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FACULTY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

M.A. (ENGLISH)

PART – I

ENGLISH POETRY

(E-101)

INTRODUCTION

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Wish you all the best!

Prof. Neelima Mehta

Head. Faculty of Distance education

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CHAPTER - I

HOW TO STUDY A POET

First steps

The problem began when I had to write an essay, as I did not really know what to say about poetry. My usual approach was to tell the story of a poem and then say what I thought it meant, but such an approach did strike me as clumsy. I genuinely liked poetry, but did not have a method adequate to expressing my enjoyment of it.

Seeing what a poem is about

What is the poem doing or saying? What we need is a way of confidently getting hold of this and of moving decisively beyond that first feeling of confusion. Fortunately, it is easy to grasp a poem as a whole in this way. The thing to do is to look for a contrast or opposition in the poem, a contrast which is at the heart of and which informs the whole poem.

The central opposition at heart of just about any poem is a tension between some idea of security and happiness, on the one hand, and things that are worrying, on the other. The poet confronts what can appear a baffling or frightening or depressing world and searches for something positive, something to celebrate, something since of security. If you can spot a tension, between order and disorder, or between happiness and unhappiness, or between something attractive and something unattractive, then you will be well on the way towards understanding the poem.

Building a response

The secret of interpretation lies in searching for a central opposition. Once you have spotted this, the poem as a whole should start to make sense quickly. In every poem there will be impression of simplicity and lack of simplicity in the form of the verse, and it will always be the case that simple, straightforward lines will seem positive whereas complicated sentences will suggest the disorder of experience.

That opposition will, however, have to resolve itself or be reconsidered before the end of the poem. This is the fundamental aspect of the structure of poetry. A theme is set up, which is built on opposition, but for the poem to end it will need to have progressed somewhere, and this can only be done by some alteration of or fresh way of looking at the original tension. The obvious point is that these 'light' and 'dark' images have helped poet bring his theme to life, the original opposition we noted being reflected in the use of opposing images.

Getting the measure of a poet

Thematically most poems have a lot in common, but the way in which every poet uses language to develop his theme makes every poem unique. Everything should come from

the poetry itself, so even if you are writing about the poet's ideas you should attempt to show how his ideas can be established from the evidence of specific poems. And not the poet's life. If you rush to produce a general account of what the author's poems are about, and then your answer will be poor. If, however, you work from short extracts, building a sense of what the poet is like, then your answer will do justice to both the theme and the texture of the verse. You will find yourself building a convincing case, solidly based on evidence.

CHAPTER - II

THE INTERPRETATION OF POETRY

Look for a central opposition in the poem

Is it legitimate to start making sense of a poem in this manner? It is a ruthless methodical way. The appreciation of the way in which poet brings this theme to life must start with a clear grasp of the theme. You need to recognize very quickly how a poet deals with common problems in life so that you have a foundation for discussing fully his original treatment of familiar issues. And familiar issues here seem to be, on the basis of evidence. Once you have identified the theme in a poem, the next step is to start looking at how the poet presents and develops his central theme/opposition. Begin by looking at the details of the poem, trying to see how the poet brings his theme to life. It is always wise to pick a few lines for analysis rather than just summarizing the general drift of one or more stanzas. The most common mistake is to pick out words or phrases which are very nice. You must always make sure that you explain what it contributes to and how. And, as your sense of the poem develops, what you will need to look at next is how the poem does actually develop. You need to look for signs of progress in the poem- that is, for evidence of how the poet is developing or complicating his theme. Look at another section of the poem, trying to see how the poem is progressing.

As the poem continues, a more and more complex picture will develop. In order to track the poem's development, it is a good idea to select a passage about two-thirds of the way through the work for discussion. The simplest way of coming to terms with any passage is to ask yourself whether the impression created is attractive or unattractive. What we can see here is an interesting way in which poet is maintaining and exploring the tension at the heart of the poem. It helps us to know that the kind of way in which the tension is being handled here is a common feature in a great many poems. Many poems set up an opposition between the way things are and a vision of how they might be, and then establish a wavering balance between the two. We are attracted by the vision such poems offer of a world characterized by happiness and order, yet the strength in such poems is that they simultaneously manage to acknowledge the pain of reality.

Look at how the poem concludes

The poem has set up an opposition, and needs to provide some final reflection on it at the end. Poet does not; however needs to resolve a dilemma he has explored in his poem. This should become clear in the closing word of 'Ode to a Nightingale'. The poem ends in confusion. The vision of a better world has been so strong that Keats is tempted to think that it might really exist. But the use of the two questions at the end suggests his uncertainty. We come back from a world of 'ease' to a mind which is obviously ill at ease. Sum up your sense of the poem as a whole, and your sense of the writer so far

- i. He deals with.....

- ii. What is so attractive about his poetry is.....
 - iii. The way in which his verse intermingles with.....
 - iv. This makes for an interesting case of..... in his poem, so that we are presented with.....
 - v. No doubt there is more that could be added, and one may produce a set of conclusions.
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CHAPTER - III

ESSAY -WRITING

Introduction

Our first rule-rely on a method rather than trusting to inspiration. The object of essay can be summed up in the following formula: in a critical essay you are trying to build a clear argument from the evidence of the text. It is essential to keep on referring to the text. Unsubstantiated assertions are of no value. Each paragraph must advance the argument in an essay by a substantial step.

If a paragraph goes on for too long it means that you are rambling. If you write in very short paragraphs what you have to say will not only appear bitty but also be bitty.

Exam questions on poetry are often rather vague, particularly when compared to the questions that are set on novels and plays. Questions on poetry are generally far less specific. Present your assessment of that writer. Produce your coherent and well-argued view of the poet.

First Paragraph

First paragraph is to introduce the problem or issue that is going to be examined. You do not have to provide an answer yet. Merely introduce the problem in a strait forward manner. Start with a superficial statement impression of the poet's work but then state that the rest of essay will look more closely at the true nature of his work. Steer into the subject in a gentle way; all the complications can be introduced as your essay develops.

Second paragraph

In the second begin to build your view from the evidence of the text. If you quote you must analysis what you quote. Text analysis - conclusion sequence is a way of thinking.

Third paragraph

What your third paragraph will essentially be dealing with is what more can be said about the poet, a fuller and more complex picture of the writer will develop. The third paragraph of essay, therefore, should repeat the pattern of the second paragraph; an introduction sentence, a short quotation, discussion of quotation, and then a conclusion.

This method guarantees that you work from the evidence and also guarantees that you build an argument. As essential thing to tell yourself, is that you can prove a lot from a little.

Fourth and Fifth Paragraph

A fourth and fifth paragraph, the pattern remains the same, but your overall case advance. Approach might seem mechanical but it can help you write essay in which you build

up a very complex sense of a writer. This is because of exploratory method; you start a paragraph with a quotation, but at the start of paragraph you don't really know what conclusion you are going to draw. It is vital that you always sum up where you have got to at the end of a paragraph; so that you know that your next paragraph will have to advance upon the case you have established so far.

It is good idea to try something different in the second last. One may achieve redirection. This change is not essential. An essay that steadily builds a coherent view of a writer is a good essay.

At the end of the essay you need to conclude. You find the word float at the end as you confidently sum up your feelings about the writer and the question.

CHAPTER - IV

JOHN MILTON

Paradise Lost, Book IX

An approach to *Paradise Lost* can be built upon the principles I have described so far. *Paradise Lost* tells the story of Satan being thrown out of heaven, his descent into hell, his tempting of Eve, and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. All is not lost, however, for Christ can deliver people from their fallen state. What is the purpose and point of such a story? The purpose is simple: we live a fallen world where sin and death exist. The poem sets out to illustrate how there is a divine order in life. To express this in even briefer terms: *Paradise Lost* is a poem about God's love in a world where sin and death exist. If the intention of the poem is as clear as this, however, you might wonder why Milton has written such an immensely long poem. The answer is that the poem has a clear-cut purpose, but it is also a complex purpose, for Milton desires to do justice to the immense complexity of experience. The poem is an epic, which is a poem that sets out to confront and make sense of the whole of experience. It therefore has to be immense in its range, so the poet's ambition is huge; for he attempts to present a coherent view of life in which he seeks to explain an order, in this case a divine order, in the whole of experience. The manner, in which Milton fulfils these ambitious goals, if he does indeed fulfill them, should start to become clear as we look at the opening of the poem.

Look for a central opposition in the poem

Then take a very quick look at a passage from book IX. The poem opens as follows:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit

Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste.....

This opening sentence of the poem is sixteen lines long, and it is obviously an immensely complicated sentence. It is just this kind of complication of structure, and the difficulty of grasping all that is being said, that can confuse or alienate the reader encountering *Paradise Lost* for the first time. First, though we need to look for an opposition in the hope that this will enable us to identify the central theme in the poem. It is, in fact, not all that difficult, as Milton does state his theme fairly directly here. Milton is going to look at the problems of disobedience, sin and death. And he immediately provides us with the solution: the 'greater Man' he refers to is Christ, and it is Christ who will restore us to the kingdom of heaven. We might worry about death but we can feel secure in the knowledge of God's love. A few lines later Milton tells us that he hopes to justify the ways of God to man : the same not is struck again, therefore, that he will examine and explain God's divine plan for the world.

Initially it appears to be a baffling and taxing sentence. The point to grasp is that the complication of structure is part of the meaning of the poem: the sentence goes on and on, bewildering us with a sense of the complexity of the world. It is only by the most astonishing

effort that Milton manages to impose overall control on the diverse materials of this sentence. And in that we have, in miniature, a sense of what the poem as a whole is going to be like and what it is going to be about. On the one hand, the poem will consistently expand and become more complicated, giving an immense vision of the complex nature of experience. Yet we shall always be conscious of the poet managing to exert his authority and control. Milton does not give himself an easy ride; however the poem maintains a sense of the world's disorder, which is complex and confusing enough to challenge Milton's desire to find and impose coherence. The poem might set out to justify the ways of God to men, but the approach Milton adopts involves presenting such a complex sense of experience that any greater truth he reveals will have to encompass and contain all those complex facts about life and the history of mankind.

Begin to look at the details of the poem, trying to see how the poet brings his theme to life

The principal events in Book I of *Paradise Lost* are Satan's rallying of the fallen angels after their defeat by God and his declaration that he will fight against God in every possible way. As Satan is so central in Book I, it obviously makes sense to look at him here.

Let us look, then, at these adjective-and-noun phrases. On one level they clearly reflect disorder: they refer to the serpent, war, ruin and perdition. It would be hard to envisage a more extreme list of problems and woes. There is, however, a force pulling in the opposite direction: the regularity with which

Milton supplies an appropriate descriptive adjective for the noun suggests a writer who is imposing some kind of regularity and control upon his materials. This becomes even more obvious if we think about the predictability adjective-noun combination every couple of lines is to suggest an author who has got the measure of even the most extreme problems. It is as if the truth is encapsulated in received phrases and that Milton can exert order and control over even the most extreme concepts.

In essence, then, we have a picture of Satan who is the embodiment of evil and disorder, but also a sense of a writer who has got the measure of this evil force. And there are other ways in which Milton reveals his control. There is, for example, a confident and comprehensive listing of Satan's faults, all of which centre in the one area of sins of immoderation and lack of discipline: we are told that he is guilty, envy, revenge, pride ambition.

It is, however, a fairly precarious control, for the disorderly forces are so strong. In addition, there is also a sense of a very large universe that Milton is attempting to make sense.

Again, however, we might return to the question of whether there is a real tension in the poem, for God and Milton seem so firmly in control. Yet there is always. I feel, a sense of Satan as so powerful that he seems almost too big and powerful to control. We might be aware of Milton's control. But we are also aware of Satan's force. These senses of his force and indeed of other aspects of his personality become more apparent as we look at a passage.

My impression is that a fairly favourable image of Satan comes across from these lines. We can almost sympathise with rebels who have been flung into a 'dreary plain, forlorn and wild', words as he refuses to accept defeat. He is, of course, the incarnation of evil and entirely motivated by hate, and in a way his words graphically reveal such shortcomings, but none the less this is someone who leads, speaks to and inspires his forces in terms we can understand.

Can this, however, be a correct view of the poem? Are we really meant to sympathise with Satan? I think we are meant to see some admirable qualities in him, for if the poem is going to work we must be allowed to feel the strength of the force that works against God's order. The poem comes to life because we feel that there is a real tension. The presentation of Satan makes us feel that the force of Satan, including the tempting power of his speech, can barely be contained. A question that sometimes comes up in relation to *Paradise Lost* is whether Satan is the sense that his refusal to submit to God's authority is courageous, even heroic and that he is therefore a comprehensible character- unlike God, who must appear as an abstract and inhuman force. To suggest that Satan is the hero, however is to impose too neat and reductive a reading on the poem. Rather than pursue the point at this stage, though, it should prove more productive if we discuss it in the light of further extract.

Look at another section of the poem, trying to see how the poem is progressing

It is quite possible that question about Satan's heroic qualities might be sent in exam. You could agree, and argue that he is courageous, or you could condemn him as utterly evil. Or, and this is the approach that I am taking, you could argue that the poem makes him attractive while at the same time condemning him. The great danger in answering such a question, however, is trying to prove your case merely from an account of the events and actions in the story. For an answer really to work- and this would apply to any question about *Paradise Lost* -you must prove your case from the actual evidence of the words of the poem. This is not too difficult, as all you need to do is select a short extract for close attention. Any passage in which Satan appears or speaks should provide you with plenty to say. For example, here are some more lines where he addresses his troops:

Here at least

We shall free; the Almighty hath not built

Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:

Here we may reign secure, and in my choice

To reign is worth ambition though in hell:

This is another inspiring speech from Satan. He talks of freedom, and obviously prefers freedom in hell to servitude in heaven. Yet his words can also be viewed from another perspective: he begins by talking about how, 'We shall be free', but within these few lines has shifted from this general concern for all his followers and is merely concerned with his own position as the leader who will 'reign in hell'. The same double-sided quality is also apparent

in the very sound and texture of his words; his words can appear elevated, dignified and heroic, but they can also be judged as empty bombast. At times the manner of his speech almost resembles a salesman's clever play with words.

Milton cannot present a story in which he just provides a simple sense of God's providential order at work in existence. We have to be allowed to feel all the snarled complexity of life. And this should help us in understanding the tremendous complexity of the poem, such things as the range of reference and the complex structure of sentences. All these features help enact a sense of a diverse and complex world that is difficult to comprehend, let alone control. Yet we should also always be able to feel a precarious, elaborate control in the sentences and verse paragraphs of the poem as Milton, by a kind of superhuman effort, just manages to impose control. In reading the poem, you will not be going wrong if you feel that everything is so big that it is just about running out of control, but do also try to see how Milton does manage to hold everything together. Potentially everything is chaotic, yet there is simultaneously a strong sense of order always in evidence.

Look at how poem concludes

Milton departs from the everyday construction, and by doing so conveys a sense of something special that surpasses everyday concerns. The lines convey to us an impression of throbbing, restless energy, of a great force that is going to rise up against God and provoke tremendous unrest.

Yet look at the same time at all the rather sly ways in which Milton makes these rebels seem, petty and insignificant. He compares them to bees swarming, and as they make themselves small so that they can all be contained in one place. Milton seizes the opportunity to refer to them as dwarfs and pygmies. The effect, as always, is that we feel the scale of the problem that is being confronted in the poem yet also feel that Milton has a larger sense of a divine order in which all challenges to God's authority just become a part of God's larger plan for the world.

Sum up your sense of the poem as a whole, and your sense of the writer so far

What we have seen in Book I of *Paradise Lost* is how, as in all the greatest poetry, there is a wavering tension between a sense of the complexity and disorder of the world and a sense of order that the poet explores, seeks or perceives in experience. The disorderly fact is that we live in a fallen world; the answer, the source of order, is God.

Yet the mention of God, and the ease with which, in that last extract we considered, the rebels are scorned, might well make us wonder again whether there is really an uneasy tension in the poem. It could be argued that Milton makes Satan just appealing enough to make the poem interesting, but that he is very firmly in control all the time, confidently and consistently justifying the ways of God to men. The thing is, however, that when we read the poem I think we do feel the strength of the forces that are pulling in the opposite direction, and do feel that Milton is having to go to extreme lengths, just as his sentences often became extremely long, to hold everything together.

In addition, at perhaps the most crucial point in the whole poem it could be argued that God's order is questioned and possibly rejected. In Book IX, Eve is tempted by the serpent and tastes the forbidden fruit. She then tells Adam.

I think this is a wonderful passage, as we see Adam's consternation, his turning in on himself and examination of his feelings, and his decision that his commitment to Eve must stand before even his commitment to God. In a poem that is so often cosmic in its range of reference and so often convoluted in its sentences, there is something strikingly beautiful in the plain simplicity of a line such as 'How can I live without there.....' It is, then, an appealing passage, but I think also a very important one, for it does seem that personal commitment here surpasses even religious commitment. It could even be argued that, in a poem that sets out to justify the ways of God to men, this particular moment in the poem justifies the ways of men to God as it shows that, for Adam, human love is more important than divine love. That is not the last word that could be offered on this extract; it could be argued, for example, that this is again all part of a larger order in the poem. But the point I am concerned to make here is the point I have been making all along, that there is a tension at the heart of poetry and very often it is the case that this tension will not be resolved, what we shall come away from a poem with a sense of the complexity of experience set against the poet's desire to establish a sense of order in experience.

There is much more that could be said about *Paradise Lost*, as of course, there is much more that could be said about all the poets, that I have discussed in this book. In particular, when you study a poet in detail you will want to consider his or her works in context, you will want to see how they relate to and reflect the period in which they were written. And you will need to go into a poet's works in far greater detail than I have managed to do in this book. None the less, you should find that the kind of approach I have illustrated should enable you to make a solid start on the work of any writer. There is, however one further issue that I still need to consider. English is a subject where you have to write essays. Your understanding of a writer will always be wasted if you are incapable of writing a good essay, and it is therefore to the topic of essay writing that I turn in the final chapter.

CHAPTER - V

JOHN DONNE:

- (i) The Sun Rising (ii) Canonisation

The obvious problem with Donne is that his poems are hard to read and hard to understand. In order to cope with his verse we have to choose between two approaches, of which the one is shortsighted and the other requires us to think for ourselves. The mistaken approach would be to find out, say from a critical book, with Donne's poetry is 'all about' and then look at his poems in the light of these ideas. The much more rewarding approach is to build a view of Donne from the evidence of a few of his poems and that, obviously, is the method I shall illustrate here. I start with '**The Sun Rising**' do not worry if you cannot understand it.

Look for a central opposition in the poem

This poem starts abruptly, and as soon as it starts there is a rapid sequence of images which accumulate so quickly that it is difficult to take them all in. It is difficult to spot a theme because these surface details are so bewildering. What we must do, however is look behind the surface in order to establish a sense of the basic theme of the poem. We can concentrate on the first few lines.

Busy old fool, unruly Sun, Why dost thou thus,

Through windows, and through curtain call on us?

Must to thy motions lover's seasons run?

The only thing I can get hold of here is the mention of love, but this should prove enough to get started. Love is repeatedly presented in poetry as something positive in a bewildering or dark world; it seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that love is going to be put forward in this poem as something, important in a disordered world. And, indeed, the sun is called 'unruly' in the first line, as if Donne wants to get away from the unruliness of the life and retreat into a secure existence with his love. It is a variation on a familiar theme of love versus the world.

Begin to look at the details of the poem, trying to see how the poet

It is reassuring to know that familiar themes are at the heart of even the most complex poems. What we are really interested in, however is what Donne does with this theme. The best way to start discovering this is to select a few lines for close attention. In this instance, I have picked some more lines from the first stanza, as Donne continues to address the sun:

Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide

Late school-boys, and sour prentices,

Go tell Court- huntsmen, that the King will ride

Call country ants to harvest offices;

Love, all alike no season knows, nor clime

Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Donne continues to praise love and to scorn the sun. This is apparent in the disrespectful way that he address the sun as a 'Saucy pedantic wretch' and in the way he elevates love as knowing 'no season..... nor clime.....' as if it is above all the instability of the world. What however do the other lines contribute to the poem? One point is that the images broaden the issue. Donne writes about schoolboys and apprentices and then about the court; such concrete images make us see how the sun organizes every area of life. Yet Donne elevates the private order of love above the wider order of the world as symbolized by the sun. When he criticizes the sun he uses words such as 'fool', 'unruly' and 'saucy' all of which suggest disorderly behaviour. The truth is, however that the sun orders and organizes the whole of existence. What we can see in all of this is a playful streak in Donne's poetry. Many poets might set love against the gloomy waste of existence, but Donne takes an irreverent delight in setting the power of love against the power of the sun.

Look at another section of the poem, trying to see how the poem is progressing

So far I have spotted something about Donne's poetry- its playful quality-but do not know what to make of that insight. The best way to make progress is simply to return to the poem, hoping that the evidence of the text will show me where to go next. The opening of the second stanza should prove as revealing as any other section of the poem:

They beams, so reverend, and strong

Why should thou think?

I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,

But that I would not lose her sight so long.....

Thematically, these lines present no problem; they continue and develop the idea of the power of love versus the power of the sun. What is perplexing however is the ingenuity and playfulness apparent, for example, in the way that the idea of an eclipse of the sun is turned inside out so that Donne's eye eclipses the sun by winking. He is reluctant to wink, though, for he does not want to lose sight of his love for even so short a space of time. can see that Donne delights in playing with ideas, but need to determine the technique employed in the poem affects the meaning of the poem.

We might make some progress if we turn again to ideas about poetry that I have already presented in this book. I have written about how poets search for order in disordered universe; they do this by looking for **connections** and **establishing** links between images. At times they can create a sense of harmony and stillness in existence. Donne's approach,

however where he takes images, turns them inside out, and plays with them, seems to pull in the opposite direction, creating a sense of a mobile and confusing world. The sun might traditionally suggest warmth, security and order, but when Donne's mind gets to work on the subjects the result is a restless, and often rather unnerving, view of things. We can, I think, relate this to some of the characteristics that are always in evidence in Donne's poetry; there are rapid leaps in imagery, twisting of ideas, and the turning inside out of all kinds of concepts. All of this suggests a giddy world which it is difficult to get the measure of. In 'The Sun Rising' we know that the sun represents the natural order, but almost immediately we are aware of a kind of chaos in existence. Donne's tone, where we never quite know whether he is being serious or not, contributes to the sense of uncertainty in the poem. Nothing seems secure, reliable or trustworthy; the poet is talking to us, but frequently we do not know whether he is serious or tongue-in-cheek. All of this effectively contributes to the sense of the bewildering nature of existence.

Look at how the poem concludes

The techniques Donne employs are very sophisticated: he has to be able to dash from idea to idea, to play with images, and speak in a rather ambiguous voice. In a way, the effect of these techniques is very simple, for they all work to create sense of a rather bewildering world, where any sense of order is going to be difficult to pin down. What can be hung on to, however, is love, either divine love or as in this poem human love. It comes as no great surprise, therefore, that love is triumphant at the end of 'The Sun Rising' as Donne again addresses the Sun:

and since thy duties be

To warm the world, that's done in warming us.

Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;

This bed try centre is, these walls thy sphere.

At the beginning love was in competition with the sun, and throughout the poem there has been a tension between the two, but as **often happens at the end of a poem** the original opposition is resolved or **seen in a new light**; what happens here is that the sun is made part of the lover's scheme of things, a scheme of things which is summed up in the last line when their bed becomes the centre of an ordered universe.

At one level, then, there are no problems here; we have identified a tension and seen how his poem resolves the tension, by making love triumphant. We might however, be wary of the tone and method of this resolution. It is suspiciously clever and ingenious; it is as if the poem has been a cryptic puzzle and Donne has finally worked out a contrived answer. Again, then, any problems we feel about Donne are really due to this playfulness and cleverness that always characterizes his verse. Indeed, some readers, on the basis of the evidence so far, might, dismiss Donne as an intellectual poet who is deficient in the areas of honesty and feeling. To my mind, however, what is in evidence again here is Donne's sense of the complex and bewildering nature of existence; the self-conscious artifice of the closing lines of

the poem serves to draw attention to the questionable nature of any ordered certainties that mankind might try to create in a bewildering world. At the end of the poem, therefore, we are left not so much with a sense of love as triumphant, as with a sense of the confusing, complex nature of experience.

Sum up your sense of the poem as a whole, and your sense of the writer so far

Perhaps the simplest way of expressing the points I have made so far is to talk about the very close correspondence between form and content. A Donne poem is difficult and bewildering and even exhausting to read. We should, therefore, be wary of tidying it up and reducing it to a next meaning. We are falsifying a poem if we place too much emphasis on its positive notion of love. The words which in fact best describe the content of the poem are those that we might use to talk about its form; that the poem is intent on offering a sense of a difficult, bewildering and exhausting world. And all Donne's techniques are employed to project this sense of experience.

These comments on 'The Sun Rising' might well point to the heart of the problem, not only with Donne but also with all difficult poets. Where we are likely to go wrong with Donne is if we try to tidy him up too much, if for example, we say that he praises the importance of love in a disordered world. This reading seems wrong because it does not pay sufficient attention to the hectic complexity of the texture of his verse. What we need to do is look at, and appreciate, how he manages to create a sense of the immense complexity of existence. And probably what all the greatest poets have in common is an ability to convey a sense of life's complexity. They will employ techniques that differ from Donne's but the result will always be that we feel an infinite sense there must be some attempt to order and control, and Donne's mental gymnastic testify ably to the important impulse in mankind to try to confront and make some sense of a confusing.

This is again something that can be said about all the finest poetry; we feel that such poetry does justice to the complexity of experience, yet also reflects the need to create order and significance in a bewildering world. But too confident an order would strike us as trite or sentimental. There is something breathtaking about the finest poetry, where any control that emerges seems precarious, and where there is a constant sense of everything just about to collapse or fall apart. And this is part of the difficulty in writing about good poetry, which you have to be alert to how it is pulling in two directions at the same time, that it is acknowledging the disorder of experience but also playing with the possibilities of order. The most common fault in studying poetry is making too much of positive 'message' in a writer, and not acknowledging the trembling, wavering instability of very good writing. In the case of Donne, it is necessary to be alert to the complicating techniques he employs, and to understand how such techniques suggest not only a giddy world but also a desire to confront that giddy world.

In turning to a Donne poem, what we need to pursue is this instability in his verse: we need to pursue the way in which he writes so that we can see how his poems can suggest both the diversity of experience and a need for pattern. Other great poets will also reveal a similar tension in their work, but every great poet will have his own way of bringing this to life.

Donne's own way should become further evident in our example, "The Canonisation"

Look for a central opposition in the poem:

Love is again central. Love is presented as the important thing, and all the concerns of the world are dismissed. Donne does not care for ambition; he just wants to be left alone to devote himself to love.

Begin to look at the details of the poem, trying to see how the poet brings his theme to life:

Donne, as always, starts in full flow, and then bombards us with images; this approach quickly establishes a sense of the busy, giddy nature of the world. In the second stanza he develops the idea of an opposition between love and the world:

Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?

What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?

Why says my tears have overflowed his ground?

When did my colds a forward spring remove?

Donne's use of imagery, in particular the images of merchant's ships and land, starts to establish a fuller sense of a whole diverse world of commerce and activity. Yet there is an undercurrent of tension all the time, for in every line there is a reference to Donne the lover who wants to be left alone by this wider world. So far, however, the poem is not all that difficult, for there is a very controlled division between Donne and the world: the world goes its own way, and the lovers just want to be in love. The images have suggested the diversity of the world, but, so far, Donne has not really started to tie things up in knots or juggled with concepts.

Look at another section of the poem, trying to see how the poem is progressing:

These changes, however, as the third stanza begins; what signals this to us is simply the fact that the poem suddenly becomes much harder to understand.

Call us what you will, we're made such by love;

Call her one, me another fly,

We're Tapers too, and at our own cost die,

And we in us find the Eagle and the Dove.....

The source of the difficulty here is Donne's use of metaphors of flies and tapers to describe their love. In so far as I can understand it, Donne appears to be saying that he and his "love" are like two flies, but they are also two candles. Somehow they die when they fly into the candle-flame, but also survive. It seems to be a kind of reconciliation of opposites

within themselves, such as when they are aware of the extremes of the eagle and the dove within themselves. But, even if we cannot quite understand what Donne is saying, we can ask why he introduces such strange metaphors.

There is, in fact, a term for metaphors of this kind where a full consideration of Donne would have to look at how he fits into the context of seventeenth-century literature and thinking. But an exploration of his achievement as a writer is not going to have much point unless it starts with the kind of detailed work on a number of his poems that I have suggested here. And what I think will always emerge from close work on his texts in this sense of Donne as kind of juggler with words, only establishing a precarious hold on things that might fall apart at any moment.

CHAPTER - VI

ANDREW MARVELL

- (i) To His Coy Mistress (iv) Thoughts in a Garden

Andrew Marvell is a distinguished representative of metaphysical poetry. He is a poet of versatile sensibility. He followed his predecessors, English as well as classical. For his perception, he accepted the metaphysical blend of passion and conceit. For his craftsmanship, he shared the classical concern for elegance and urbanity. He produced a small volume of poetry by which he is now remembered.

To His Copy Mistress revives the tradition of love poetry coming from Ben Jonson and Donne. On a Drop of Dew is known for its rich and varied symbols. The poem on garden reveals his loving observation of nature. It demonstrates his power of evoking pleasures of the pastoral scene. Though small in output, Marvell's poetry shows the extraordinary range of his interest and achievement. Marvell's memorable poetry combines metaphysical wit with classical grace.

To His Copy Mistress is a love poem written in the particular tradition of Ben Jonson and Petrarch. But it employs metaphysical reasoning and wit. It combines the best of both traditions, as it were.

Petrarch, an Italian poet of the 14th century started a new convention of courtly poetry. In his love poems, the mistress is presented as beautiful and virtuous, but at the same time she is cold and unresponding. Poems of this literary convention plead with the mistress to put off her coyness and accept love while the lovers are still young. To describe this stock experience, poets used imagery which is extravagant as well as rhetorical. Poets of the first half of the 17th century followed the above tradition, but they also incidentally made fun of the Petrarchan extravagance. Such poems employ what is known as the *carpe diem* theme and the poem under discussion belongs to *carpe diem* tradition.

The poem is developed in three stages. The first section is in the manner of elaborating a hypothesis. The second section raises a logical objection to what is proposed in the first stanza. The last section gives an orthodox conclusion to what has been logically developed in the first two sections. The beginning of each section suggests a particular stage in the logical process of thinking. While the first section begins with the conditional 'it' the second section opens with a halting 'but' and the third section starting with 'therefore' points to a conclusion. Logical process is linguistically presented, and it is a rare instance of classical craftsmanship.

Within the frame-work of logical analysis, a number of hyperboles and images of emotional appeal are employed. The content or experience the poem seeks to convey is constructed in three stages, (i) If there is a vast span of time and space, the lover tells his mistress, he would praise her beauty and court her love until the conversion of the Jews, (ii) But, argues the lover, life is short and it does not permit such a leisurely approach. In the

eventuality of her death, her values like honour and virtue are meaningless (iii) Therefore, he exhorts his mistress to accept his love while there is yet youth and time. To make this abstract reasoning highly convincing, the poem employs witty exaggeration and playful conceits.

The poem begins in a playful, conversational tone. It looks as though the two lovers are engaged in a dialogue. It portrays the typical Petrarchan convention of compliment.

Had we but world enough, and Time,
This coyness Lady were no crime.
We could sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.

With the dexterous use of hyperboles, the lover speaks of ideal courtship. If they had enough time, he would be willing to court her till she eventually accepted his love. He would spend a hundred years to praise her eyes and forehead, two hundred to adore each breast, forehead two hundred to adore each breast, and thirty thousand to the rest. Introducing the language of arithmetic into love poetry, the lover observes that the lady deserved this pomp and attention. While she would like to pick up the rubies by the Ganges he would complain of his courtship by the Humber in England.

The leading image of this section is vegetable love. Such a love is possible only when the lovers are granted endless world and time.

My vegetable love should grow.
Vaster than empires, and more slow.

The geographical and botanical allusions in the above lines are meant to destroy our sense of time and place, and to prove thereby the timelessness of ideal love. But there is also a feeling of exasperation in the lover's mind suggested by the central image. Vegetable love, though natural or spontaneous, is somewhat undirected as well as unsupportive in its growth. It suggests a lack of intelligent direction in imagined courtship. It is an expression of unthinking, adolescent feeling. The image, though indirectly, serves as ironic comment on the proposal for their inconceivable courtship.

There is a sudden shift of thought in the second section. The lover is reminded of the brief human existence by the key image 'Time's winged chariot.' Time waits for no one, and it marches on relentlessly.

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near:
And yonder all before us lie

Deserts of vast eternity

From the exuberance of feeling depicted in the first section, the lover now turns his attention to harsh reality. He shudders to visualize the vast deserts of eternity. The above lines indicate an important growth of sensibility. There is a movement from adolescent hyperbole to mature discrimination. The lover urges his mistress to grow up in the face of actuality.

The last two lines of this section give a grim picture of the prospect of death. If the lady does not opt for human contact, the grave worm will claim her chastity. This is an example of controlled irony.

The grave is a fine and private place,

But none I think do there embrace.

Fine and private ironically match with her proud coyness. In a tone of frightening, sarcasm, the lover says the grave worm will ultimately taste and caress her body. The lover, though exasperated, still frightens and persuades his mistress. The ironic understatement of this section stands in contrast to the ironic overstatement of the first section.

In the last section, the lover once again dwells on the lady's beauty and youth. He wins her attention and succeeds in his effort. Giving up her coyness, she pours out her hidden passion. The lovers allow their fierce passion to run riot. The movement towards explosion is brought out in the last ten lines.

And, now, like amorous birds of prey,

Rather at once our time devour

Than languish in his slow-chapt power.

Let us roll all our strength and all

And tear our pleasures with rough strife

Through the iron gates of life

There is a compression of feelings and images, (i) Let us devour of prey (ii) Let us roll our strength and all our sweetness into one compounded ball, (iii) Let us strife through the iron gates of life. The images, suggesting the exuberance and swiftness of love, are too obvious to comment upon. They are images of sensuous appeal. The final couplet, using a kind of pun or paradox, sums up the whole situation and gives it a conventional conclusion. The poem is an example of how a great poet, choosing a conventional theme and following a particular literary tradition, can yet produce a poem of high intensity.

CHAPTER - VII

THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN

Thoughts in a Garden, as the title suggests traces the mental growth of Marvell. It stresses the joy of solitude and peace in a pastoral scene. In its choice of the subject matter, the poem anticipates an important aspect of a new movement in poetry, a movement that flourished in the 19th century. It points forward to the contemplation of nature which gained importance in the poetry of the Romantics. But in its treatment of the theme, the poem follows the tradition of Donne. It makes use of metaphysical wit and seriousness. We notice a distinct development of thought the nine stanzas of the poem.

The first two stanzas emphasize the inferior value of human effort compared to the greater satisfaction and repose that nature offers to man.

Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow,
Society is all but rude,
To this delicious solitude.

Forgetting the distractions of human endeavour, the speaker relaxes in the delicious solitude of the garden. He stresses the joys of solitude and peace, quite suitable for contemplation. The world of nature and the world of human beings is posited in contrast. Note the significance of 'rude' and 'delicious' Marvell does not present society and solitude as mutually exclusive alternatives. He finds solitude more enjoyable than the rude pleasures of society.

In terms of colour symbols, the poet expresses the same idea. The lovely green of the garden is more exciting than the red or white complexion of a lady. The garden is seductive in its appeal. Ardent lovers find the garden a congenial refuge. Nymphs and gods retreated into the garden for their amorous pursuits. Daphne turned into a tree when she was pursued by Apollo. Syrinx changed into a reed when pursued by the great god Pan. Note Marvell's witty use of myth. When all the passion of youth is spent, the natural retreat is the reposeful garden.

The fifth stanza employs visual images to describe the witty climax of delight. The poet would not succumb to the sensuous suggestions of love. The sensuous pleasures of the garden would not detract him from the contemplation of higher pleasure.

What wondrous life in this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head:
The luscious clusters of the vine

Upon my mouth do crush their wine

The nectarine and curious peach

Into my hands themselves do reach;

Stumbling on melons, as I pass,

Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass

References to ripe and tempting fruits, expressions such as luscious, ensnared, stumbling and fall indicate the kind of impact Nature made on the poet. However, the sensuous opulence will not be allowed to obscure his contemplative spirit. The mind has mystical capacity to withdraw from sensuous delights. It can transcend the senses to reach a richer state of joy

Yet it creates, transcending these,

For other worlds, and other seas,

Annihilating all that is made,

To a green thought in a green shade.

In these lines, mind is conceived as an unfathomable source of ideas. It can imagine a world of perfection, transcending the harsh realities of life. Lying in the cool shade of the garden, the poet is in a sort of reverie. His imagination annihilates the physical world and moves on to indulge in the greenness of its creative thought. This does not mean that the destruction of the sensuous leads to a senseless state of abstraction.

Passing from the mythological reference in the middle section of the poem, the poet is reminded of Biblical association of the garden. Before the creation of Eve, Adam was alone in the garden. His only pleasures were the smell and taste of flowers and fruits.

Such was that happy garden-state

While man there walked without a mate;

After a place so pure; and sweet!

But it was beyond a mortal's share

To wonder solitary there;

Two paradises it were in one

To live in paradise alone

The poet is reminded of the scene of Adam's fall. With the creation of Eve, Adam

lost the solitude so conducive for his contemplation. As a corollary, the garden too lost its peace and serenity. Rejecting the sensuous attractions of the garden of Eden, the poet withdraws into the garden is doubly attractive because there is no tempting Eve, and it promises a sinless state for man. Continuing his thought in the concluding stanza, the poet depicts the garden as an emblem of peace and serenity.

The poem, true to its title, offers a few postulates by way of implication. It seems to imply (i) that a life given to contemplation is nobler than a life of reckless activity; (ii) that solitude favourable to contemplation is preferable to society; (iii) that the repose in the beauty of nature gives greater satisfaction than the restlessness a human beauty evokes; and (iv) that the world created by the mind is more meaningful than the world perceived by the sense. Within this broad spectrum of thought, the poet evokes a certain association of ideas connected with the garden. The associations are mythological, Biblical, and Platonic. From aesthetic pleasure to intellectual enjoyment and finally to a state of spiritual bliss are the three important stages in Marvell's mental growth as depicted in the poem.

CHAPTER - VIII

ALEXANDER POPE

The Rape of the Lock

A poem called The Rape of the Lock, which tells the story of how a young man cuts off a lock of a young woman's hair at a social gathering. In this particular passage we see the young woman putting on her make-up before going out.

Look for a central opposition in the poem:

What is being described is a young woman putting on her make-up in front of the mirror, but the kind of language used suggests in front of the mirror, but the kind of language used suggests a religious ceremony. That might seem puzzling, except that we are almost certain to realize that Pope's tone is mocking; he is mocking social affectations and social failings. By describing something so trivial in such inflated terms, he draws attention to its triviality. The implicit sense of Pope that comes across, therefore, is of a man of superior good sense who can see the folly of others. This view of Pope is consistent with the view we constructed from our examination of his portrait of Sporus, but a difference on this occasion seems to be that Pope is amused rather than angry. The passage, however, is not just comic, and as usual it is the imagery that complicates the meaning. The use of religious imagery serves to mock the girl, but it also hints at a more serious theme by suggesting that self-worship, in this society, has replaced a true sense of religious values.

Begin to look at the details of the poem, trying to see how the poet brings his theme to life :

Can you see how alertness to Pope's imagery has already begun to point to deeper implications and a larger reach within this apparently trivial episode? A look at a few more lines from the extract at this stage could add to that sense of the poem. Having established that the theme is false and true values, your examination of the word used in a few lines of the poem could show how they work to create an impression of things running to excess in society. All you would need to report on is an inflated, exaggerated quality in the language. As against this, you could show how Pope's own couplets are controlled and disciplined at all times. It is, then a simple blend of things that you focus on in any passage from any poet; that is, on the ways in which the structure, the choice and combination of words, and the images, work to give substance to a straightforward opposition at the heart of the poem.

Look at another section of the poem, trying to see how the poem is progressing:

As you move from passage your sense of the poem might not be altering all that much, but a full appreciation of the poem will be steadily accumulating. Take these lines, for example:

This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And All Arabia breathes from yonder box.

The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white
Here files of pines extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux.

The passage is easy to talk if all the time you keep in mind that there is a close association between what you are noticing in the form of the passage and the meaning of the passage. To start with, for example, there is a kind of giddy jumble of references here: which reaches its climax in the line “Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux”. Bibles appear amidst all the ephemera of the dressing-table, but that sums up the problem, that people in this society have lost any sense of what is solid and central in existence. Every detail, every word and every line, makes an active contribution to the overall effect of the passage. You cannot, however, hope to follow up every word, so select those that interest you most, and try to relate them to your developing sense of the passage’s theme. For example, when Pope writes about the tortoise shells and the elephant tusks being made into two kinds of comb, the meaning that is consistent with the theme we have discovered is that there is something wrong with a society that transforms what is natural into social artifacts in this excessive kind of way. The image, therefore, confirms our sense of the poem’s theme, but also adds to our grasp of the meaning of the poem.

Look at how the poem concludes:

The closing lines of this extract are

Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face.....

We could again comment here on falseness, on how the lines draw attention to the gap between the projected image of the woman and the truth about her, but the point I want to take up is that these lines, like the description as a whole, are funny. They are so because any description of someone acting in an extreme or exaggerated way is funny, but the true power of the passage is that it is simultaneously serious and comic. Society has lost any sense of true values, but there is something absurd the whole notion of social folly.

Sum up your sense of the poem as a whole, and your sense of the writer so far: Over the years I have read a lot of examination answers on Pope’s poetry, and usually there has been one noticeable failing. Candidates can always see that Pope is for moderation and against excess, but having stated that, most students seem at a loss, and simply repeat the same point over and over again. What I hope has become evident in this discussion of Pope, however, is that even a small amount of attention to how he puts his poems together will enable you to write a full and interesting answer about him. The moment you report on the use and effect of an image, or the moment you look at how one of Pope’s couplets challenges disorder in society, then your answer will acquire substance and authority. And the final result

will be subtle and complex appreciation of Pope as a writer.

Remember, however, that you must always pull back to report on what you have managed to prove. If I do this myself now, I can add to the sense of Pope that I had put together at the end of discussing the Sporus passage. At that point I had gained a sense of what Pope stood for and what he was against, but a look at a second extract has, to my mind, made me realize rather more clearly how Pope is a comic satiric writer, laughing at those who are misguided, hoping to laugh them out of their folly.

CHAPTER - IX

WILLIAM BLAKE

From Songs Of innocence

- (i) Introduction
- (ii) The Lamb
- (iii) The Little Black Boy
- (iv) The Chimney Sweeper
- (v) The Divine Image
- (vi) The Echoing Green
- (vii) Holy Thursday
- (viii) Nurse's Song

From Songs of Experience

- (i) Introduction
- (ii) The Tyger
- (iii) Nurse's Song
- (iv) The Chimney Sweeper
- (v) Holy Thursday
- (vi) London
- (vii) The School Boy-

Songs of Innocence

Introduction

The Poem gives evidence of sustained simplicity. It is free from ornamental figures of speech, barring a few alliterations. But then, alliterations delight children. The nominal phrases do not have more than one adjective as modifier or qualifier. You may notice just one qualifier as in the case of *valleys wild* or a modifier in *merry cheer*. The poet has refrained from using adjectival clauses even for the sake of qualifying a noun. There are two or three sentences that include adverbial clauses and no sentence has the basic structure NP + VT +

NP, with an adjective added.

Notice the use of *joy* as a verb, a usage not common today. The use of *stain* in the sense of colouring a thing should also be noted. The elliptical style of omitting the subordinator that in the last line of the poem is also worth your attention. This is necessitated by the rhythm. In the four-line stanzas we have here, the second and the fourth line rhyme with each other. Linguistic simplicity should not be separated from the meaning of the poem. Simplicity goes well with joy, childhood, lamb, nature, gentleness and the angels. Even the poet's musical pipe was, perhaps, made of straw as in many a pastoral idyll. The tears here are the tears of joy and not of sorrow of course. Compare 'He wept with joy to hear' with 'Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps' in Blake's prophetic poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. The poet makes a rural pen from a reed and staining the clear water of a stream, writes the *Songs of Innocence*. He is inspired to do so by a stream, writes the Songs of Innocence. He is inspired to do so by a child he sees in a vision-William Blake was a mystic and visionary- and he promptly writes down the songs. The child he sees on the clouds symbolizes the infant Jesus, perhaps. The Biblical saying- see the introduction to the Songs - is carried forward by the poet in its true spirit. The child is innocent, knows no selfishness and he wants the poet to write down the songs so that every child might read them and become happy. There is no selfishness or sophistication in the world of innocence. Songs of Innocence: The Lamb

Make a study of the contrast of this poem with *Tiger* in *Songs of Experience*.

This is one of the simplest of poems and at the same time very characteristic of William Blake who sees unity of all living creatures with Nature and God, particularly Jesus Christ.

The sentences here are, by and large, the basic or kernel sentences of English language: NP + VT, NP + Vs+ ADJ, NP + Vb + NP. There are questions, of course, the questions which are no doubt the transforms of the basic structures. These questions are to be found in the first stanza and the answer is to be found in the second. This can only be a general statement, for you have the question 'Dost thou.....?'

The second stanza gives a turn to the poem by identifying the lamb with child Jesus and with the child-speaker in the poem. Jesus is the 'lamb of God' in the European Christian tradition. Lamb, of course, symbolizes innocence and gentleness; and the love behind the question 'Dost thou know who made thee?' should be contrasted with the awe behind the question 'Did he who made the lamb make thee?' in the poem *The Tiger*, when you come to it in the *Songs of Experience*. The lamb, the questioning child- the question are not rhetorical- and the Creator look like three different beings in the first stanza, and the second stanza shows them to be one. They are identified with each other.

Songs of Innocence:

The Little Black Boy

The poem is written in the form of four-line stanzas, with alternate lines rhyming with

each other. The basic rhythm is iambic. The sentences are longer and more complex than those in the earlier poems, without crossing the border of simplicity. Rhetoric avoided, though its use in the present context could have been tempting. Nominal phrases are simple and they may contain adjectives, but no adjectival clauses.

Compare the “silver hair” (line 26) of the poem with the ‘white hair’ of the boy in *The Chimney -Sweeper*. “My mother taught me underneath a tree”: this is a very evocative image and it brings before us the picture of a woman working in the open fields under the hot sun of the tropical sky. She is a poor working-class woman who has to take her child with her to the place of work in the field.

The feelings of the little black boy are quite touching, but not pathetic. The emotion moves you, but it is kept under control by the poet. There is no self-pity in the feelings of the boy who narrates in the first person his state of mind and describes his hope. This first-person narration lends the feeling of immediacy and poignancy to the poem. Hope and self-pity are mutually exclusive.

The black boy is not envious of the white boy. Envy belongs to the *Songs of Experience* and it is out of place here. The black skin or the white skin is only a cloud and when it leaves, the children will see the heavenly Father face to face and play on His knees. The last two lines do not satisfy me, though. Why should the black boy be standing, while the white boy is leaning on God’s knees and stroke the latter’s fair hair and hope to be like’ him? These lines imply the superiority of the white boy’s skin and light hair, and it goes against the earlier consolation that the white and black skin are only clouds screening the boys from the radiant God.

The presence of the mother is important. Though an adult, she does not belong to the world of the grown-ups we find in the *Songs of Experience*. On the other hand, the moving quality, of the poem must be attributed to her presence. The images of Blake are general, and rarely concrete. Here the reference to the mother and the child under a tree in the sun has the concreteness of a distant telescoped image.

We read a poem, no doubt, because it is a poem. Nevertheless its social context, if the has one, should not be ignored. During the time of William Blake himself, progressive reformers appeared and campaigned against the ill-treatment and slavery of the blacks in a white country, and some of them made the very point Blake is making here. William Mason preached a sermon in 1789 in York Minster (Blake’s songs are dated also 1789) against slave trade and in the course of his sermon, he added that the slaves were ‘of the same origin as themselves beings that have immortal souls like themselves enshrined in a body which, though it has a variation of complexion has hardly any form or feature/’ The pronoun themselves in the quotation is a reference to the white congregation.

Song of Innocence

The Chimney - Sweeper

See the contrast and irony in the last two stanzas. After having been on the clouds on

the way to the Kingdom of God in his dream, Tom awakes and he and other chimney sweeps collect their bags and brushes for sweeping the chimneys of London.

Like Holy Thursday, this poem ends with a moralizing tone and as in that poem, here too there is tinge of sarcasm.

It would be interesting to compare The Chimney-Sweeper with The Little Black Boy. The two poems comprise rhyming four-line stanzas, though the rhyming patterns differ. Both the poems are narrations in the first person, one by a little black boy and another by a little white boy whose face is grimy with the black soot. Both of them refer to their mothers, though in the present poem the mother is no more. Both of them belongs to an unhappy class- the little black boy belongs to the Negro community and the white boy to the low-paid, dirty and degrading profession of the chimney- sweepers.

The Negro boy is consoled by this mother who tells him soothingly that his black colour is only a cloud, and he would be freed from it when the time comes so that he would be able to behold God, Father in heaven. Here, the chimney-sweeper in a dream is freed from the black soot with a wash in a river on the way to heaven, where like the little Negro; he would have God for his father. Finally, their faith in God is their only consolation. Or is it opium, to use the striking word of Karl Marx?

Now let us turn to this particular poem. Chimney-sweeping was a hazardous occupation and what is shocking today; boys of tender age were apprenticed to this job. England, of course, has its share of progressive reformers and one year before Blake wrote the Songs of Innocence in 1788, the British Parliament was persuaded by a master chimney-sweeper to legislate suitably in order to ensure the welfare of the boys by fixing the hours of work and the minimum age limit for being apprenticed as a chimneysweeper. But the Act legislated by the parliament was not enforced effectively. The contrary of this poem has the same title in the Songs of Experience.

Songs of Innocence

The Divine Image

This poem should be studied as a contrary of the poem under the same title in the Songs of Experience. However, see the notes for that poem.

The present one appears on the surface to be a didactic poem belonging to the tradition of the moral songs written during and earlier than Blake's time. Nevertheless, a closer observation will reveal an interesting feature not found in the moral songs. Here God and Man are regarded as one. They are identical, when mercy, pity, love and peace dwell together in man.

The poet speaks of 'human form divine'. If man is divine, all men must be loved, whether they are Jews, Turks or heathens. In The Merchant of Venice, racial harmony is upheld in the Jew's speech, because both the Jews and the Christians are human. Here in this poem, racial harmony is upheld because both are divine.

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* written still under the influence of the mystic Swedenborg, you find the 'argument' Good if heaven, Evil is Hell. William Blake does not go in this direction as far as the Indian Monistic philosophy goes. He is essentially a Christian.

Note the following also from one of his other prophetic works: 'He who would see Divinity must see Him in His Children' (from *Jerusalem*).

Songs of Innocence

The Echoing Green

The adjective green can be used as a nominal phrase by adding the article the. Can you give a similar example of your own?

The sentences of the poem are invariably short and most, if not all of them, begin with a nominal phrase. They have the sentence pattern NP + VP + Complement or adjunct. There is hardly any complexity in the basic sentence pattern. Again as in the previous poem, even the nominal phrases are simple and no adjectival clause is added. Even the adverbial adjuncts are brief. The poem comprises ten-line stanzas of rhyming couplets. The last stanza has a dying fall as in music. The curtain of silence falls gradually as the sun sets and the green darkens. The use of capital letters in the last line of each stanza is dictated only by the need of emphasis.

Notice the reversal of the nouns in the phrase girls and boys. Ordinarily we say boys and girls. Don't we? But then the poet has to rhyme.

It is an innocent world that we see here, comprising children, sport, and singing birds, mothers love and sunrise and sunset. It is a world untouched by sorrow and envy. The old folk here remind us of their youth which they have passed, and the poet does not include them for nostalgic contrast. You are reminded of youth, and not warned of the approach of old age. The old also laugh in the poem and remember their youth, but there is no regret at the passing of youth. The emphasis is on greenery and spring which richly symbolize the early years of man's life. The setting of the sun is not symbolic of any sad event to come. It only signals the time for rest and sleep in the laps of mothers. The night here means no more than what it means to birds. We are still far away from the world of Experience in which the night brings out the prowling animals.

Songs of Innocence

Holy Thursday

This poem too like the previous one was originally a part of "An Island in the Moon" which was not engraved or printed and the poet allowed it to remain a manuscript. He made some changes, however in the poem and subsequently it was engraved and printed in its present form as a part of the songs.

This service was organized annually for the children of the charity schools of London. You will find a slight ironical tone at the end of the poem. We know how bitter Blake was at

the man-made poverty and misery. The poor children who were dirty were scrubbed and allowed a rare bath before being taken to St. Paul's. William Blake had, no doubt, in his mind, the condescending attitude that some people like Bishop Edmund Gibson and to some extent Isaac Watts had towards those boys. The phrase 'wise guardians of the poor' has a bite of irony in it. The last line has an epigrammatic force in it; but with its moralizing tone, it is not in tune with the irony of the previous line.

Songs of Innocence

Nurse's Song

You find an earlier version of this song in the manuscript of the poem called *An Island in the Moon* written by the poet a few years earlier than the *Songs*, that is, in 1784. However this earlier version was not engraved and published by the poet. It remained a manuscript only during his lifetime. The present poem is a contrary of the poem under the same title included in the *Songs of Experience*.

The nurse is not envious at the playing children, and she is calling them home, only because the sun has set. The laughter and the sport of the children continue and the nurse does not mind it. As in so many other poems of this group. Nature, joy and children are one.

A critic by name Erdman has pointed out that this poem was prompted by *Hymns in Prose for Children* published by Mrs. Anna Barbauld who conducted a boy's school. When you read the hymn, you will have to grant that there is something common in the images of the two works. But then Mrs. Barbauld's writing is didactic, typical of a school mistress!

CHAPTER - X

WILLIAM BLAKE

Songs of Experience

Introduction

The Holy Word embodied in God weeps at the fall of man (lapsed soul) and its tears are the dew drops. In the second instance, 'dewy grass' the word has a literary meaning. Some words can be used both figuratively and literally.

The language of the poem is not as simple as that of the *Songs of Innocence* but that is so, only comparatively speaking. Even here, rhetoric and long sentences are avoided, multi-clause sentences are not many and monosyllabic words dominate the poem. The voice of prophecy is exhorting the earth, and the poet has not surrendered to the temptation of high-flown language. Blake's art in the Songs is characterized by maximum expression in minimum language.

The prophetic voice of poetry is calling upon the earth to awake. In the poem The Songs of Los that Blake wrote later, the prophetic voice of poetry is embodied in Los who is distinguished from the God of reason who is a symbol of oppression also. The earth in the poem represents the fallen state of man who has lost his innocence. Having lost his innocence, the grown-up man is in a world where he is not free. He is bound by numerous chains of restrictions and rules. The end of the night and the coming of the morning indicate the renewal of light for which a call is given by the prophetic bard 'who present, past and future sees.'

This highly compressed and complex poem has a deeper layer of meaning. The vigilant watchers of the night (the stars of the heavenly floor) and the restrictions on the earth (the waters of the sea set a limit beyond which you cannot go) will be there, till only the break of day and then you have the dawn of the new dispensation of boundless freedom; not in a world limited by the sky and the earth, but a limitless and boundless world. As Wordsworth's 'Ode*' puts it, Shades of the prison house begin to close

Upon the growing boy.

The finite world closes in upon the lapsed soul after it has descended into generation' (to use a Platonic term), but that is only till the break of day, when the soul liberated will return to the Infinite.

The phrase 'lapsed soul' itself is important in this context. William Blake seems to owe this phrase to the book Five Books of Plotinus a translation done by an Englishman of his time named Taylor. It is a rendering of Plotinus's philosophical discussion called On the Nature and Origin of Evil. According to Neo-Platonic philosophy, the soul had existed earlier than its entry into the drossy material body. The entry into matter is a fall or lapse. Its original

existence was Divine Light. Matter for Plotinus was symbolized by water and its existence in matter was a state of captivity. To the Greek philosopher, the material body was a sordid mass and its state was one of sleep. Blake seems to owe the phrase 'lapsed soul Y slumberous masses and a few other significant phrases to Plotinus, who elaborated the philosophy of Plato.

This poem is a contrary of Introduction in the Songs of Experience. Those who think that they have discovered a coherent system of symbols in Blake's poetry offer the view that the stars in the poem stand for reason. Some others believe that the stars mean secret delights. I do not see how the lines in the poem call for these interpretations.

Songs of Experience

The Tyger

You have a series of wh questions in the poem, but they are not rhetorical, and most of these questions have the simple underlying structure NP+ VP+NP. The verbless wh questions are exclamations. The lexical aspects of the poem is also simple, and it is close to the spoken language. Neither the numerous wh questions nor the repeated use of adjective 'dread' makes the poem monotonous. On the other hand, this linguistic aspect of the poem quite objectively embodies the poet's sensation of bafflement, awe and wonder bordering on fear at the sight of the tiger which is incandescent with energy. The poet is not concerned with its colour or stripes. That also explains the repeated use of the imagery drawn from a workshop or smithy. It should be noted that the poet uses nearly the same imagery in a different context in his poem *The Book of Urizen* (Chapter IV (a), 179-183)

The very qualities of the poem are responsible for a wide range of critical interpretations. The art of compression, the simplicity and directness of the treatment of the subject, the series of questions (the wh questions followed by the yes/no type of questions) and the enigmatic stars throwing down their spears have all posed a challenge to the intelligence of the readers. No wonder, different interpretations are offered by critics and scholars some of whom have not escaped the pitfall of reading their own meaning into the poem. The only thing all the readers are unanimous about is that the poem raises profound questions. Therefore, at this point of time it is difficult to believe that a twentieth century critic. Alice Meynell, herself an admirer of William Blake, could seriously regard the poem as a 'Sunday-school poem for children' Earlier in 1884 James Thomson in a not so scandalous statement said that The Tiger was a 'magnificent expression of boyish wonder and admiring terror'. Now let us leave this minor critical scandal behind, and see what some other critics have said about the poem. In the view of Stanely Gardner (not the creator of Perry Mason!.) The 'Tiger' is simultaneously about creation, control and ferocious revolt, all of which is contained in the symbolism. I can understand the interpretation that it is about creation, but I am unable to see how the images of the poem call for the view that it is about control and revolt as well. It is certainly tempting to see Frankenstein's monster in the poem getting out of the control of the creator himself, but that is possible only when we look at a part of the poem at the cost of the other parts. One can even go to the length of stating that two equal parts of almost every stanza communicate with equal power the poet's awe and wonder at both the

tiger and its creator. Again the last but one stanza which holds the key to the door behind which the meaning lies opens a new world altogether. Gardner's interpretation misses the significance of the starry tears and the lamb.

According to S. Foster Damon who has written a well documented book on William Blake, *The Tiger* deals with 'the immense problem of evil' He goes on to add the Evil is the wrath of God and that its purpose is to consume error. Therefore, the problem before Blake was 'how to reconcile the forgiveness of sins (the lamb) with the punishment of sins (the tiger). There is no doubt that there are two opposite elements in the poem that cannot be reconciled with each other. But it is equally beyond doubt that the poem repeatedly emphasizes the duality of the created and the creator. The emotion of the poem seems to have resulted from the two irreconcilable elements, namely the tiger and the lamb, outside the creator who looks at his own works. We cannot also by-pass the implication in the poem that the tiger's natural instinct is to attack gentle animals symbolized by the lamb for its food, though both of them are created by the same immortal hand.

There is no purpose in a little book like this in multiplying further the examples of critical exegesis. One may mention, however, the Biblical interpretation that the tiger and the lamb are meant to show that they lie down together. But that is so in the Kingdom of God to come, but not on the earth and this interpretation will lead us back to the *Song of Innocence* and not to the *Songs of Experience*. Interpretation of the poem is many because of the way the poem is written. In despair, one is almost tempted to agree with D.G. Rossetti who believed that the poem was imperfect and who even rewrote the poem with his changes when he reprinted it. But there is no room for despair, really.

The poem should be read as a poem first and foremost, and not as a piece of theological or philosophical criticism. It is an independent entity separate from Blake's later works and the books of other writers. It is only when we read the poem in this sense we are justified in understanding the poet's possible concern for a human or spiritual situation. The question before us is, how does the poet communicate the emotion arising from the fact of what the poet regards as a contradiction in the act of creation which has given the world both the lamb and the tiger.

The simplicity of communication and the emotion of awe, wonder and terror are held in a state of perfect tension, even at the cost of omitting explanatory links which can be found in the rough draft. This method makes for concentration, particularly in a poem which concentrates on the ferocious energy of the animal. The poet avoids physical details and speaks of only the 'deep' or 'the forests-of the night' by which he means what is primeval and vast. The imagery of the smithy with its fire, chain and hammer-the metallic images embody perfectly what is almost nothing but fierce energy; the tiger (remember it is not merely its eyes that are burning bright) itself is burning bright. The burning eyes of the tiger and its energy in the primeval dark forests give the impression that the whole beast is fiery.

The feelings of terror and awe roused by the tiger and the maker of the tiger the animal rouses both the emotions -- is followed by another emotion when the poet thinks of the lamb and now the paradox of creation is focused rapidly. The emotion is not expressed

directly by the poet's own rhetoric. We have for it the image of the stars throwing down their spears and watering the heaven with their tears. It is not the human beings that weep. That would have made the poem sentimental. On the other hand, it is the stars the eternal watchmen of the heaven who weep reminding you of the angels who pitying stand and weep 'when wolves and tigers howl for prey' in one of the Songs of Innocence. The emotion of pity is made sufficiently distant. The poem ends by repeating the first stanza, without answering the questions raised by the poet himself. To the emotion of awe and wonder is added a sense of bafflement and mystery.

The rhythm of the opening lines embodies magnificently the agitation of the human heart pounding at the sight of the dread tiger.

Songs of Experience

Nurse's Song

After the first two poems which are two of the most enigmatic songs, we come to a poem which is fairly simple. It is comparatively free from obscure symbolism. This poem should be contrasted with its contrary under the same title in *Songs of Innocence*.

It is only the adjective 'green' that presents some difficulty. Why does the nurse become green and pale? With regard to the complexion, the word 'green' means pale, sickly hue indicative of fear, jealousy, ill humour or sickness. Here in the poem the meaning is emotional. The children's sport reminds the nurse of her younger days, and the memory of innocence contrasted with what will follow produces ill humour in her mind. It is not joyous sympathy as in the Songs of Innocence. On the other hand, it is a warning to the children of the harsh reality that youth is a waste of time and that adulthood is wasted in hypocrisy, in putting up appearances and hiding truth. What the nurse has learnt, the children are yet to learn. 'Night' in the poem symbolizes experience.

Do you notice that the language of the poem is much more complex compared to the 'Nurse's Song' in the Songs of Innocence, though this comprises two stanzas only?

Songs of Experience

The Chimney - Sweeper

The original draft of the poem as found in the Rossetti Manuscript book shows that Blake at first wrote only the second and third stanza. Obviously, the poet intended them to form a complete poem by themselves. The first stanza and the title were written later on. They were an after-thought, written in pencil on a different page. Has the poem gained by this addition?

Songs of Experience

Holy Thursday

Its contrary is a poem with the same title in the Songs of Innocence. Unlike the other

poem, this one does not have brilliant imagery. On the contrary, it is almost bare and has practically no images. The poet is agitated and is questioning the existing state of things, the establishment, to use a modern term. The questions are free from rhetoric, because the poet avoids all clichés and stock-in-trade accounts of poverty. On the other hand, there is a stunning exposure in the line 'Fed with cold and usurious hands' which suggests the public contributions made to maintain the neglected children and for their charity service in the Cathedral of St. Paul. The poet is appalled by the poverty of children, 'these flowers of London'. The charity of the rich who were soulless and patronizing shocks him.

There is anger, there is bitterness and the poet suggests that the appalling poverty is man-made not made by Nature or God.

Songs of Experience

London

London can be classified with the poem *The Little Vegabond*, *Holy Thursday* and *The Chimney Sweeper*. In them you can find the poetry of London City known in those days for its poverty, squalor, destitution and the 'Satanic mills' which exploited the poor. Compare this poem with Goldsmith's essay *A City Night Piece* which is also about that 'Unreal city' to use a phrase of T.S. Eliot. Blake sees it as a place of sorrow and suffering for which he holds the authorities responsible. With the selfishness and repression which the church and the state represent, the poet hears the clang of the man-made manacles.

The third stanza is one the most striking in the whole range of Blake's poetry. In this highly compressed form of writing, you can notice how he holds the church responsible for the chimney-sweeper's young and fair skin is physically blackened, but it is the church that is morally blackened! How do we explain the line 'Runs in blood down the palace walls?' It is pointed out by Erdman that Blake would have known that curses were often chalked or painted on the royal walls. What is general in the two stanzas is balanced by the images in the next two.

16 Marriage hearse: What a shocking collocation! Blake means, of course, marriage bed. It is blighted by the young harlot's curse and, therefore, it is a hearse. Compare the lines of the fourth stanza with the following lines from the same poet's *Auguries of Innocence*:

The harlot's cry from street to street

Shall weave old England's winding sheet.

Songs of Experience

The Schoolboy

The poem is almost the universal cry of a young child in a particular mood or phase of his life, and it finds an echo in the heart of every school-going child. The typical schooling evidently comes in the way of the unity Blake finds in Nature, freedom, joy and childhood, which is the theme of many poems of his. It is of some interest to note here that according to

William Blake he never went to school. He was apprenticed to an engraver while still a young boy: and subsequently; he went to the Royal Academe as a student of art. He had an education that suited his artistic gift which found the most natural expression in a favourable environment. It was harmony, not discipline that he found in his education. One can understand Blake's view of the school restrictions and discipline. He has said in one of his epigrammatic pieces:

Thank God! I was never sent to school

To be flogg'd into following the style of a fool.

The pastoral image of Blake who was a Londoner was rather general, typical of such images in the eighteenth century poetry. The line 'The distant huntsman winds his horn' is an example of this kind. But this poem with its melancholy music is none the worse for it, because the object of the poet is not related to pastoral imagery.

CHAPTER - XI

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH THE PRELUDE

The Romantic Revival

After fifty years following the death of Johnson, a period rich and varied in achievements bears an appropriate name 'The Romantic Period'. It expresses the appeal to the imagination made by the great writers of the time. Romanticism stands for sharpened sensibility and heightened imaginative feelings. It influenced many forms of art. Major features in Romanticism are subtle sense of mystery, intellectual curiosity and an instinct for the elemental simplicity of life. It was inevitable corollary of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

Romanticism is not opposed to reality, but it is some transfiguring- by new power of vision and feeling. A sense of mysticism is observed in poetry of the age. An appreciation of Nature's charm leads to sanctity of spirituality, received a deep significance. Sense of awe, wonder and beauty and intellectual reaction in man is natural and inevitable. There was first a return to old modes and movements. It was gradually realised not by imitation but by a fresh creative outburst. Romanticism included a speculative and inquisitive turn of mind. It brought about interpretation of great writers the creative imagination of the poets. In this romantic inspiration we find elements of both intellectual form and imaginative vision, of inner soul, simplicity, praise of dignity of man, the glorification of liberty are clearly more didactic issues. Rather than reflecting nature of outer world, poetry now served to poet's inner delight. The Victorian Poets were Romantics. Prose writers Bronte, Dickens, Thackeray serve as good examples.

The Prelude

Wordsworth wrote the first draft of The Prelude or The Growth of Poets Mind during the years 1798 to 1805. It is a long autobiographical poem. He visited France in 1790. He was disillusioned with French Revolution. He first made affirmation of transcending power and subsequently made revision.

The Prelude was published in 1850 after poet's death. He did not succeed in removing the traces of his 1798 position towards life and art. (One may find similarity in case of Munshi Premchand and his views on Soviet Revolution.) Essential assumption underlying the very meaning and structure of the poem is that of indefinite growth and change in the mind of poet. (Osho says only fools can be consistent.) Romantics assume of unending growth and change of the self. This is regarded as Wordsworth's most successful composition. After 1807 his writing though abundant, is essentially rested upon the assumption of fixity and permanence and infrequently revealed the dynamic force of his earlier work.

Wordsworth loves Nature but is concerned far less with sensuous manifestations than with spiritual aspects. The Divinization of Nature culminates for English literature in words. It was his aim as a poet to seek beauty in Nature and to interpret this beauty in spiritual terms.

In the Prelude he shows it was his boys delight in outdoor life, with pure passion. We find many passages in which he strongly expresses his belief in the inner life of Nature. We see in 'Lucy Poems' he represents Nature's 'vital feeling of delight'. Later he is determined to find design, order and harmony in universe. Spiritual Unity of Nature is seen in 'The Excursion' and mystical approach in 'Tintern Abbey'. Nature's educational value is apparent in 'The Prelude'. He gives the most impressive and the most satisfying account of man's relation with Nature. He is the greatest Nature poet because he is the poet of more than external Nature; he is, the poet of Man.

The Prelude lines 75 to 335

Wordsworth introduces us with the importance of imagination which he considers a power higher. During the evening walk in valley he felt his soul was visited by breeze which was playing sweet music. After a few days of loitering, he thanked himself for choosing such abode. He was now able to communicate overcoming his burdened heart. He was under the spell of passion. He felt confident that his organic sensibility is able to grasp general truth. He derived inspiration from courageous enduring personalities in the history of Europe. He felt need to narrate the story of Frenchman Dominique de Courage's, story of Wallace who fought for Scotland. He admits he gets contradictory thoughts and felt lack of power, lack of ability and timidity. Sometimes selfishness paralyses his faculties.

River Derwent had lulled him during infancy, The river after leaving mountains, flowed into plains and is received by Cockermath castle. He considers it as a symbol of decayed feudal system. He thanks his favourable environment which contributed beauty and fear in his life. After he became ten, he found pleasure roaming : over the open high mountain. Sometimes it so happened that a strong desire predominated over better reason. Nature directed the adventures to some great aim. He often felt the loud dry wind was uttering strange things through his ears. The clouds seemed to move mysteriously. He felt although man is made of dust, the immortal soul within grows like harmony in music. Nature has secrets, discordant elements as well. It is strange that all terrors, pains, sufferings, regret and irritation of mind played part in generating that quiet part of life. He was grateful for what he has received and achieved.

Criticism

William Hazit: Wordsworth sets up an opposition between natural and the artificial; the spirit of humanity and the spirit of fashion and of world. His unartificial style is free of all trappings of verse. He elevates meaning "by the strength of his own aspiration. He clothes the naked with beauty and grandeur. There is a lofty philosophical tone a thoughtful humanity, unfused into his pastoral vein.

S. T. Coleridge : We find in him occasionally a matter of factness in certain poems. First there is a labourious minuteness and fidelity in representation of objects and then insertion of accidental circumstances. As if the poet is providing justification for events in real life. But in poetry it appears superfluous. The reader is in fact more than willing to believe the poet for his own sake.

William Blake: He is not a he but a Heathen Philosopher and holds enmity against all true poetry or inspiration.

John Stuart Mill: His poetry is defined to be his thoughts, coloured by and impressing themselves by means of emotions. He may be considered the poet of unpoetic nature, possessed of quiet and contemplative taste.

Thomas de Quincy: Meditative poetry is perhaps that province of literature which will maintain most power. In this he has no competitor since death of Shakespeare.

WORDSWORTH	A Few Points To Ponder : Consider
A Poet Of Nature	A Poet Of Man
A Poet Of Human Growth .	A Poet Of Love
A Didactic Poet	A Philosopher Poet
An Evangelist	A Mystic
His Imagery	His Greatness, Popularity
His Contribution To Poetry	

CHAPTER - XII

S.T. COLERIDGE

The Ancient Mariner

It is a very long poem, so I cannot quote all of it here. I shall also keep my analysis as brief as possible, since what I want to do in the closing pages of this chapter is try to highlight in the simplest form possible the ideas that I have developed in it.

Look for a central opposition in the poem:

We need to establish an opposition. A wedding is obviously a time of happiness and rejoicing. In an indirect way, the mention of wedding makes us consider the whole concept of marriage, which is the central social institution, the secure framework within which most people choose to live. Yet on the occasion of this wedding the guest is approached by a mysterious figure. It seems fair to say, therefore that the theme of the poem promises to be the intrusion of the strange and disturbing into every life.

Begin to look at the details of the poem, trying to see how the poet, brings his theme to life :

What happens in “The Ancient Mariner” is that the mariner tells the tale of how he shot an albatross, and the strange events that ensued. An appropriate passage to look at now is a section that appears just after the albatross has been shot, when things are beginning to go wrong.

I want to keep my comments on this poem very brief, so will limit myself to mentioning the sense of something grim and macabre that has been released. It is as if the mariner, by his act of destruction, has broken all the rules of behaviour with the result that, with the veneer of civilization gone, disturbing forces become evident. The principal method of bringing this to life in the poem is the use of appropriately disturbing impressions of strange forces.

Look at another section of the poem, trying to see how the poem is progressing :

One unusual feature of ‘The Ancient Mariner’ is that Coleridge provides notes in the margin. If you bother to read these notes you will see that they offer a moral meaning to the poem, centering on the need to respect all forms of life. These two stanzas I have just quoted seem to endorse that sense of the poem, for they start with the concepts of faith and prayer and God’s order.

This returns us, however, to the issue we have been looking at throughout this chapter, the issue of what is being said in a difficult poem. It would be possible to argue that the purpose of ‘The Ancient Mariner’ is moral; we could put together a neat and coherent response along these lines, using stanzas such as these to substantiate our case. Here, for example, there is positive idea of turning to God and putting one’s faith in God. The problem

with such a coherent reading of the poem, however, is that it seems to sweep out of existence all those disturbing elements we have already seen in the earlier stanzas quoted. They offer us a strong sense of the dark mysteries of existence; the simple concept of Christian prayer does not, in the overall context of this poem, outweigh and banish those disturbing force. As in 'Kubla Khan' Coleridge uses symbols, the way in which he uses the sea, the sun all the surrounding references create a sense of unfathomable mysteries.

Look at how the poem concludes :

A simple Christian moral message is central here. You might; however; feel that these lines wrap everything up too neatly. This is because the poem as a whole has included disturbing details and disturbing features which work against the desire to find a consoling significance in the event narrated. The overall pattern is important, through for again it enables the poet to maintain a wavering balance between our sense of the complexity of experience and our desire to find a meaning in experience. It is in the gap and tension between these that so much of the interest poetry exists.

Sum up your sense of the poem as a whole, and your sense of the writer so far: Elsewhere in this book, I have looked at enough of a writer's poems to piece together some kind of overall picture of his work. At this point however, with only a certain amount established, I want to call a halt to my discussion of Coleridge, because the note I want to end this chapter on is not a discussion of an individual writer but a summing-up of some points about difficult poetry. I have looked at very different writers here, but there are ways in which they have a great deal in common. In particular, there is a wavering tension in their work; they seem to acknowledge both the complexity of experience and the precarious quality of any order that is established. Different writers will achieve this in different ways, but essentially it is complications in imagery (or symbolism) and in structure that introduce a sense of diversity and complexity in a poem. Yet, at the same time, the poet is establishing a structure and images do suggest that links can be established between different ideas of experience. At any particular point in a poem, therefore, we might simultaneously feel both the complexity of experience and the poet's compulsion towards understanding. What I have said in this chapter about difficult poetry must to a large extent apply to all poetry, but it is I think fair to say that it is only the most ambitious and gifted poets who make us feel that we are for ever simplifying their work if we try to pin it down.

CHAPTER - XIII

ROBERT BROWNING

i) The Last Ride Together

(ii) Porphyria's Lover

Robert Browning (1812-1889) belonged to the Age of Queen Victoria. He was educated at a private school and at home, and as a young man, traveled a good deal in Europe. In 1846 he married Elizabeth Barrett, a talented poet, whose poems he had appreciated. It was in fact an elopement, after which Browning moved to Florence where he lived with his wife until her death in 1861. The beautiful idyll of their courtship has been given to the world in *Sonnets from the Portuguese* by Mr. Browning. His artistic and poetic genius at a very early age. There is an anecdote that at the age of two he painted in lead pencil and blackcurrant, jam, juice a picture of a cottage and rocks which was thought a masterpiece. His first poem *Pauline* a boyish, feverish, chaotic affair but full of fire, passion and talent, was written when he was just two decades old. It contains a splendid eulogy of Shelley about whom the poet afterwards modified his enthusiasm. This was followed by *Paracelsus* two years later among his other writings mention must be made of *Pippa Passes*, *Men and Women*, *Dramatic Personal* and his longest work *The Ring and the Book*, a story of crime published in 1869. He also wrote a number of plays. *Stafford*, *A Blot on the Scutcheon* and *Colombo's Birthday* are among them. To the average reader, however, Browning is known as the author of such well known short pieces as *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *The Last Ride Together*, *A Grammarian's Funeral*, *Saul* and how they brought the good news from Ghent to Aix.

You must remember that Browning was not a "worrier" about contemporary problems. His contemporaries, Arnold and Tennyson reacted to the events of the time and wrote about the spiritual dearth which characterized the period (Scientific Revolution which brought spiritual restlessness. It shattered the old religious values. Many Christians lost faith in the Bible and existence of God. It was an age of doubt and uncertainty) Whereas his contemporaries deeply felt the restlessness of the Victorian Age Browning concerned himself with the inner drama of the human soul. He was interested in dramatic and psychological studies of love, religion and art. He is a dramatic poet in the sense Browning's drama is a drama of the interior, a tragedy or comedy of the soul. Therefore his poetry is an effort to conquer "the province of the soul". He wanted to understand the working of the human mind. Therefore he wrote not dialogues but monologues. Poets of his generation invented a novel topic in the psychology of the human mind. Browning made the mind the principal subject of presentation- mental conditions and psychological facts too abstruse to be apparent in the coarse medium of action and ordinary speech. Gifted with keen intellect he could lay hold on those psychological moments that expose and unveil the character of an individual as in a flash of lighting. He called these moments the "quintessential moments of life. Perception of these quintessential moments is the prime principal of his art". In other words, in his poetry he tried to examine thoroughly the realm of human consciousness and seize the varied moods of man as they alter under the influence of circumstances. The monologue suited his purpose

best. He makes his characters analyse their own mind. He selects a person intelligent enough to probe his own consciousness, lay bare the functioning of his own story. So his characters analyse their sentiments and thoughts at some crucial term of their life. This method is called the Dramatic Monologue. Dramatic Monologue is “one side of the conversation of which the other side is silent or taken for granted.” In its use he may not be a pioneer but a past master, (Wordsworth used it in *Expostulation and Reply* and Tennyson in *Ulysses*) but Browning used it with special skill and success. In fact, it is his singular device and he exploited to the full its dramatic and psychological possibilities. In his use of the dramatic monologue Browning anticipates T.S. Eliot a major poet of the 20th Century. As a critic puts it “the blood of Browning’s verse is still running in contemporary poetry. Analytical tendency, intellectual curiosity and use of spoken language are some of the fruits which his poetry shares with modern poetry. Remember the statement - “Browning is clearly the forerunner of the modern poets in the matter of diction” as Sir Herbert Read recognized many years ago.

The Last Ride Together

The Last Ride Together is taken from *Men and Women*. Browning opines that it is ignoble to have a low aim. It is better to fail in a high aim than succeed in a low one. In this poem the hero is rejected by his lady-love. He did approach her with some hope. But he does not become melancholic and desperate. His love for the lady was sincere and noble and intense. Rejection makes him philosophic and it is transformed into a spiritual experience. There is spiritual gain, although the lady is lost. Douglas Bush writes “His (Browning’s) general position was indeed much like Tennyson’s the human capacity for love is the irrefragable proof of the all embracing reality of divine love. Browning’s faith in human and divine love carried with it his special emphasis on ‘apparent failure’ on the worth of aspiration, on the finite imperfection of earth and man and the infinite perfection of heaven.”

The lover gets a final answer from his lady. The story is presented from his point of view. We know nothing about him, like who he is or where he lives. The reason for the lady’s refusal is not given weightage. Unwanted details are left out. The man is disappointed and he nobly accepts his fate. His efforts to win her have become futile. Note his nobility. He does not censure her or curse her. He is grateful to her for she has given him sweet memories. His last request is to have just one ride with her in his carriage.

The lady has an attractive personality. She has dark eyes and bent brows. Her pride does not allow her to consent to his request but pity drives her to agree. Lady’s decision is crucial to him. It is a question of his life and death. He waits with his breath suspended. He is relieved when her acceptance comes. His joy makes him feel like a God.

So, one day more am I deified. The world is like heaven because he has an angel beside him. The thought that this ride is going to be the final one makes him wish that the world come to an end then and there.

The lady sits in his carriage, leaning on his shoulders with closed eyes. His eyes turn towards the western sky. The cloud is radiant there is the glow of sunset, and the brilliance of the evening star and the luster of the rising moon. What is beautiful in the sky is transformed into this lady on the earth. “Flesh has faded for ever” the physical reality exists no more.

Supreme bliss is experienced by him.

As they begin their ride, the lover begins to think freely. He wonders if he had behaved in a different way could he have changed the course. But he wonders that instead of gaining a different action would probably have made her hate him. One consolation is that he is not disliked by her.

As the wheels move further, his mind wanders into the past. He realizes that failure is universal. All men aspire for something but they never succeed in their ambition. What they achieve is small. What they have is not vast. They start with hope and end up in despair.

Failure is the lot of all men. Can man execute all that he imagines? "What hand and brain went paired?" Imagination moves fast but man's action cannot keep pace with what he conceives.

"What heart alike conceived and dared?" The physical limitations come in the way of execution. Even if one manages to reach the goal he may not get the rewards (crown) he expects. All that a noble statesman who has dedicated his life to the service of his country gets is a tribute often lines in papers. The general who plants his country's flag after vanquishing his enemy gets a burial in lucky because he in his own life time has the luck to enjoy his lady's company.

A poet transforms his glorious dreams of love into beautiful verse. He sings out his love through music. But in his own life he remains sick, poor and worn out and dies a premature death. He does not experience even a small fraction of what he writes. The lover's lot is far superior as he shouts in glory "sing for me, I ride."

The sculptor expends his talent on stone. He takes years to carve a beautiful figure of Venus. But people prefer a living girl to cold venues. A musician spends his youth to perfect a style only to discover that he is not liked by people. This lover's is definitely better.

Browning expresses his philosophy through the lover. If one is to get supreme bliss, what is to be sought after death. There will be emptiness in the life to come. Life here is a kind of probation. If earth is good, heaven should be better. It is not right to desire full satisfaction on earth.

The best part of our dreams is fulfilled in heaven. Not the word 'upturned' which indicates the nobility of our aspirations. The lover has experienced happiness which is enough for the rest of his life. This memory will sustain him throughout his life. With perfect claim he will enter into eternity.

Heaven offers perfection. So why should one feel miserable on this earth. The heaven will probably offer him this blissful experience in a more pure and intensified form. His optimism makes him feel that his experience will become eternal.

A single voice is heard throughout the poem but the lady's presence is felt throughout. The familiar language effectively contributes to the dramatic element. Browning's 'obscurity' has drawn attention of readers. Does the distortion of syntax

contribute to obscurity or the complexity of thought? Rightly a critic observes: "Browning's more ambitious works are not read today. But his shorter pieces continue to appear in anthologies. Happily a number of these shorter poems continue to be read as triumphs of both concrete and psychological drama."

CHAPTER - XIV

THOMAS HARDY

A Poet of no mean order : Hardy was a prolific writer of poetry just as he was a prolific writer of novels. He was a first rate novelist. He can not be ranked so high in poetry. A great poet he certainly is; but he does not rank with such greats as Pope, Wordsworth, Shelly, Keats, Byron, Tennyson, Browning and T.S.Eliot.

A variety of themes and a variety of forms : He produced more than nine hundred poems. Most of them are short, some are as short as four lines. But he also wrote *The Dynast* which is an epic drama of high merit and considerable length. Love theme predominates. Other subjects are Nature, relation between man and nature, past, memories, reminiscence, religious beliefs, ironies of life, cruelty of fate etc.

As a poet of love, Hardy occupies a higher status. However it is not joy of fulfilment which he deals with. He wrote more than a hundred poems in memory of his departed wife in spite of the fact that she made him miserable in course of their married life. It shows an essential of humanity of him.

The rural background, and Nature- imagery: He uses profusely imagery of nature and of country occupations. His pictures of nature are often not very elaborate or detailed; but they are certainly vivid and concrete kind. Hardy is one of the greatest lovers of nature and he is one of the greatest Nature's poets too.

Narrative poems: His narrative poems are not Ions like Byron but like Wordsworth, he tells simple stories of rural life. His noteworthy poems are *The Burghers*; *My Cicely*; and *A Trampwomans Tragedy*.

Dramatic monologues: He reminds us of Browning. Hardy however dwells on darker aspects, ignoring brighter.

The Elegic note: This is very conspicuous. Melancholy is the prevailing atmosphere of most of his poems. He was a pessimist though not a cynical in his novels as well as poetry. A sense of transitoryness in happiness is prevailing. Most of his elegiac poems are dramatic.

Hardy is also known as warpoet. He speaks of uncemonious burial of soldier. We observe simple but powerful expression of his affection.

A realist: He was a through realist. He depicts both dark and somber aspects. His poems coming directly from heart, never refuse to shut eyes to the truth. Intellectual honesty is his hallmark . Hardy was deeply a reflective man. He observed deeply, meditated and came to conclusions. Hardy's poetry does express convictions, even as his novels do. His poetry also tends to show his deep sympathy. The general tone of his poetry is one of deep despondency. Sometimes, a gleam of hope does shine.

Diction and Syntax: Hardy's craftsmanship is much admired. Some consider him as

prosiac, irregular and clumsy, even narrow and monotonous. He uses words from dialects and technical. However, there is a remarkable condensation of thought and feelings. He used a large variety of rhythms and rhymes. In fact he used every aspect of poetic device. Another noble aspect is his alliteration. He used a variety of stanza forms. Some of his poems are very short.

To An Unbirn Pauper Child

The background of the poem

The poem is based upon an actual incident to which Hardy was a witness. Hardy's sympathetic nature and society's callousness provide the central opposition. A magistrate of court had ordered the pennyless pregnant woman be sent to a house of charity. In the poem Hardy tells the unborn child what is its fate would be.

Poet is not in a position to offer any help or protection. Death in the womb would be the best end as the child would have to endure hardships, misfortune, suffering. He wishes the child should be blessed with good health, with love and all kind of joy.

Summary

The child can not look forward to a happy life when it comes into this world. The poet urges it to die in the womb. The poet draws attention of the child to unpleasant aspects of life, and child's inability to face the world. People groan, sigh, laughter stops and greetings die. Religious belief of the people languish, affection and enthusiasm do not last long. The child would enter this world without any knowledge about it.

The poet would be glad if he can find some place where the child can spend peaceful happy life. But the poet is helpless. Human beings are irrational but they are also hopeful, and they see silver lining of every cloud. The poet hopes and imagines that the unborn child would lead a happy, healthy and fruitful life.

Critical appreciation

It is one of the most pessimistic poems of Hardy. His view of life is identified as his philosophy conveyed to us by his novels. Hardy was prompted by an actual incident by the fate of a destitute pregnant woman who was ordered by a magistrate to go to a charitable institution and wait for her time of delivery. Hardy felt deeply sympathetic. He had seen such cases in society, examples of extreme poverty. The poem combine most depressing picture of life. With dwindling religious faith, misfortune and afflictions abound, all the laughter of human beings comes to an end. Poem ends on a note of hope and best wishes.

Images and style

Apart from depressing view of life, we note that poet's most appropriate use of words and phrases convey ideas and feelings effectively. "Doomster" is a significant word. "Travails and teens" is a most effective phrase to convey misfortune and sorrow. "Laughter fails",

“greetings die”, “hopes dwindle”, “Faiths waste away”¹, “affections and enthusiasm numb” - these are very effective phrases.

Structurally the poem is perfect, as his other poems are. We observe concentration of feelings and thoughts and no digression or deviation. The poem is in regular six-line stanzas each having rhyme-scheme.

Criticism

Hardy's prominent are the helplessness of men, the unavailability of destiny and the carelessness of gods. Hardy does see a positive side of life. He does not allow himself to be carried away by his pity to make a poem either hopeful or morbid. Hardy upholds values of human life. His deep compassion and hope are affirmed. His sense of dignity and tenderness is worthy of Biblical and charitable. The use of second person implies simplicity and sublimity. Poet's love-hate relationship with life offers compassion and reverence for individual. Poem ends on hopeful note.

One is reminded of Upanishadic story of Satyakam. In A Ganika's (concubine) son rises to a level of a Rishi (sage) and subsequently he contributes to Holy Yajurveda. Thus Hardy's hope is not out of place or futile after all.

The Oxen (Or Christmas Eve) Poet suggests, the stroke of Christmas at midnight, the time of birth of Jesus Christ, is the most sacred not only for mankind but for all animals as well. Hardy's general attitude towards religious belief being one of scepticism, here he takes a position that even the animals will thank God for having sent his son to redeem all creation.

Criticism

Here is a deeply religious poem suggesting even the Oxen would kneel in prayer. Christmas is a time to pray God and offer thanks. Of course the poem has its appeal for the religious or rather Christian kind of readers.

Hardy was a sceptic or an unbeliever or shall we say non-believer. He had renounced his faith and religious belief at an early stage in his life. However, in this poem it seems he has fallen under the influence of religious feeling. The poem gives expression to a feeling of piety which only most orthodox Christians are capable of experiencing.

Language and Style

Simplicity and lucidity enhance religious feeling. The poem appears spontaneous and sincere. Reading the poem we have no doubt if it is only a passing phase or impulse.

Criticism.

The poem is a beautiful Christian reverie. Mood of the poem is uncharacteristic of Hardy. He successfully invokes tenderness and pity. He appears to be in search of^H some blessed hope in the bleak and cruel world.

CHAPTER - XV

W.B. YEATS

Byzantium

We find in “The symbolism of Poetry” (1900) an explanation of the emotional force of symbols as what T.S. Eliot later called ‘Objective correlative’. He followed Sainte Beuve in the thought what endures in literature. May if his poem dramatized himself or some persona using a kind of speech, and he achieved it in some of the great speeches and lyrics of his plays. Hence his insistence on symbolism and poetry for most of his plays, for they are dramas of the human soul at some point of crisis and must therefore use the language of the soul. He described the basic duality in himself through symbolism he has made his own. That conflict is deep in my subconscious, perhaps in everybody, I dream of clear water, perhaps two or three times, then comes erotic dreams. Then for weeks perhaps I write poetry with sex for theme. Then comes the reversal it came when I was young with some dream or some vision between waking and sleeps with a flame in it. Then for few weeks I get a symbolism like that in my Byzantium poem.

Two images, crucial for the reading of Yeats, are the holy city of Byzantium and purgatorial dreaming back of the souls after. His most exciting lyric, Byzantium took its structure from Yeatsian dance play. By 1929-30 he had mastered and assimilated dramatic structure. He used elements of dance-play structure to strengthen the dramatic impact of the lyric. Thus lyric begins with the scene setting lines in stanza one. The first person narration of the poem has evoked in his eye of the mind, the images of Byzantium and the floating image, man or shade rather as the musician evoke the world of the quester in the dance play. The poet questor in Byzantium is like the hero of a Yeats play, ready to follow the labyrinthine path of the spirit, again like such a hero, is uncertain perhaps heading defect.

Byzantium is subtle, allusive, intricate lyric, it also excites us with its dramatic energy and that spectacular dance of ghosts. It could have been written by a poet who was also a masterly dramatist.

Yeats intimately traces his imaginative process in its relation to his heart very early in ‘Among School children’ As the Children gaze at the poet. ‘In momentary wonder’ he takes us inside himself behind the smiling exterior.

His eyes flick from one child to another. But the thought of Maud as a child mixes with his perception of the real children, and a new image out of imagination bursts into his consciousness and feeling :

‘And there up my heart is driven wild:

She stands before me as a living child

The image is as immediate and vivid as an appreciation, and it releases ‘Her present

image” as it also unleashes that rich blend of thought, memory, sentiment and humor that follows and final questioning wonder of the adult mind which complements the memory wonder of the children and which completes the poem.

Dr. Parkin Andrew in his book titles ‘The Dramatic imagination’ of W.B, Yeats remarks the nature of Yeats imagination to be neither epic nor even wholly lyric but essentially dramatic in it’s qualities Yeats is regarded as the greatest poet since words worth we also see him as the greatest commentator on imagination since Coleridge.

QUESTION BANK

1. Explain any three with reference to context in the light of some of the following points :-
 - Significance of the extract
 - Imagery/Symbolism
 - Allusions
 - Diction/Style
 - Literary Background
-
- A) “He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”
 - B) Busy and fool, unruly Sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers’ seasons run?
Saucy Pedantic wretch, go chide
Late school-boys and sour prentices,
Go tell country-huntsmen that the king will ride.
Call country ants to harvest offices;
Love, all alike, no seasons knows nor climes,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.
 - C) While a debated what to do
That moment she was mine, mine fair,
Perfectly pure and good : I found
A thing to do, all her hair
In one, long yellow string I wound,
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her.
 - D) Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long -cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind
Past hopes already lay behind.
 - E) Fair would I, dear , find some shut plot
of earths wide wold for thee, where not

One tear, one qualm. Should break the calm.
But I am weak as thou and bare;

- F) The unpurged images of day recede;
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed;
Night resonance recedes, night walkers' song
After great cathedral gong;
A starlet or moonlit dome disdains
All that man is.
- G) For God's sake hold your tongue and let me love;
Or chide my palsy, or my gout
My five grey hairs or ruined fortune flout;
With wealth your estate, your mind with arts improve
Take you a course, get you a place
Observe his Honour or His Grace.
- H) God save thee, Ancient Mariner !
From the fiends that plague thee thus!
Why look'st thou so? - With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.
2. What is the purpose of the invocation in Book I of Paradise Lost?
 3. Write a critical note on the epic conventions used by Milton in Paradise Lost Book -1.
 4. Analyse the theme, motifs, imagery and symbolism in Paradise Lost Book-1.
 5. "But he (Satan) is a figure of heroic magnitude and heroic energy, and he is developed by Milton with dynamic intensity." Discuss with special reference to Book-I of Paradise Lost.
 6. Analyse the main characters of Paradise Lost, with special reference to Satan.
 7. Explain in detail the central theme of Paradise Lost- "Fall of Man."
 8. Comment on the statement 'Milton's poetry is the meeting ground of the Renaissance and the Reformation'.
 9. Write a note on the autobiographical elements in Paradise Lost.
 10. Write a note on the roles of (a) Beelzebub, (b) Moloch, (c)Chemon, (4) Thammuz, (e) Balial, (f) Mammon.
 11. Examine critically 'The Canonisation' as a love-poem or as a Metaphysical poem.
 12. How does John Donne as a Metaphysical poet use conceits in his poem 'The

Canonisation’?

13. Write a critical essay on imagery in the poems of John Donne “The Canonisation” and “The Sun Rising.”
14. Evaluate Milton’s use of Blank Verse and Versification in Paradise Lost.
15. Write a note on the stylistic devices used by Milton in Paradise Lost.
16. Comment on the lyricism in Andrew Marvel’s poems ‘The Garden’ & ‘To his Coy Mistress’.
17. Comment on the central theme of glorification of love in Andrew Marvel’s poems “To His Coy Mistress” & “The Garden”.
18. Consider ‘The Rape of the Lock’ as a mock-epic poem.
19. ‘ Discuss the role of the supernatural elements in The Rape of the Lock.’
20. Write an essay on the role of the sylphs and gnomes in Popes ‘The Rape of the Lock.’
21. What aspects of the eighteenth century social life are presented satirically in ‘The Rape of the Lock’? Illustrate your answer.
22. Comment on the blending of fantasy and social criticism in “The Rape of the Lock’.
23. Analyse the character of Belinda as a symbolic figure in “The Rape of the Lock”.
24. Comment on the use of Medievalism in ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’.
25. Consider ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ as a upernatural poem.
26. Explain the use of symbolism in the poem ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’.
27. Write a note on the atmosphere of mystery and horror as created by Coleridge in his The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’.
28. Comment on the role of the Wedding-Guest in the poem ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’.
29. Discuss the theme of guilt and redemption kin the poem The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’.
30. “William Blake’s poems, ‘Songs of Innocence’ & ‘Songs of Experience’ show the two contrary stages of the Human Soul” Comment with examples.
31. Compare and contrast the themes of Blakes’ poems ‘Songs of Innocence’ & ‘Songs of Experience’, in terms of innocence and maturity.
32. Answer any one in not more than 800 words :-

1. Critically access the view that in Hardy's poem 'To An Unborn Pauper Child' the poet describes human beings as 'unreasoning, sanguine and visionary'.
 2. "Hardy was not an idealist. He believed in worldly wisdom". Discuss and Substantiate this statement with illustrations from the poem 'To An Unborn Pauper Child.'
 33. Answer any one of the following in not more than 400 words:-
 - 1) Epic Similies and their functions in 'Paradise Lost,' Book I.
 - 2) Use of imagery in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."
 - 3) Explain Milton's pictorial depiction of Satan's experience in Hell.
 - 4) Discuss the social and mock-epic elements in Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock.'
 34. Critically analyse Yeats's 'Byzantium' as a symbolist poem.
 35. Comment on the rich tapestry of imagery and symbolism in Yeats's poem 'Byzantium'.
 36. Evaluate Wordsworth's 'The Prelude Book' (poem) for its lyricism of verse and versification.
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