in language, making it a greatly simplified analysis.

15.2 PURPOSE OF SCANSION

A reader can comprehend a poem more fully by understanding the poetic form's structure. This prosody or poem analysis also enables the reader to:

- By breaking a line into feet and observing the syllabic structure of each foot, you can determine the metre of a poem.
- Using the line's length in feet, determine the sort of line.
- Recognize the role that a poem's rhythm has in enhancing its meaning.
- Draw out the free verse and blank verse's natural rhythm.
- Determine the appropriate way to read a poem out loud.

15.2.1 Steps in Scanning a Line

1. Read it aloud
2. Pick out and mark one stress in each polysyllable.
3. Decide which monosyllables are stressed: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs yes; conjunctions, prepositions, articles no; pronouns only through contrast

4. Mark the slacks
5. Consider ways to divide the preliminary line of marks into feet, checking that the substitutions are plausible and that the line has the right number of feet.
6. Decide whether any stresses are promoted

- **Check Your Progress I**

1. Define the term Scansion.

2. Discuss the Scansion's symbol.

3. Write a brief note on the purpose of Scansion

4. What are the steps of Scansion?

15.3 METERS

There are basically four types of meters. They are as following:

1. Syllable–stress or accented syllabic metres
2. Strong–stress metres
3. Syllabic metres
4. Quantitative metres

15.3.1 Syllable–stress or accented syllabic metres

A foot is the smallest measure of metre used in poetry. A foot is a grouping of phonetically stressed and unstressed syllables in prosody. The following examples show the four main feet used in English poetry:

Meter	Pattern	Examples
Iambic	U /	About, Betray, Canoe, Erode, Robust
Trochee	/ U	Garden, Highway, Tiger, Raven
Anapaest	U U /	Augustin, Bernadine, Christiane, Disagree, Disconnect
Dactyl	/ U U	Abacus, Abelow, Accident, Admiral, Biblical

In addition to the four primary feet—the spondee (/ /) and the Pyrrhus (U U)—appear as replacements in a poem sequence.

Poetic metre is created by the repetition of metrical feet across a line of poetry. Greek suffixes are used to specify a poetic meter’s length.

One Foot	Monometer
Two Feet	Dimeter
Three Feet	Trimeter
Four Feet	Tetrameter
Five Feet	Pentameter
Six Feet	Hexameter
Seven Feet	Heptameter
Eight Feet	Octameter

15.3.2 Strong-stress Metres

Strong-stress poetry in Old and Middle English preceded the syllable-stress metre. Because of this, the strong-stress metres are frequently referred to as the "native" metres, and they are unique to the Germanic languages (such as German, English, Dutch, Swedish, etc.). Each line of strong-stress poem contains a predetermined number of stresses. However, the unstressed syllables may differ considerably. Both William Langland’s vision poem *Piers Plowman* and the Old English epic poem *Beowulf* (C. 1000) make use of strong-stress metre. The following is the sample of Strong-stress Meters:

/ / / /
 In a somer sesun // whon softe, was the sonne
 / / / /
 I schop me in-to a schroud // a scheep as I were;
 / / / /

In habite of an hermite // un-holy of werkes
 / / / /
 Wende I wydene in this world // wondres to here.

The four lines above each have a middle pause (II) or caesura. Two syllables are stressed on either side of the caesura. Alliteration is used in this paragraph to add emphasis.

The following nursery rhyme also uses strong-stress.

/ / / /
Jack and Jill // went up the hill,
 / / /
To fetch a pale // of water,
 / / / /
Jack, fell down, and // broke his crown
 / / /
And Jill // came tumbling after.

Three and four tensions are alternately placed in the lines above.

15.3.3 Syllabic Metres

The stresses and pauses vary in syllabic metres. However, the number of syllables in each line does not change. Syllabic metres predominate in poetry written in Romance languages, which include French, Italian, and Spanish. Latin, the language of ancient Rome, was the source of these languages. However, in English, the syllable count alone does not provide much rhythmic attraction to most listeners.

15.3.4 Quantitative Metres

The time it takes us to utter a syllable is referred to as quantity in this context. The length of time we pronounce the vowel at the syllable nucleus is a byproduct of this. For instance, there are several ways to say "sweet rose," you can shorten or prolong the vowel sound however you like. However, this variety would make it difficult for the poet and you, the reader, to communicate. Now, if you compare Sanskrit or Hindi to English, you'll discover that neither language allows you to freely alter the length of the vowel sound or the number of syllables. They are predetermined by the Sanskrit and Hindi linguistic systems.

Due to their intense inflection, quantitative metres predominated in Greek and Latin poetry. (To inflect a word is to change its form at the end according to its peculiar, case, mood, tense and number. For instance, we can say that —child|| and —boy|| inflect differently in the plural.) Because those languages allowed the alternation of long vowels in the roots and short ones in the inflections, the inflection encouraged the development of long, slowly paced lines. In contrast to German, English, which lost the majority of its inflections in the 15th century, is less amenable to the quantitative metres.

Check Your Progress II

1. What are the different types of Meters.

2. List down the various types of feet in Scansion.

3. What do you mean by accented syllabic metres?

4. Discuss Quantitative Metres.

15.4 PRACTICE

i) The Iambic metre:

U / U /

With rav/ished ears

U / U /

The mon/arch hears

U / U /

Assumes / the God

U / U /

Affects / to nod

U / U / U /

And seems / to shake / the spheres. (- Dryden)

ii) The Trochaic Metre

/ U / U / U / U

May thou/ month of/ rosy/ beauty,

/ U / U / U / U

Month when/ pleasure/ is a/ duty,

/ U / U / U / U

Month of/bees and/ month of/ flowers,

/ U / U / U / U

Month of/ blossom/ laden/ bowers.

iii) The Anapaestic Metre

U U / U U / U U /

I am mon/arch of all/ I survey,

U / U U / U U /

My right/ there is none/ to dispute;

U U / U U / U U /

From the cen/tre all round/ to the sea

U U / U U / U U /

I am lord/ of the bird/ and the brute

iv) The Dactylic Metre

/ U U / U U

Touch her not scornfully

/ U U / U U

Think of her mournfully.

/ U U / U U

Gently and humanly;

/ U U / U U /

Not of the remains of her

/ U U / U U

Now is pure womanly.

• **Check Your Progress III**

1. The curfew tolls the knell of parting day, The lowing herds wind slowly
o'er the lea.

(Iambic --Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard")

2. The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold And his cohorts were
gleaming in purple and gold.

(Anapestic --Lord Byron, "The Destruction of Sennacherib")

3. "There they are, my fifty men and women." (Trochaic --Robert
Browning, "One Word More")

4. "Éve, with her basket, was Deep in the bells and grass." (Dactylic --
Ralph Hodgson, "Eve")

5. Trochee trips from long to short From long to long in solemn sort
Slow spondee stalks; strong foot yet ill able Ever to run with the dactyl
trisyllable. Iambics march from short to long. With a leap and a bound the
swift anapests throng. (Metrical Feet by Samuel Coleridge)

6. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour Draws on apace. Four happy days bring in Another moon; but, O, methinks, how slow This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires, Like to a stepdame, or a dowager. . . .
(Iambic Pentameter)

7. Thy way not mine, O Lord However dark it be; Lead me with thine own hand Choose out the path for me.(Iambic)

8. Dreadful gleams, Dismal screams, Fires that glow, Shrieks of woe, Sullen moans, Hollow groans. (Trochaic - A. Pope)

9. Tell me not in mournful numbers Life is but an empty dream; For the soul is dead that slumbers, And things are not what they seem
(Trochaic - A.W. Longfellow)

10. How fleet is the glance of the mind Compared with the speed of its flight! The tempest itself lags behind And the swift winged arrows of light (Anapaestic)

15.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you learnt about the basics of the scansion of the poetry and its purpose. In addition to this, you also had an exposure of learning different types of Meters and Feet followed my extensive practice. And to master the scansion, further you need to practice more and consult a dictionary whenever you need to.

15.6 KEY WORD

Assonance	repetition or a pattern of similar sounds, especially vowel sounds. A partial rhyme in which the vowel sounds are the same, but the consonant sounds are different.
Alliteration	The repetition of consonant sounds in a series of words.
Antithesis	A rhetorical device in which sharply contrasted ideas are linked in parallel words or phrases.
Caesura	a natural pause or break in a line of verse, usually occurring near the middle of the line.
Consonance	repetition of similar consonant sounds, especially at the ends of words.
Couplet	Two rhyming lines of verse. Shakespeare's sonnets always end with a couplet; his earlier plays are full of them. In the later plays, they are used mostly for special effects, comic effects, and final flourishes.
Elision	The omission of a part of a word (usually one syllable) to make pronunciation easier or to achieve a rhythmic effect.
End-Stopped Line	A line of poetry in which the idea is complete and which ends with a punctuation mark reveals a strong correlation of thought and feeling.
Enjambéd Line or Run-On Line	A line of poetry in which the sense of the sentence or clause is not completed (as in an end-stopped line) but which continues into a succeeding line – allowing thoughts to continue from line to line, rather than finishing a thought per line.
Feminine ending	An extra, unstressed syllable at the end of a line (which would ordinarily end with a stressed syllable). Many feminine endings in a row often

	reveal tentativeness, a contrast between thought and feeling.
Masculine ending	an extra stressed syllable at the end of a line.
Oxymoron	A poetic device in which two words of opposite meaning are brought together in an emphatic way.
Parenthetical Phrase	A phrase which is secondary to the main thought, and dependent on it, so that it must be uttered with less emphasis in order for the main thought to be clear. Mark parentheses around it in your script.
Prose	Generally, any written or spoken expression that is not in poetic, rhythmic patterns. Usually, prose appears on the page with an even right margin. Shakespeare uses it in informal situations.
Pun	A pun plays with a works that has two or more meanings in order to twist the sense. Puns are not always funny.
Quatrain	A stanza or poem with four lines, with many possible rhyme schemes.
Rhetoric	The art of discourse and persuasion; skill in the use of language.
Versification	the system of rhyme and meter in a poem

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❖ Answer

1.

u / u / u / u / u /
 The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 u / u / u / u / u /
 The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea.

2.

u u / u u / u u / u u /
The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold
u u / u u / u u / u u /
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.

3.

/ u / u / u / u / u
 "There they are, my fifty men and women."

4.

/ u u / u u
 "Éve, with her basket, was
 / u u / u u
 Deep in the bells and grass."

5.

/ u / u / u /
Trochee trips from long to short
 u / u / u / u /
From long to long in solemn sort
 / / / / / / / / u
Slow spondee stalks; strong foot yet ill able
 / u u / u u / u u / u u
Ever to run with the dactyl trisyllable.
 u / u / u / u /
Iambics march from short to long.
 u u / u u / u u / u u /
With a leap and a bound the swift anapests throng.

6.

u / u / u/ u / u /

Now, fair / Hippo / lyta, / our nup/ t(ia)l hour

/ / u/ / / u / / /

Draws on / apace. / Four hap / py days / bring in

u / u / u / u / u /

Anoth /er moon; / but, Ó, / methinks, / how slow

/ / / / / / u / u /

This old / moon wanes! / She lin / gers my /desires

/ u u / / u u / u /

Líke to / a step/ dame, or / a dow/ ager. . . .

7.

U / U / U /

Thy way/ not mine, / o Lord,

U / U / U /

Howev/er dark/ it be;

U / U / U /

Lead me / with thine / own hand,

U / U / U /

Choose out/ the path/ for me.

8.

/ u /

Dreadful gleams,

/ u /

Dismal screams,

/ u /

Fires that glow,

/ u /

Shrieks of woe,

/ u /

Sullen moans,

/ u /

Hollow groans,

9.

/ u / u / u / u

Tell me/ not in /mournful/ numbers

/ u / u / u /

Life is /but an /empty /dream;

/ u / u / u / u

For the/ soul is /dead that/ slumbers,

/ u / u / u /

And things/ are not /what they/ seem.

10.

u / uu / uu /

How fleet /is the glance/ of the mind

u / u u / uu /

Compared /with the speed/ of its flight!

u / u u / u u /

The tem/pest itself/ lags behind

u u / u u / u u /

And the swift /winged ar/rows of light

:: STRUCTURE ::

- 16.0 Objectives**
- 16.1 Background**
- 16.2 Introduction**
- 16.3 Summary**
- 16.4 Themes**
- 16.5 Form and meter**
- 16.6 Setting**
- 16.7 Key words**
- 16.8 Let us sum up**
- 16.9 Check your progress**
- 16.10 Books suggested**

16.0 OBJECTIVES

- The unit focuses on the analysis of "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold.
- The unit will encompass the summary, themes, form, meter and setting of "Dover Beach".
- The necessary critical analysis of the poem "Dover Beach" will be presented concisely and lucidly.

16.1 BACKGROUND

"Dover Beach" stands at the head of Arnold's shorter poems as his most perfect work of art. As a presentation of ideas, it is one of the simplest because, although the archetypal image of the sea is rich in suggestion, there is almost none of Arnold's usual discursive analysis: he only turns away from a dark world emptied of religious meaning to cling to human love. The poem may initially seem strange as the product of a brief wedding trip, which it appears to have been. However, it is, after all, a distillation, an extreme one, of Arnold's grimmest and gloomiest thoughts and feelings of earlier years. Marriage would reinforce the idea of love as

an anchorage in a Godless, chaotic, hostile world. Here, as in other poems, very limited salvation comes through feeling, not reason, although love is only a desperate refuge; it does not bring profound self-knowledge and intimations, however dim, of a reality beyond the self. However, it is the negative theme that matters most, and "We are here as on a darkling plain" may be taken as "the central statement Arnold makes about the human condition.

16.2 INTRODUCTION

He wrote at least a portion of 'Dover Beach' on a honeymoon trip with his bride to the seaside town of Alverstoke following their wedding in June 1851. Later in the month, they visited Dover as well. Arnold delayed the publication of 'Dover Beach' until 1867, but eventually, it became one of his best-known poems. In it, he weaves together allusions to the present, classical Greece, and medieval Europe. Critics have found echoes of Sophocles, Milton, Wordsworth, and Keats, among others, but Arnold achieves unity by effectively juxtaposing sight and sound imagery. 'Dover Beach' is a jewel that Arnold had kept to himself since the beginning of his married life. Although Victorian readers did not immediately appreciate it, it was destined to be read by later generations of readers as an essential poem in its own right and representative of Victorian consciousness.

The poem also illustrates how Arnold's deepest structures of feeling throughout his literary career are grounded in his religious heritage. At the emotional climax of the poem, the speaker addresses his companion: 'Ah, love, let us be true/To one another! for', and it describes the senseless violence of the world that underlies its seeming beauty.

16.3 SUMMARY

—The sea is calm tonight.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,

Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.¶

The opening of *Dover Beach* is a more subtle blend of assurance and disquiet. The speaker observes the tide and the moon reflected on the calm sea. The speaker stands next to the English Channel and observes the French and English coasts. The speaker then invites another person to come and have a look at the scene that the speaker had been observing. The speaker senses something uncomfortable and describes the water meeting the moonlit land. The speaker urges the companion to listen to the waves as they clash against the rocks and pebbles. The speaker associates the flowing of the waves with sadness.

Against apparent peace and stability are the facts of the vanishing of the light and the glimmering of the cliffs. There seems to be untroubled serenity in "Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!" Nevertheless, then we meet the ominous "Only," the hint of alien coldness in "the moon-blanch'd land," and the full recognition of the sinister in "the grating roar" of the pebbles drawn back and flung up on the strand. This endlessly repeated process brings "The eternal note of sadness in." What follows confirms the hint that men are like pebbles, forever swept back and forth by circumstances and forces beyond their control.

—Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.¶

We stand on Dover beach and hear the same note Sophocles heard on the Ægean, the same that the age hears as the sea of faith retreats 'down the vast edges of the drear and naked shingles of the world. Suddenly, the speaker thinks about the famous Greek tragedy playwright Sophocles and

imagines how Sophocles would have become sad when he would have stood on the Aegean Sea, just like the speaker feels. Sophocles associates the sound of the waves with the general sorrow of humanity. The speaker then acknowledges the sea as the sea of faith that once flowed with a high tide. At that time, religion and faith swirled around the earth like a girdle. Unfortunately, now, the speaker only feels the sea of faith completely retreat, meaning that humanity has lost faith in God. Suppose Sophocles likening human calamities to the stormy sea is not strictly relevant. In that case, Arnold's allusion to his favourite Greek dramatist has the effect of the myth in Philomela-of joining past and present in one long chain of suffering. His association of the tide with "the turbid ebb and flow/Of human misery" is wholly logical, though it must be granted that his transfer of the impressive image to "The Sea of Faith" is not, since it does not perpetually ebb and flow but has ebbed once for all; however, we need not be upset by that any more than we are by Keats's making the mortal nightingale immortal.

—Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.¶

The speaker is addressing the companion as "love" for the first time, which makes us believe that the speaker was in the company of a lover till now. The speaker frankly confesses and requests the lover to be honest because the speaker does not feel that the world offers joy, love or clarity. Neither claims the speaker can the world provide any certainty, peace, or relief from eternal pain. The speaker is pessimistic about their situation and compares standing on a flat, dark piece of land, caught up and surrounded by the fighting chaos. Here, battles between unknowing groups continue under cover of darkness. Nevertheless, despite a bleak, 'modern' view of the human condition, the poem affirms romantic love. The conclusion is unexpected-if one may speak thus of such a familiar poem and quote such familiar lines.

The conclusion was written before the preceding lines 1-28. The final picture of ignorant armies clashing by night refers to a disastrous battle in Sicily. The image breaks away from that of the sea, which has hitherto

been dominant, yet the conclusion depends on its whole meaning and impact on what has preceded it. There are particular links between the fact of darkness and the lines "for the world . . . pain," which return to and reject the delusive beauty and security described in the opening lines. Nevertheless, "that we have no sea in the last section is the very point of the poem" may be thought of as an over-subtle forcing of the metaphor.

16.4 THEMES

Loss of Faith

"Dover Beach" strongly reflects the theme of loss of trust. The beach also plays an important role throughout the poem. For the speaker, losing credibility is like losing certainty. Dover the beach itself embodies this loss in its sights and sounds. The poem initially does not allude to the theme of loss of faith. Instead, elements of beaches, pebbles, and waves echo the theme of sorrow. We see an analogy between God and the immateriality. However, this does not mean that religious beliefs will return, but that something will take their place (in this case, dominance of science).

The speaker's position on this loss of faith becomes clear in the third stanza. Faith once made the world "full" and "bright". Its loss, then, represents "melancholy." Moreover, the "Sea of Faith" once touched the shores of the entire world but is now "withdrawing." The poem essentially says that this loss of faith is global, suggesting the vast reach of scientific advancements at the time. The speaker doubles down on the idea that scientific advancement represents a loss rather than a gain in the poem's final couplet, saying that the new era will herald "confused alarms of struggle and flight," and "ignorant armies clash[ing] by night." In other words, the speaker believes that scientific advancement will bring only scientific—not spiritual—certainty and will lead to more doubt and questioning (which is, in fact, an essential part of the scientific method of inquiry). Overall, then, the poem expresses a kind of resignation. The speaker fully admits the change in the process—as inevitable as the waves rising and falling—and challenges the reader to consider whether this loss of faith is progress or a wrong turn. "Dover Beach," then, is a profoundly pessimistic poem that questions the dominant values of its day and embodies the grief that some felt at the prospect of losing religion. This question remains in the 21st century, and readers should consider whether their lives are spiritually fulfilling.

Nature and Alienation

The changing relationship of people to the natural environment is tied to the idea of a loss of faith – Dover Beach, written shortly after the era when romantic poets praised nature as an antidote to overly rational

thinking. It recreates the relationship between humans and nature. Ask naturally. Instead of finding happiness or sublimeness in the natural environment, the speaker (while acknowledging the beauty of the beach) finds a deep sadness. Cold indifference and the mighty forces of nature make the speaker seem small and insignificant. The poem thus seeks to capture the complexity of human experience as part of the natural world, rather than as the center of it.

At the heart of this poem is the tacit acknowledgment that humanity is only part of a larger system, the natural world. The sight of nature prompts the speaker to think about the timescales that render his life meaningless. A striking reminder. The beach and the sea are the most prominent characters in the poem. The product of millions of years of erosion and movement of water, they represent timescales far beyond the breadth of human life and perhaps beyond the mind's ability to comprehend them.

This deep sense of time takes the speaker away from the natural scene they are observing. This scene dwarfs the speakers and the sense that nature is almost hostile to the trials of mankind, as evidenced by the "roar" of the beach accompanied by the "eternal sound of sorrow" as pebbles move with the waves. The reference to eternity here clearly ties the concept of time to the alienation of the speaker. Without God guaranteeing an eternal afterlife, the timescales evoked by nature seem mocking of man's limited place in the world.

The speaker's thoughts on the ancient Greek playwright Sophocles further emphasize the tragedy that the speaker believes is happening now. The speaker imagines hearing at sea the same loneliness and sorrow that Sophocles hears in his poem. To an orator, human life is inherently sad, and Sophocles, as a tragedy performer, must have heard the same sorrow at sea. On the one hand, the poem claims that nature always has this alienating effect. On the other hand, however, the speaker seems to be particularly focused on the present moment, the moment the poem was written. The use of the present tense throughout indicates that the speaker feels the present moment is an incredibly alienated time.

The poem's natural setting makes the speaker question everything about human existence that was once guarded by religious beliefs. In addition, the beach has a paradoxical property - it constantly changes its shape. Nevertheless, it has remained roughly the same for millions of years, always changing and always looking the same. This paradox embodies the way people try to make sense of their lives when the world offers no

certainty. It is often assumed that ultimately, "Dover Beach" reveals the subliminal melancholy of striking natural scenes. The speaker recognizes the beauty of the scene, but that beauty cannot compensate for the way the scene makes the speaker seem small and insignificant.

16.5 FORM AND METER

—Dover Beach meter is very unpredictable. Whenever a pattern seems established, it is quickly broken. This unpredictability is exhibited both in stressed and unstressed syllable patterns and in line length. For example, line 10 contains the iambic pentameter (5 ft) "Of the pebbles that the waves pull back and throw", and line 21 contains the iambic pentameter (2 ft) iambic pentameter (The Sea of Faith) line. This restless variation is highly unusual for the Victorian era in which the poem was written. In addition, readers can experience the speaker's psychology in real time. This is confusing, unsettling, and importantly, unpredictable.

At first, the poem appears to be establishing an iambic rhythm, even if the line lengths vary from the outset:

The **sea** is **calm** tonight.
The **tide** is **full**, the **moon** lies **fair**
Upon the **straits**;

These lines are highly regular, with a reliable shift from unstressed to stressed, creating a gentle rocking motion in keeping with the discussion of the sea and its tides. However, as line 3 continues, a kind of metrical battle begins, in which the iambic pattern tries to re-establish itself but is constantly disrupted:

Upon the **straits**; on the **French coast** the **light**

"On the French coast" is a pyrrhic foot followed by a spondee, two unstressed syllables before two stresses. This is unusual in itself, but that it occurs in the middle of the line is doubly daring and lays down a metrical challenge to the iambic opening lines. This signifies the conflict in the speaker's psyche between the outwardly beautiful scene and the symbolically troubling world it seems to represent to the speaker.

The final stanza embodies this tussle between iambs and irregularity too. Lines 33 and 34 are straightforwardly iambic —Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,/Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain, but lines 36 and 37 defeat this stability "Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,/Where ignorant armies clash by night". Considering that these two lines introduce the idea of an uncertain future dominated by "confused

alarms of struggle and flight" and "ignorant armies," metrical confusion plays a relevant role. The unreliability of the metrical pattern embodies the "confusion," "struggle", and "clash" that these lines discuss. The poem's subject is about a rupture or breakage, as a world founded on faith is changed by the rise of science, and the meter of the poem itself seems ruptured, underscoring and amplifying the poem's subject.

16.6 SETTING

There are two settings for poetry. As the title suggests, the first is a literal take. Dover beach. Dover is on England's southeast coast and is a major port. The cliffs the speaker refers to are mostly chalk. That is, it is white and shimmers in the moonlight. There are also steep slopes where the coast ends abruptly and joins the sea. The sea the speaker sees is the English Channel that separates England from France (which is why the speaker can see France over the sea in the first place). The setting also embodies the speaker's psychological conflict that develops throughout the poem. The scenery is beautiful from the outside, and the cliffs are impressive, but there is also a vague sense of threat. Since England is an island nation, anyone wishing to attack it (before air travel) must reach the coast by sea and land.

The beach itself is a transitional space. That said, while the beach may look the same year to year to the casual observer, it's always changing. Every time a wave comes and goes, there is a subtle difference. Similarly, a beach is where land and sea meet. It's like an intermediate zone where you don't know where the land is and where the sea is. This is important for poetry because the speaker is concerned with similar moments of historical transition. From the speaker's perspective, society (and perhaps humanity more generally) is moving from faith to a science-based understanding of the world. As a result, the intellectual and spiritual life of the world is in transition. The tranquil nature of the beach therefore makes the speaker think more deeply about faith, change, loss and love.

Considering this, there is another meaning that the framework of the poem is the narrator's spirit itself. The reader thus follows the narrator's journey from equanimity to doubt, love for others, sadness, and anxiety about the future.

16.7 KEYWORDS

Aegean Sea	an arm of the Mediterranean Sea, located between the Greek peninsula on the west and Asia Minor on the east
Allusion	hint
Chaotic	in a state of confusion
Grimmest	very serious; not smiling
Hostile	having very strong feelings against somebody/something
Immateriality	of no substantial consequence, unimportant
Medieval	connected with the period in history between about 1100 and 1500 AD (the Middle Ages)
Myth of Philomela	While the myth has several variations, the general depiction is that Philomela, after being raped and mutilated by her sister's husband, Tereus, obtains her revenge and is transformed into a nightingale (<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>), a bird renowned for its song
Paradoxical	opposite
Refuge	protection from danger, trouble, etc.; a place that is safe
Subtle	not very noticeable; not very strong or bright
Tacit	understood but not actually said

16.8 LET US SUM UP

—Dover Beach is a poem which insists on love and honesty especially at a time when the spiritual faith is waning. The speaker of the poem laments the loss of faith that hugely prevailed at one time on the earth. The speaker acknowledges that the world has lost joy, hope, certainty and peace. Disillusionment prevails when ignorant armies are clashing during the dark of the night.

16.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Choose the correct option:

- 1) Dover beach is a metaphor for _____.
a) loss of faith b) innate kindness
c) darkness of humanity d) a honeymoon

2) "The Sea of Faith was once, too, at the full, ... But now I only hear its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, retreating, to the breath..." is a metaphor for _____.

- a) dover beach
- b) the poet's wife
- c) the poet's honey moon
- d) humanity's loss of faith

3) What country does the speaker see on the other side of the English Channel?

- a) Italy
- b) France
- c) Hoboken
- d) Belgium

4) What's the famous land formation at Dover that's mentioned in this poem?

- a) The Pit of Despair
- b) The Great Waterfall of Dover
- c) The Sea of Faith
- d) The White Cliffs of Dover

5) What Greek playwright makes a cameo in this poem?

- a) Euripides
- b) Sophocles
- c) Aeschylus
- d) Kermit

❖ **ANSWER IN BRIEF:**

1) What is the mood of the poem —Dover Beach?

2) Analyse the poem —Dover Beach and discuss how the loss of faith (during his times) affects the poet and his thought?

3) How does the speaker describe the beautiful night scene at Dover in the poem?

4) How is the metaphor of sea used in the poem?

5) The poem brings out the loss of faith in the modern world. Discuss with close reference to the text.

Write a detailed note on the following questions:

1) Does Arnold take a reflective or an emotional stance in his poetry?

Explain.

2) What is the central idea of the poem?

Answers:

1) – A 2) – D 3) – B 4) – D 5) – B

16.10 BOOKS SUGGESTED

- Alexander, Edward. *Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill*. Routledge, 2010.
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:: STRUCTURE ::**17.0 Objectives****17.1 Background****17.2 Introduction****17.3 Summary****17.4 Themes****17.5 Key words****17.6 Let us sum up****17.7 Check your progress****17.8 Books suggested**

17.0 OBJECTIVE

- The unit focuses on the analysis of —Because I could not stop for Death by Emily Dickinson.
- The unit will encompass the summary, background and themes of —Because I could not stop for Death.
- The necessary critical analysis of the poem —Because I could not stop for Death will be presented concisely and lucidly.

17.1 BACKGROUND

Dickinson’s most well-known and highly discussed poem, "Because I could not halt for Death," first appeared in the first volume of her poetry, edited by Mabel Loomis Todd and Thomas Wentworth Higginson in 1890. The incorrect title, "The Chariot", was given to it by Higginson,

who may have been inspired by a Victorian artwork from the Victorian era depicting Apollo, the patron of the arts, riding the artist to heaven in his chariot. The editors sadly removed the fourth stanza, and Mrs Todd "improved on" the poet's exact rhyme in stanza three by rhyming "Mound" with "Ground" in its place. The restored poem was only made available to readers in Johnson's 1955 Poems. Despite this, it was already noted as one of her most significant and is still praised as a succinct articulation of her most important theme: immortality and death.

The 1847 death of Olivia Coleman, the attractive older sister of Emily's close friend Eliza M. Coleman, who passed away from a tubercular haemorrhage while out riding in a carriage, has been proposed by academics as the inspiration for Dickinson's "Carriage Ride with Death." However, the picture also has a wide range of cultural sources. For example, the central metaphor of the poem—a young woman being kidnapped by death—is based on the ancient myth of Persephone, the daughter of Ceres, whom Hades takes to the underworld. In addition, a common iconographic motif in mediaeval times was "Death and the Maiden," which occasionally took the shape of a virgin being sexually ravished by death.

Despite being unaware of these customs, Dickinson gave them a uniquely personal touch. She not only moved the kidnapping to the back roads of her own New England, but she also changed the female "victim" into a keen observer/participant in the mysterious journey from life to death and from temporal existence to eternal life. The speaker never verbalizes any genuine feeling over her kidnapping, and she never refers to it as such. She does not appear to be afraid or in agony. She is too busy to stop for him, and he, the courtly suitor, takes the initiative, so there is no sign that she is in love with death. Nevertheless, she does not push back. Instead, she is carried away by death, which is shown as "civility" or an act of politeness.

Additionally, she reacts politely, setting aside her work and her free time for the duration of her life. She is drawn in by the journey she meticulously watches and chronicles. The poem serves as her means of examining the query that preoccupied her mind: "What does it feel like to die?"

17.2 INTRODUCTION

Dickinson's extremely famous poem —Because I could not stop for Death— draws on the sentimental idea of death as a gentle lover escorting his love to a new and blissful home. The motif of death as a courtly lover is highlighted in the poem's first three stanzas. Death here is —kindly— and offers the narrator a smooth journey to the afterlife. The journey is slow, not frighteningly hasty or bumpy, and death is full of chivalric —Civility.— The journey includes familiar scenes as the carriage glides past the school and fields. However, the fourth stanza brings an abrupt turn to the poem.

In the first three stanzas, the spatial coordinates of the poem are clear and consistent. The carriage journeys straight away from the home and town, eventually passing "the Setting Sun." However, when the narrator suddenly adds, "Or rather – He passed Us –," the journey's progress suddenly becomes confusing. This abrupt turn in the poem flags a movement away from the sentimental idea of death as an easy spiritual journey. Instead of moving smoothly past the setting sun to the heavens, the journey ends abruptly, and the scene becomes threatening. The poem has quickly moved from the positive image of "the Fields of Gazing Grain" to the darker image of the "Dews . . . quivering and chill" that threaten a vulnerable body clad with "only Gossamer" and "only Tulle."

The journey ends not with the arrival at a heavenly home but in the buried and suffocating home "in the Ground" – the physical grave. The carriage that seemed so comfortable in the poem's first half is not a chariot that transports a soul to an afterlife but a hearse transporting a body to the cemetery. "Eternity" seems nothing more than "Centuries" of physical decay in the earth that feels shorter than "the Day" when the narrator first noticed she was on her way to death. This poem's last stanza also suggests that genuine eternity lies in the day we recognize death and thus capitalize on the present moment, which is itself infinite.

17.3 SUMMARY

The most widely read and debated poem by Emily Dickinson is "Because I could not halt for Death." Although it is difficult to determine how much its problematic aspect contributes to this fascination, it warrants such attention. According to some scholars, the poem depicts death accompanying the female speaker to an absolute paradise. Others think that death appears as a liar, or even a rapist, who drags the victim away to be destroyed. Others believe the poetry leaves the issue of her final

destination unresolved. This poem acquires initial intensity by having its protagonist speak from beyond death, like "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died." However, in this case, the action has already begun to die effectively, and its physical qualities are merely hinted at.

Because I could not stop for death –
He kindly stopped for me –
The carriage held but just Ourselves –
And Immortality.

The opening stanza offers a positive perspective on a depressing situation. Death is gracious. He arrives in a car that suggests awe or courtship, and he carries eternity or at least its promise. The word "stop" can refer to stopping by someone or ceasing one's regular activities. The irony of death's benevolence in this pun suggests his cruel intention to claim the woman despite her involvement with life. He comes across as a potential suitor since she is alone—or almost alone—with death.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility –

Death never has to move quickly in the second stanza because he always has enough power and time. The speaker now acknowledges that she has neglected both her work and her leisure; She has given up her life claims and appears pleased with her civility in exchange for death—a civility appropriate for a suitor but an ironic quality of a force that does not require rudeness.

We passed the school, where Children strove
At Recess – in the Ring –
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –
We passed the Setting Sun –

The sense of motion and the gap between the living and the dead are conveyed in the third stanza. Children carry on with the conflicts and games of life, which the deceased woman no longer cares about. Her state also has nothing to do with the vitality of nature, which she sees in the sun and grain; It creates a terrifying contrast.

Or rather – He passed Us –
The Dews drew quivering and Chill –
For only Gossamer, my Gown –
My Tippet – only Tulle –

However, in the fourth stanza, she becomes troubled by what appears to be a physical threat and her separation from nature. She realizes that the

sun is passing them rather than them, implying that time is leaving her behind and that she has lost the ability to move independently. Her dress and scarf are made of soft materials, and she is assaulted by the evening's wet chill, which symbolizes the coldness of death. Some critics maintain that she is destined for a celestial marriage and is dressed in the white robes of Christ's bride.

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground –
The Roof was scarcely visible –
The Cornice – in the Ground –

The body is placed in the grave in the fifth stanza, which is depicted as a swelling in the ground and suggests it will sink. Its flat roof and low roof supports add to the feeling of dissolution and may represent how quickly the deceased is forgotten.

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity –

The conclusion of the stanza suggests that the carriage with the driver and guest is continuing its journey. The soul is moving on without the body if it has been centuries since it was deposited. Because she experienced the shock of death on that first day, it felt longer than the subsequent centuries. Even at that point, she was aware that the destination was eternity; however, the poem does not specify whether eternity comprises anything other than the void into which her senses are dissolving.

Emily Dickinson may intend paradise to be the woman's destination, but the conclusion withholds a description of what immortality may be like. The presence of immortality in the carriage may be part of a mocking game or indicate some real promise. Since interpreting some details is problematic, readers must decide on the poem's dominant tone.

17.4 THEMES

Death

The experience of the physical process of dying is usually not pleasant in Dickinson's lyrics. However, the spiritual dimension that opens up through death, as a rule, is a joyous experience worth striving for. A masterly example of her ambiguous attitude towards the experience of death is in this poem, which at first glance seems to display a nice picture of death and accentuates the naturalness and gracefulness of the speaker's procession to the grave. In the poem, Dickinson dramatizes the role of

death as a kind and attentive lover who takes her out for a carriage ride, with immortality as a chaperon that sanctifies the relationship between death and his lady. The lover-death-image is an old one. The one presented in this poem relates to the tradition of 19th-century courtly love. Death comes as a well-mannered gentleman, apparently motivated by honourable intentions, observing all the customary civilities, concerned only with carrying the lady to her bridal rooms in heaven.

Melancholy and Nostalgia

At the beginning of the poem, death does not seem to act against the lady's will, but now he is not the gallant lover anymore but turns into a seducer trying to deceive her by making promises he will not keep. Immortality initially had the function of a chaperon to satisfy social conventions, but now he changes into death's accomplice and procurer. So, an ambivalent attitude on the part of the speaker arises from these shifts: "She is saying 'kindly', 'slowly drove' and 'Civility' in retrospect through clenched teeth." The highly ambiguous character of this poem suggests that in the face of death, Dickinson is persistently torn between fascination and fear. Because of her uncertainty, there is no coherent concept in the visions of her death, but rather a multitude of realizations that are hard to account for. The poem shares the impressionist sequence of images taken from the sphere of everyday life and the line. In the poem, the speaker who has already died is looking back at her death as if in an afterthought, although the intervals of time differ considerably.

Chivalry

The poem deals with a similar moment in which a woman is severed from her chosen tasks and carried off by an anonymous gentleman called 'Death'. Once again, the fair theme of love is associated with a thought so mean. However, this poem explicitly states that the advent of the gentleman caller is nothing short of death for the woman. While this poem is usually read as a poem about death, revealing Dickinson's playfully macabre vision of death as a gentleman caller, it is a poem that identifies the gentleman caller as death; for him, a woman is expected to put away both her labour and her leisure.

Courting is a male prerogative; she must wait to be called upon, but a quick and total surrender is expected once chosen. She must give up her work and leisure for His Civility. He has all the privileges of authority; he nominates the time of execution but is regarded as 'kindly' and civil. That the death coach contains the new couple - 'And Immortality' - suggests something of the enormous duration of the marriage journey. However, it

also suggests that male authority extends into eternity; earthly life and the afterlife are in his hands; indeed, that hypothesis underpins his authority here.

17.5 KEY WORDS

Afterlife	life after death
Ambiguous	open to more than one interpretation; not having one obvious meaning
Articulation	the formation of clear and distinct sounds in speech
Benevolence	the quality of being well meaning; kindness
Ceres	In Greek mythology, Ceres became the mother of Persephone through her brother Zeus.
Chivalry	the medieval knightly system with its religious, moral, and social code
Hades	In Greek mythology, Hades kidnaps Persephone.
Iconographic	the visual images and symbols used in a work of art
Immortality	the ability to live forever; eternal life
Melancholy	a feeling of pensive sadness, typically with no obvious cause
Nostalgia	a sentimental longing or wistful affection for a period in the past
Persephone	In Greek mythology, Persephone, also called Kore or Kora, is the daughter of Zeus and Demeter (Ceres).
Spatial	relating to or occupying space
Victorian	a person who lived during the Victorian period

17.6 LET US SUM UP

In conclusion, Emily Dickinson's 1863 poem "Because I could not stop death" was intriguing. This poem depicts a slow, upbeat journey through life before abruptly taking a dark turn and staring death in the face. Alliteration and personification are two types of figurative language used in this poem. There are also numerous themes in this poem.

17.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Choose the correct option:

- 1) What is the 'Death' or 'He' personified to?
 - a) Her husband
 - b) Her life
 - c) A gentleman who drives a carriage
 - d) God
- 2) What does the word 'immortality' mean?
 - a) Motor
 - b) Death
 - c) Sleep forever
 - d) Live forever

- 3) What is the 'House' referred to in the fourth stanza?
 a) A cellar
 The grave
 b) The narrator's home
 c) The narrator's home
 d) A church
- 4) 'And I had put away / My labor and my leisure too' - What is meant by these lines?
 a) The narrator is tired
 b) The narrator has finished her day at work
 c) The narrator will never again work or participate in any other activity
 d) The narrator is only being polite to Death
- 5) Which words could be used to describe Death in this poem?
 a) Hasty, rough, terrifying
 b) Civil, polite, gentlemanly
 c) Loud, friendly, pleasant
 d) Inconspicuous and weak

❖ **Answer in Brief:**

- 1) Why is death called a civil suitor?
- 2) What does the speaker do in return to his civility?
- 3) Describe the scenes witnessed by the poet as the carriage progressed through its last ride.
- 4) How does the poet give the theme of death an erotic touch?
- 5) Where does the carriage stop?

Write a detailed note on the following questions:

- 1) Where does the poet think of her new house as her grave?
- 2) Explain how the poem ends in ambiguity?

Answers:

- 1) – A 2) – D 3) – C 4) – C 5) – B

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- Christensen, Lena. *Editing Emily Dickinson: The Production of an Author (Studies in Major Literary Authors)*. Routledge, 2007.
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યુનિવર્સિટી ગીત

સ્વાધ્યાય: પરમં તપ:

સ્વાધ્યાય: પરમં તપ:

સ્વાધ્યાય: પરમં તપ:

શિક્ષણ, સંસ્કૃતિ, સદ્ભાવ, દિવ્યબોધનું ધામ
ડૉ. બાબાસાહેબ આંબેડકર ઓપન યુનિવર્સિટી નામ;
સૌને સૌની પાંખ મળે, ને સૌને સૌનું આભ,
દશે દિશામાં સ્મિત વહે હો દશે દિશે શુભ-લાભ.

અભણ રહી અજ્ઞાનના શાને, અંધકારને પીવો ?
કહે બુદ્ધ આંબેડકર કહે, તું થા તારો દીવો;
શારદીય અજવાળા પહોંચ્યાં ગુર્જર ગામે ગામ
ધ્રુવ તારકની જેમ ઝળહળે એકલવ્યની શાન.

સરસ્વતીના મયૂર તમારે ફળિયે આવી ગહેકે
અંધકારને હડસેલીને ઉજાસના ફૂલ મહેંકે;
બંધન નહીં કો સ્થાન સમયના જવું ન ઘરથી દૂર
ઘર આવી મા હરે શારદા દૈન્ય તિમિરના પૂર.

સંસ્કારોની સુગંધ મહેંકે, મન મંદિરને ધામે
સુખની ટપાલ પહોંચે સૌને પોતાને સરનામે;
સમાજ કેરે દરિયે હાંકી શિક્ષણ કેરું વહાણ,
આવો કરીયે આપણ સૌ
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ભવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ

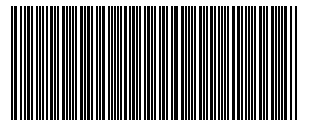
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