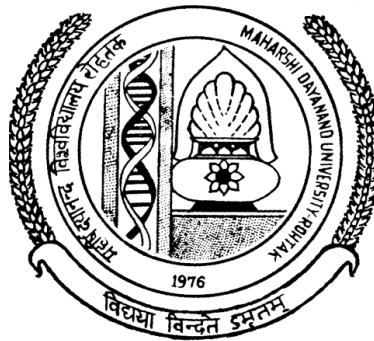


**Bachelor of Arts (DDE)**

**Semester – IV**

**Paper Code – BA4001-IV**

**ENGLISH – IV**



**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**  
**MAHARSHI DAYANAND UNIVERSITY, ROHTAK**

(A State University established under Haryana Act No. XXV of 1975)

NAAC 'A+' Grade Accredited University

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## **B.A. Part-II (Semester-IV)**

### **(English Compulsory)**

**Paper Code:BA4001-IV**

**Scheme of Examination:**

**Maximum Marks: 80**

Prescribed Book: Literature & Language-IV

#### **Instructions to the Paper Setters and Students.**

- Question 1.** Explanation with reference to the context: Students will be required to attempt any two out of the given three passages. **5x2=10**
- Question 2.** Short answer type questions: Students will be required to answer any five out of the given eight in about 50 words each. **5x3=15**
- Question 3.** Essay type questions: Students will be required to answer two questions in about 150-200 words each. There will be internal choice in both the questions. **7½x2=15**
- Question 4.** Student will be required to write short notes on any four of the given six poetic forms & devices. **10**
- Question 5.** Grammar: Pre-fix and Suffix; This will be a “Do as Directed” type question. Students will be required to attempt any twenty out of the given thirty items. **20**
- Question 6** Translation of a short passage from English to Hindi **5**
- Question 7** Dialogue Writing: Students will be required to compose dialogues on one of the given three topics (in about 150 words) **5**

Prescribed Book: Center Stage edited by Sunita Sinha ,S.S Rehal, Dinesh Kumar

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Distance Education Notes : Literature & Language-IV

**B.A Part-II (Semester-IV)**  
**(English Compulsory)**  
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# UNIT-1

## SONNET XVIII

William Shakespeare

### Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Unit Objectives
- 1.2 About the Poet
- 1.3 About the Poem
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Key Terms
- 1.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 1.7 Explanation of Important Passages
- 1.8 Questions and Exercises

### 1.0 Introduction

Sonnet 18, often alternatively titled *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?*, is one of the best-known of 154 sonnets written by the English playwright and poet William Shakespeare. Part of the Fair Youth sequence (which comprises sonnets 1–126 in the accepted numbering stemming from the first edition in 1609), it is the first of the cycle after the opening sequence now described as the procreation sonnets.

In the sonnet, the speaker asks whether or not he should compare his beloved to the summer season, and argues that he should not because the comparison does not properly express the depths of his emotion. He also states that his beloved will live on forever through the words of the poem. Scholars have found parallels within the poem to Ovid's *Tristia* and *Amores*, both of which have love themes. Sonnet 18 is written in the typical Shakespearean sonnet form, having 14 lines of iambic pentameter ending in a rhymed couplet. Detailed exegeses have revealed several double meanings within the poem, giving it a greater depth of interpretation.

### 1.1 Unit Objectives

The objective of this unit/poem is to help the students in understanding the poetic capabilities and deep insight of William Shakespeare, a well-known playwright and poet of the Elizabethan Age. The students need to be well versed in understanding the finer aspects of Shakespearean Sonnet.

### 1.2 About the Poet

William Shakespeare (26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616) an English poet, playwright, and actor, is considered to be one of the greatest writer in the English Literature. He is called England's national poet, and the "Bard of Avon". He has written 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems. The popularity of his splays can be gauged by the fact that they have been translated into major languages all around the world.

Shakespeare was born and brought up in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway. Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were primarily comedies and histories, which are regarded as some of the best work ever produced in these genres. He then wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608, including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, considered some of the finest works in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote tragicomedies, also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights. His *Sonnets* are considered to be his last non-dramatic works to be printed. He is credited with the creation of the Shakespearean sonnet. The Shakespearean sonnet is divided into four parts. The first three parts are each four lines long, and are known as quatrains, rhymed ABAB; the fourth part is called the couplet, and is rhymed CC.

### 1.3 About the Poem

#### Sonnet XVIII

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
 By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
 When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

The Poet begins the poem with a question addressed to the friend: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The next eleven lines are devoted to such a comparison. The poem, in fact, is a tribute to beauty. The poem is a statement of praise about the beauty of the fair youth who is 'more lovely and temperate' than a summer's day. The final quatrain of the sonnet tells how the beloved differs from the summer in that respect: his beauty is permanent. In the couplet, the poet explains how the beloved's beauty will accomplish this feat, and not perish because it is preserved in the poem, which will last forever; it will live "as long as men can breathe or eyes can see."

#### 1.4 Summary

Sonnet 18 is considered to be memorable for the dexterous and diverse presentation of the topic, in which the poet's feelings reach a level of delight.

The poet believes that beauty of his friend is "more lovely and more temperate" than a summer's day. The speaker lists some negative things about summer: it is short—"summer's lease hath all too short a date"—and sometimes the sun is too hot—"Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines." However, his

friend's beauty will last forever, unlike the fleeting beauty of a summer's day. By putting his love's beauty into the form of poetry, the poet is preserving it forever. "*So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*" The lover's beauty will live on, through the poem which will last as long as it can be read. On the surface, the poem is simply a statement of praise about his friend's beauty; summer tends to unpleasant extremes of windiness and heat, but his friend is always mild and temperate. Summer is incidentally personified as the "eye of heaven" with its "gold complexion"; the imagery throughout is simple and unaffected, with the "darling buds of May" giving way to the "eternal summer", which the speaker promises his friend. Finally, the poet believes that his verses will live forever and though these verses the beauty of his friend shall remain alive for ever.

### 1.5 Key Terms

*temperate* (1): i.e., evenly-tempered; not overcome by passion.

the eye of heaven (5): i.e., the sun.

every fair from fair sometime declines (7): i.e., the beauty (fair) of everything beautiful (fair) will fade (declines).

nature's changing course (8): i.e., the natural changes age brings.

that fair thou ow'st (10): i.e., that beauty you possess.

in eternal lines...growest (12): The poet is using a grafting metaphor in this line. Grafting is a technique used to join parts from two plants with cords so that they grow as one. Thus the beloved becomes immortal, grafted to time with the poet's cords (his "eternal lines").

### 1.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

#### 1. Who is the Writer of this Sonnet?

Ans: William Shakespeare.

#### 2. Who does the poet compare his friend with?

Ans: The poet compares his friend with a summer's day.

#### 3. What is 'the eye of heaven'?

Ans: The 'eye of heaven' is the sun in this poem.

#### 4. What does the poet say will live forever?

Ans: According to the poet his own verse and the beauty and youth of his friend shall live for ever.

### 1.7 Explanation of Important Passages:

Passage 1

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:*

**Reference to the Context:**

These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's famous sonnet "Sonnet XVIII". In this poem the poet compliments the unparalleled splendour of his friend, the Earl of Southampton.

**Explanation:**

The poet asks a question whether he should compare him to a summer day. But at once the poet himself answers that his friend is more lovely and sweet than a summer day. Though, sometimes the rough winds blowing during the summer season do shake the darling buds that sprung during the month of the May and summer season is also too short-lived.

**Passage 2**

*Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;*

**Reference to the Context:**

These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's famous sonnet "Sonnet XVIII". In this poem the poet compliments the unparalleled splendour of his friend, the Earl of Southampton.

**Explanation:**

In these lines the poet says that usually a summer day is sweet and pleasant but sometimes the sun shines very hot. Quite often the sun's golden complexion loses its brightness. In fact, every beautiful object loses its beauty after some time. It happens due to chance or by the law of nature.

**Passage 3**

*But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:*

**Reference to the Context:**

These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's famous sonnet "Sonnet XVIII". In this poem the poet compliments the unparalleled splendour of his friend, the Earl of Southampton.

**Explanation:**

In these lines the poet says that though every beautiful thing in the world loses its beauty but your beauty shall never fade away. Even death shall not be able to brag that the poet's friend wanders in its shade. Rather the poet's friend shall become immortal when he is mentioned by the poet in his verse.

**Passage 4**

*So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*



**Reference to the Context:**

These lines have been taken from William Shakespeare's famous sonnet "Sonnet XVIII". In this poem the poet compliments the unparalleled splendour of his friend, the Earl of Southampton.

**Explanation:**

In these lines the poet feels that his verses will live so long as men can breathe or eyes can see. In fact the poet wants to immortalise his friend through his verses. People will read his verses all through the ages and through his verses will come to know his friend's beauty as well.

**1.8 Questions and Exercises**

Answer the following questions in 20 to 30 words.

**1. Who is 'thee' referred to in the Sonnet?**

Ans: Although there is no written evidence about who is this 'thee' referred to in the poem. Presumably it is referred to poet's friend.

**2. Who is 'thee' compared too?**

Ans: 'thee' is compared to a summer's day and all the beautiful objects/creations of the nature. The poet feels that 'thee' is immortal due to poet's verses.

**3. What does the poet say about the month of May?**

Ans: According to the poet in the month of May lovely flowers bloom. But, quite often in the month of May it becomes too hot, and rough winds shudder the lovely buds of May.

**4. How does the poet eulogise eternal summer?**

Ans: The poet feels that summer is a season of warmth and lovely flowers bloom all throughout. This everlasting summer represents endless youth and beauty.

**5. How does the poet compare eternity with mortality?**

Ans: poet calls all beautiful things mortal i.e they are subject to death and transience. Whereas great work of art like poet's own verses are eternal i.e are timelessness.

**6. How does the poet talk about death?**

Ans: In this poem William Shakespeare has personified death. Shakespeare calls death all powerful and all the creations wander in its shade.

**Answer the following questions in about 200 words each.**

**1. Sum up the idea of beauty as talked about in the poem.**

Ans: The poet believes that beauty of his friend is "*more lovely and more temperate*" than a summer's day. The speaker lists some negative things about summer: it is short—"summer's lease hath all too short a date"—and sometimes the sun is too hot—"Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines." However, his friend's beauty will last forever, unlike the fleeting beauty of a summer's day. By putting his love's beauty into the form of poetry, the poet is preserving it forever. "*So long as men*

*can breathe, or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*" The lover's beauty will live on, through the poem which will last as long as it can be read. On the surface, the poem is simply a statement of praise about his friend's beauty; summer tends to unpleasant extremes of windiness and heat, but his friend is always mild and temperate. Summer is incidentally personified as the "eye of heaven" with its "gold complexion"; the imagery throughout is simple and unaffected, with the "darling buds of May" giving way to the "eternal summer", which the speaker promises his friend. Finally, the poet believes that his verses will live for ever and though these verses the beauty of his friend shall remain alive for ever.

**2. What is a sonnet? How does Shakespeare use other poetic devices in this poem?**

Ans: A *sonnet* is a fourteen-line lyric poem, traditionally written in iambic pentameter—that is, in lines ten syllables long, with accents falling on every second syllable, as in: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The sonnet form first became popular during the Italian Renaissance, when the poet Petrarch published a sequence of love sonnets addressed to an idealized woman named Laura. Sonnet is usually of two types :

Petrarchan sonnet and Shakespearean sonnet. The Petrarchan sonnet is divided into two parts, *octave* and a *sestet*, with a rhyme scheme *abba abba cdcddc*. The Shakespearean sonnet consists of three quatrains *abab cdcd efef* and a concluding couplet *gg*.

Shakespeare has used other poetic devices in the poem to heighten the poetic effect.

Shakespeare has used alliteration, 'And every fair from fair sometimes declines' personification, 'Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade' metaphor, 'Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines'.

**3. It is presumed that rather than immortalising his King, the poet tries to establish his own credentials. Comment on this.**

Ans: The poem starts with a flattering question to the beloved—"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The poem starts with a tribute to the beauty and youth of poet's friend. But soon the poet declares that his friend is far more beautiful and sweet than a summer's day, because it is short—"summer's lease hath all too short a date"—and sometimes the sun is too hot—"Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines." However, his friend's beauty will last forever, unlike the fleeting beauty of a summer's day.

However, the poet does not mean that his friend is immortal, rather he emphasises that it is his verses which are immortal. Infact, the poet is praising his own poetry which he feels will remain forever.

**4. 'Shakespeare in his poem compares permanence and transience.' Comment on this assessment of the poem.**

Ans: In this poem William Shakespeare has compared transience of human life or natural beauty with permanence of his own verses or art. The poet says that all beautiful things lose their beauty after some time. He states that summer's day, lovely blooming buds of May are short lived, as they are

shaken by the rough winds. But in a self praising tone, the poet states that his own verse is permanent. To quote :

*So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

Whatever one may feel about the sentiment expressed in the sonnet and especially in these last two lines, one cannot help but notice an abrupt change in the poet's own estimate of his poetic writing. Thus, in this poem William Shakespeare believes that his verses will live forever and through these verses the beauty of his friend shall remain alive for ever.

## UNIT-2

### KNOW THEN THYSELF

#### Alexander Pope

##### Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 About the Poet
- 2.3 About the Poem
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Key Terms
- 2.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 2.7 Explanation of Important Passages
- 2.8 Questions and Exercises

##### 2.0 Introduction

This extract is taken from *An Essay on Man* a longer poem published by Alexander Pope in 1733–1734. This poem *Essay on Man* was designed to be a part of a system of ethics which he wanted to express in poetry. On its publication, *An Essay on Man* received immense appreciation all through Europe. Great French Enlightenment writer, Voltaire called it "the most beautiful, the most useful, the most sublime didactic poem ever written in any language". In 1756 Another great French Philosopher Rousseau wrote to Voltaire admiring the poem and saying that it "softens my ills and brings me patience".

The poem generally suggests that man, with his limited capability, cannot comprehend the ways of God – therefore it is proper for him to confine himself to the study of man.

##### 2.1 Unit Objectives

The objective of this unit/poem is to help the students in appreciating the poetic capabilities and deep insight of Alexander Pope's poetry. The students need to be well versed in understanding the finer aspects of satirical poetry of which Alexander Pope was the master.

##### 2.2 About the Poet

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) is considered to be the most outstanding literary personality of the Neo-Classical Age. According to his biographer, John Spence, Pope was "a child of a particularly sweet temper," and with a voice so melodious as to be nicknamed the "Little Nightingale," Pope was barred from attending public school or university because of his religion, He was largely self-educated. He was well versed in French, Italian, Latin, and Greek, and read widely, discovering Homer at the age of six.

At twelve, Pope composed his earliest extant work, *Ode to Solitude*. However, in the same year he was affected by the onset of the debilitating bone deformity that plagued him until the end of his life. This

disease affected his spine and stunted his growth—Pope’s height never exceeded four and a half feet—and rendered him hunchbacked, asthmatic, frail, and prone to violent headaches. His physical appearance would make him an easy target for his many literary enemies in later years, who would refer to the poet as a “hump-backed toad.”

Pope’s *Pastorals*, which he claimed to have written at sixteen, were published in Jacob Tonson’s *Poetical Miscellanies* of 1710 and brought him swift recognition. *Essay on Criticism*, published anonymously the year after, established the heroic couplet as Pope’s principal measure and attracted the attention of Jonathan Swift and John Gay, who were Pope’s lifelong friends and collaborators. Together they formed the Scriblerus Club, a congregation of writers endeavoring to satirize ignorance and poor taste through the invented figure of Martinus Scriblerus, who would serve as a precursor to the dunces in Pope’s late masterpiece, the *Dunciad*.

In 1712 Pope wrote *The Rape of the Lock*, his best-known work and the one that brought him fame. Its mundane subject—the true account of a squabble between two prominent Catholic families over the theft of a lock of hair—is transformed by Pope into a mock-heroic send-up of classical epic poetry.

Pope in 1713 began work on his six-volume translation of Homer’s *Iliad*. He arranged for the work to be available by subscription, with a single volume being released each year for six years, a model that garnered Pope enough money to be able to live off his work alone, one of the few English poets in history to have been able to do so.

In 1719, following the death of his father, Pope moved to an estate at Twickenham, where he lived for the remainder of his life. Here he constructed his famous grotto, and went on to translate the *Odyssey*—which he brought out under the same subscription model as the *Iliad*—and to compile a heavily-criticized edition of Shakespeare, in which Pope “corrected” the Bard’s meter and made several alterations to the text, while leaving corruptions in earlier editions intact.

He wrote *Dunciad*, a vicious, four-book satire in which he lampoons the witless critics and scholars of his day, highlighting their “abuses of learning”. Reaction to the *Dunciad* from its victims and sympathizers was more hostile than that of any of his previous works; Pope reportedly never left his house without two loaded pistols in his pocket.

Pope published *Essay on Man* in 1734, and the following year a scandal broke out when an apparently unauthorized and heavily sanitized edition of Pope’s letters was released by the notoriously reprobate publisher Edmund Curll (collections of correspondence were rare during the period). Infact, these letters were edited and delivered to Curll in secret by Pope himself.

In 1738 his health began to fail. Alexander Pope died at Twickenham, surrounded by friends, on May 30, 1744. Since his death, Pope has been in a constant state of re-valuation. His high artifice, strict prosody, and, at times, the sheer cruelty of his satire were an object of derision for the Romantic poets of the nineteenth century, and it was not until the 1930s that his reputation was revived. Pope is now considered the dominant poetic voice of his century, a model of prosodic elegance, biting wit, and an enduring, demanding moral force.

### 2.3 About the Poem

*Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;  
 The proper study of mankind is man.  
 Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,  
 A being darkly wise, and rudely great:  
 With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,  
 With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,  
 He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;  
 In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;  
 In doubt his mind or body to prefer;  
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;  
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
 Whether he thinks too little, or too much:  
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;  
 Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;  
 Created half to rise, and half to fall;  
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;  
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:  
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!*

The poem “Know then Thyself” is an extract taken from *An Essay on Man: Epistle II. An Essay on Man* (1729-34) comprises four epistles in all. One of the most celebrated works of English Literature.

In this poem, at its outset, Pope commands man to “Know then thyself,” an adage that describes his argument (1). Although he actually intends for man to better understand his place in the universe, the classical meaning of “Know thyself” is that man should look inwards for truth rather than outwards. Having spent most of the first epistle describing man’s relationship to God as well as his fellow creatures, Pope’s true meaning of the phrase is clear. He then confuses the issue by endeavoring to convince man to avoid the presumptuousness of studying God’s creation through natural science. Science has given man the tools to better understand God’s creation, but its intoxicating power has caused man to imitate God. It seems that man must look outwards to gain any understanding of his divine purpose but avoid excessive analysis of what he sees. To do so would be to assume the role of God.

### 2.4 Summary

The main idea of the poem is the primal adage “Know thyself”. Alexander Pope says that it is beyond the reach of human intelligence to investigate the inscrutability of God. Pope counsels man to confine

his study to mankind and not try to comprehend the ways of God. The proper study of mankind is man himself. The poet states that man's nature is full of inconsistencies. He is a mixture of contradictions. He is wise and ignorant, cultured and crude. He is darkly wise and rudely great. Always confused whether to act or to rest, man is never sure whether he is God or a beast. To make matters worse, man is caught between the opposite dictates of his body and soul. His birth is the commencement of his earthly life, which soon comes to an end. No matter how strong his logical power, he is always prone to errors of judgement. Pope further expands the idea of the dual nature of man and says that he can never free himself from the chaos of thought and passion. The paradox is, while he thinks that he is the King of the universe, he is actually a prey to many forces. Man thinks that, being a learned creature, he can act as the judge of the universe; but his judgement is so poor that he is continuously making mistakes. Pope sums up his opinion of man with the declaration that man is 'the glory, the jest and the riddle of the world'.

## 2.5 Key Terms

Thyself : yourself

Scan : scrutinize, examine

Isthmus : a narrow tract of land that connects two larger land bodies.

However, in this poem it refers to the fact that man is suspended between God and beast.

Darkly wise : ignorant but wise

Middle state : reference to the earth

Stoic : one who is indifferent to pain and pleasure

Hangs between : ever confused

Deem : regard or consider in a specific way

Alike : equal, similar

Chaos : disorder

Lord of all things: King of the Universe

Glory : splendour

jest : joke

riddle : puzzle

## 2.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

Explain the following lines:

### 1. Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;

**The proper study of mankind is man.**

Ans: These introductory lines refer to the famous Greek adage "Know thyself". Here, the poet advises man to study his own nature and not to try to understand the ways of God. The proper study of all mankind is study of his own self.

**2. He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;**

Ans: The condition of man is that he is in a state of doubt i.e. indecisiveness. Man is confused whether to act or not.

**3. Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;**

Ans: In this lines the poet highlights the complete confusion arising out of the constant conflict in his mind between contemplation and obsession.

**4. Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;**

Ans: In this line the poet says that man is the great lord of all things, he has mastered all material things, yet he falls prey to these very things.

**2.7 Explanation of Important Passages**

**Passage 1**

*Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;*

*The proper study of mankind is man.*

*Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,*

*A being darkly wise, and rudely great:*

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from “ Know Then Thyself” which is an extract from Alexander Pope’s famous poem “ Essay on Man”. In this poem the poet advises man to restrict his study of mankind and not try to understand the ways of God.

**Explanation:** In these lines the poet says that the proper study of mankind is man himself. Man should not try to scan the ways of God. The mysteries of God are beyond the human intellect. Therefore, man should limit himself to his own study. The poet says that man is a curious paradox. He is a mixture of opposites. He is darkly wise and rudely great. He is, indeed, a great riddle.

**Passage 2**

*With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,*

*With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,*

*He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;*

*In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;*

Reference to the Context: These lines have been taken from “ Know Then Thyself” which is an extract from Alexander Pope’s famous poem “ Essay on Man”. In this poem the poet advises man to restrict his study of mankind and not try to understand the ways of God.

**Explanation:** Man has a great deal of knowledge. Yet he remains in doubts. His knowledge is not perfect. He has much knowledge therefore he cannot be called a sceptic. He can’t be called enlightened as he is also full of doubts. He has great power over material things. But he is a slave to his passions. He is too weak to be called a stoic. He remains in a state of uncertainty. He remains indecisive to remain in



doubt whether he should lead a life of action or one of rest. He does not know whether he should consider himself a God or a beast.

### Passage 3

*In doubt his mind or body to prefer;  
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;  
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:*

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from “ Know Then Thyself” which is an extract from Alexander Pope’s famous poem “ Essay on Man”. In this poem the poet advises man to restrict his study of mankind and not try to understand the ways of God.

**Explanation:** The poet says that man ever remains in a state of uncertainty. He remains in doubt whether he should prefer his mind or body. He does not know which of the two is more important. Another enigma about man is that he is born but to die. He reasons but to err. Birth and death are two extremes..logic and error are another set of extremes. But all these extremes co-exist in man. Thus man is really a riddle. he has reason yet he is ignorant. His reasoning is always imperfect.

### Passage 4

*Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;  
Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;  
Created half to rise, and half to fall;  
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;  
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!*

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from “ Know Then Thyself” which is an extract from Alexander Pope’s famous poem “ Essay on Man”. In this poem the poet advises man to restrict his study of mankind and not try to understand the ways of God.

**Explanation:** In these lines the poet says that man is a mere chaos of thought and passion. He remains confused all the time. He is always being abused and disabused by himself. He is a mixture of opposities. He is created half to rise and half to fall. Man is the great lord of all things. Yet he falls prey to these very things. He is the sole judge of truth on this earth. Yet his own life is a tale of endless error. Man is , indeed, a riddle. He is glory as well as jest of the world.

## 2.8 Questions and Exercises

### 1. Who is the writer of the poem “ Know Then Thyself”?

Ans: Alexander Pope.

### 2. According to the poet, Who is prey to all?

Ans: Man.

**3. According to the poet, What is the proper study of mankind?**

Ans: The study of man.

**4 What should man not scan?**

Ans: The ways of God.

**5. In What doubt does man hang?**

Ans: Whether to act or rest.

**6. According to the poet, why man cannot be a stoic?**

Ans: Man is too weak to be a stoic.

**Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words.**

**1. What is a paradox? Find two instances of paradox in the poem.**

Ans: The word paradox means opposite to expectations, existing belief or supposed opinion. It is a statement that appears to be self-contradictory but true. In this poem Pope calls man 'darkly wise' and 'rudely great'. Thus, man, according to the poet, is a paradox.

**2. How is man stuck between an angel and an animal?**

Ans: Man has both angelic as well as inhuman virtues. He has feelings of sympathy, love and compassion for others. But at times he behaves like an animal.

**3. What is it that man cannot be stoic?**

Ans: Man is too weak, both in mind and body. He cannot suffer pain or trouble without complaining.

**4. How is man a confused being?**

Ans: Man always remain a confused being because he always lives in a state of limbo. He has knowledge, yet he is ignorant. He is weak, yet proud.

**5. What are the doubts that trouble man?**

Ans: Throughout his life, man remains disturbed with all sorts of doubts. He remains in doubt, whether he is God or a beast, whether to act or rest? He is always doubtful whether to prefer mind or body.

**6. Explain ;” The glory, jest and the riddle of the world” .**

Ans: Man is glory as well as jest and riddle of the world because he is a glorious creature due to his achievements; however, he sometimes becomes a joke due to his foolish actions. These strange opposition makes him a riddle of the world.

**7. What is a rhyme scheme used in the poem/**

Ans: The poem has been written in heroic couplets. The poem contains nine couplets and each couplet has a different rhyme.

Answer the following questions in about 200 words each.

**1. What is the central idea of the poem?**

Ans: The central/main idea of the poem is based on an ancient aphorism “ Know thyself”. Throughout the poem, Pope advises man to limit his entire study to mankind and not to try to understand the

ways of God. The poet is of the opinion that man is a victim of opposites. He is both foolish and wise, great but at the same time rude, he possesses too much knowledge but remains a sceptic, though he considers himself to be a stoic but he is full of weaknesses. Man is caught between a catch 22 position, between the opposite pulls of his body and soul. Man is born with a dual nature. He can never free himself from the 'chaos of thought and passion'. The poet affirms that the proper study of mankind is man himself. Being such as he is, he must limit himself to studying his own nature.

**2. Where, according to Pope, does the root of man's confusion lie?**

Ans: According to Alexander Pope, man is all confused and the root of his confusion lies in the fact that he is totally ignorant about himself. He hangs between knowledge and ignorance. He acquires knowledge but is bound by passion and weakness of his body. He is torn apart by the contradictory demands of his mind and body. Moreover, he also has a confusion of identity. Whether, he is a beast or is he God? Is he divine or is he an animal? All these conflicts make him a confused creature. He is never sure about what he is. He hangs in doubt whether to act or rest.

**3. What is Pope's concept of man?**

Ans: Alexander Pope depicts man as a bundle of contradictions. Pope believes that man is a curious paradox. The poet has expressed his idea through various terms and expressions highlighting the duality of man. The expression, 'He hangs between' used by Pope clearly suggests the thought that man does not have a clear individuality. Man stands on the isthmus of a middle state 'between the two extreme states of being- God and beast. He is a mixture of opposites. He is sensible as well as uninformed. He is crude as well as cultured. He is 'darkly wise' and 'rudely great' i.e he is wise and living in darkness, great but at times uncivilized.

Man, according to the poet is, created half to rise and half to fall. Though, he has mastered all material things, yet he himself falls a prey to all these things. Although, man has discovered newer and newer truths about the physical world, but he failed to discover the truth about himself. Finally, the poet says that Man is, undeniably, a riddle. He is both, the glory and jest of the world.

**4. How do poetic devices like paradox, repetition, etc help the poet reiterate his point of view?**

Ans: Alexander Pope in his poem '*Know Then Thyself*' has exhibited both these techniques remarkably. The central idea Pope wants to convey is that proper study of mankind is man himself. He repeatedly emphasises that man doesn't know who or what he himself is, but tries to scrutinize the ways of Almighty. Pope states that man is a curious riddle. In order to support his argument the poet uses certain paradox. For example, man resorts to, "reasoning but to err", "In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast", "created half to rise, and half to fall". These devices are employed astutely by the poet to heighten the poetic effect the well.

## UNIT-3

# ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

“Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” is a poem composed by Thomas Gray, first published in 1751. Although the origin of the poem is unknown, it was partly inspired by Gray’s thoughts following the death of the poet Richard West in 1742. The poem is more of an elegy in name but not in form. It employs a style similar to that of contemporary odes, but it encapsulates a contemplation on death, and remembrance after death. The narrator uses the occasion to reflect on the lives and death of the obscure rustics buried in the churchyard. When Gray designated his work as an elegy, he placed it in a long tradition of meditative poems that focus on human mortality and sometimes reflect specifically on the death of a single person. By setting his meditation in a typical English churchyard with mounds, gravestones, and yew trees, Gray was also following a tradition. The poem is unique in the sense that it does not just lament death but also reflects on the toil, struggle and anonymity of the rustic dweller.

### 3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand what is an elegy and how it is composed.
- Appreciate the poetic expression and figures of speech
- Derive a message out of poetic expression which is largely driven by imagination.

### 3.2 ABOUT THE POET

Thomas Gray was born in Cornhill, London in 1716. His father, Philip Gray, was a clerk and his mother, Dorothy Antrobus, earned by making hats for women.. He was the fifth of 12 children, and the only child of Philip and Dorothy Gray to survive infancy. Gray's mother was keen to send him to Eton College where two of his uncles worked. He recalled his schooldays as a time of great happiness, as is recorded in his “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College”. In 1734 Gray went up to Peterhouse, Cambridge but could not indulge in studies as he disliked the curriculum. His family wanted him to study law but he spent most of his undergraduate years reading classical and modern literature.

It was in 1742, mainly after his close friend Richard West died, that Gray began writing poems seriously. He moved to Cambridge and started training himself for literary study. For most of his life Gray was a scholar in Cambridge, and only later in his life did he begin traveling again. He was so self-critical and fearful of failure that he published only thirteen poems during his lifetime. Gray died in July 1771 at Cambridge, England.

Gray began writing his masterpiece, the Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard, in the graveyard of St Giles parish church in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, in 1742. After several years of leaving it

unfinished, he completed it in 1750. Its reflective, calm and stoic tone was greatly appreciated. It has been translated into many languages including classical languages such as Latin and Greek. It is still one of the most popular and most frequently quoted poems in the English language. Gray did not produce a great deal of poetry. The "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," however, has earned him a permanent place in the annals of literary history. The poem was written at the end of the Augustan Age and at the beginning of the Romantic period. So it has features associated with both literary periods. Whereas on the one hand, it has the ordered, balanced phrasing and rational sentiments of the Neoclassical poetry, on the other, it tends toward the melancholy, emotionalism and individualism of the Romantic expression. Added to this, it idealizes the common man.

### 3.3 THE POEM

#### 3.3.1 The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,

The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.  
 Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,  
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;  
 Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r  
 The moping owl does to the moon complain  
 Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,  
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.  
 Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,  
 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,  
 The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

**Explanation:** Gray sets the scene for his private and quiet thoughts. He is far from the din of the city and looking out from a country churchyard at a rural scene. It is evening time and the flocks of animals and birds are home bound. Only the nocturnal creatures such as the owl, the cricket etc seem to be around. Although the scene is beautiful, life is not joyous, and Gray reflects that this day dies just like the one before it, as the plowman walks home wearily. The poet is alone, but he is not lonely or tired. The text gives a sense that he enjoys his solitude and stillness around. With these descriptions, Gray creates the backdrop for his melancholy reflections about eternal truths.

#### 3.3.2 For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,

Or busy housewife ply her evening care:  
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.  
 Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
 Their furrow of the stubborn glebe has broke:  
 How jocund did they drive their team afield!

How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!  
 Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

**Explanation:** Gray uses the churchyard scene to invoke important images: the sturdiness of the elms, death as symbolized by the graves, and the comfort provided by the yews trees shading bodies that sleep entombed. The poet reflects that death for the humble and obscure folks means a cessation of life's simple pleasures: waking up to the songs of birds, sharing life with a wife and children, and enjoying the fruits of their labour. Gray ponders upon not only the untimely death of young people but on the death that comes after a normal life span. But that does not imply that these unknown people had nothing worthy. In fact the poet appeals to the resourceful ones not to look down upon the simple lives lead quietly in some far off village.

3.3.3 The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,  
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
 Awaits alike th' inevitable hour  
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.  
 Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,  
 If Memory o'er their Tomb no Trophies raise,  
 Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault  
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.  
 Can storied urn or animated bust  
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
 Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death?  
 Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
 Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.  
 But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
 Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;  
 Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,  
 And froze the genial current of the soul.  
 Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
 The dark unfathom'd caves of their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone  
 Their glowing virtues, but their crimes confined;  
 Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,  
 The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,  
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride

With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.  
 Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;  
 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life  
 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.  
 Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect  
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,  
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.  
 Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,  
 The place of fame and elegy supply:  
 And many a holy text around she strews,  
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.  
 an bear:  
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

**Explanation:** The lines in this stanza provide the central message of the poem: The poor are born with the same natural abilities as members of the upper classes. Who can say what humble people might have accomplished in the great world had they not been constrained by their circumstances and their innate powers not been frozen by chilling poverty. Gray implies that the innocence and beauty of these souls, wasted in their isolated rural environment, and resembling hidden deserts and ocean caves, could have flourished in better conditions. If one boasts of high position, power, beauty or wealth, it is of no value as death overpowers all human attributes. The rich may boast of elaborate memorial services and lavish tombs but these poor folks have no such memorable ceremonies performed as their remembrance. The poem reminds stoically that nothing can bring back the departed soul and no resounding glorification of the dead will revive them. The dead village folks could have possessed qualities of states men, scholars and poets, had the conditions of their lives permitted them. But poverty restrained their talent which lay hidden like a flower or a gem not appreciated by others. However some humble mounds have been made to show respect to the dead. These simple memorials ask the passer by to heave a sigh. The poet draws solace from the fact that their poverty restrained them from doing wrong deeds .

#### 3.3.4 Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone

Their glowing virtues, but their crimes confined;  
 Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,  
 The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,  
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride  
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.  
 Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;  
 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life

They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.  
 Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect  
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,  
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.  
 Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,  
 The place of fame and elegy supply:  
 And many a holy text around she strews,  
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

**Explanation:** Gray returns to the churchyard in this section, remarking on the graves' simple markers with their badly spelled inscriptions, names, and dates. Some bear unpolished verses or consoling biblical texts; some are decorated with "shapeless sculpture." Gray is touched that such grave markers show the humanity these dead people share with all men and women (including, by implication, the famous who took paths of glory). Those who remain can sense that the dead "cast one long lingering look" back on what they were leaving and were comforted by at least one loved one. Gray reflects that the voice of general human nature can be heard crying from these graves. The inscriptions on the graves might be simple but they instruct moral lessons to the onlooker.

3.3.5 On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires;  
 Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
 Ev'n in our Ashes live their wonted Fires.  
 For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,  
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;  
 If chance, by lonely contemplation led,  
 Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate.

**Explanation:** Gray mentions an eternal and common desire shared by all humans. The dying man longs for remembrance. He desires that someone would shed tears and narrate his tale to the others. Even the ashes of a dead person ask for respect and acknowledgement. Although the inscriptions on the tombs have no rhythm and music, there is hope that some traveler will come that way and read those lines and remember the dead.

3.3.6 'One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,  
 Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;  
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;  
 'The next with dirges due in sad array  
 Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.  
 Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay  
 Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

**Explanation:** The farmer recounts that one morning the poet was nowhere to be seen. He was not at the hill or the heath or near the tree, the stream or the lawn and the wood. Then the farmer saw the poet's



funeral procession to a church, marked by sad faces and mournful songs. He was buried in the same church yard with simple lines inscribed on the grave beneath an old thorny tree. In this way the poet gives the message that he counts himself amongst common humanity and even died as one of them.

### 3.3.7 THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth  
 A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.  
 Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,  
 And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.  
 Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,  
 Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:  
 He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,  
 He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.  
 No farther seek his merits to disclose,  
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,  
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose,)  
 The bosom of his Father and his God.

**Explanation:** Gray speaks of his grave being “upon the lap of Earth” and not inside the ornate church. He accords himself modest praise and justifies his life as worthwhile. He concedes that despite his “humble birth,” he took pains to educate himself. Although some may consider the poet’s natural melancholy a disadvantage, he himself thought it the source of his poetic sensibility . Gray describes himself as generous and sincere, for which his reward was not worldly fame or fortune (the “paths of glory”) but heavenly “recompense,” in the form of kindred souls. The epitaph concludes by advising the reader not to ask more about the poet’s virtues and frailties but to leave him to God’s care.

### Check Your Progress

1. What is an elegy? Is the present poem an elegy in the typical sense?
2. What is the theme of this elegy?
3. What is an epitaph and what is its significance?
4. What is a figure of speech? Give some examples from the Elegy

### 3.4 Summary

An elegy is a poem which laments the dead. Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is noteworthy in that it mourns the death not of great or famous people, but of common men. The speaker of this poem sees a country churchyard at sunset, which impels him to meditate on the nature of human mortality. The poem invokes the classical idea of memento mori, a Latin phrase which states plainly to all mankind, "Remember that you must die." The speaker considers the fact that in death, there is no difference between great and common people. He goes on to wonder if among the lowly people buried in the churchyard there had been any natural poets or politicians whose talent had simply never been discovered or nurtured. This thought leads him to praise the dead for the honest and simple lives that they lived. The major subject throughout this poem is death. The poem has a dark atmosphere and takes

place in a cemetery; the author reflects on how people are remembered after their passing away. The author reminds us that all men will certainly die, and they will be remembered by their glories on earth. Gray uses sophisticated diction reflecting the neoclassic style. He also uses iambic pentameter which is a line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable. An example of iambic pentameter in the poem: "Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife, their sober wishes never learned to stray; along the cool, sequestered vale of life they kept the noiseless terror of their way." Gray also uses personification in the following example : "Awaits alike the inevitable hour the paths of glory lead but to the grave."

### 3.5 KEY TERMS

- **Curfew:**night time
- **Knell:** sound of a bell
- **Yonder :** there (old English)
- **Ivy mantled:** covered with ivy creeper
- **Solitary:** lonely
- **Hamlet:** village
- **Sickle:** an agricultural instrument
- **Furrow:** a long line or hollow that is formed or cut into the surface of something
- **Annals:** year-wise record of events
- **Aisle:** a passage between rows of seats
- **Vault:** an arch shaped roof
- **Lyre:** a musical instrument
- **Muse:** a person or power which inspires a creative artist
- **Implore:** plead
- **Rustic:** villager
- **Ignoble:** degraded
- **Vale:** valley
- **Kindred:** relatives and friends
- **Rill:** a small stream
- **Melancholy:** sorrow
- **Bounty:** reward
- **Recompense:** make amends for loss
- **Abode:** home

### 3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

Answer 1: Elegy is a melancholy poem, especially for the dead or for a funeral. This poem, technically speaking is not an elegy although it is said to have been written at the death of the poet's friend. This elegy is based on despair regarding the human condition.

Answer 2: Gray criticizes the vain struggles of those who seek success and defile their virtues for the sake of ambition. He raises the stature of the humble residents of hamlets. Those people who now lie peacefully in their graves claimed no big achievements. But their

simple life was free of care and concern. However they wanted the world to remember them and made simple tombs for the dead.

Answer 3: An epitaph refers to words written for a dead person, specially inscribed on a tombstone. The epitaph in the “Elegy” is important because it reveals Gray's imaginary tombstone and informs the reader about the thoughts of the poet. He was not born into a wealthy or famous family, yet he did receive an education. He was often depressed, but he was blessed because God gave him a friend. The epitaph summarizes all these views.

Answer 4: Figurative language in the form of a single word or phrase used for rhetorical effect is called figure of speech. It can be done by addition( by expansion and repetition), omission (by subtraction and abridgement), transposition ( by transferring) and permutation(substitution). Use of metaphors, similes, images, personification, alliteration are some examples of figures of speech in the “Elegy”.

### 3.7 SELECTED FIGURES OF SPEECH

- **Elegy:** It is a poem which is dedicated to mourning with a sad setting, tone and poetic expression. It is usually sung at the passing away of a kindred soul. The present elegy laments the hidden potential of common village folk who lived and died in anonymity.
- **Quatrain:** A quatrain is a four-line stanza. "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is written in heroic quatrains. Heroic quatrains rhyme is in an abab pattern and written in iambic pentameter. An iamb is a poetic foot consisting of one unstressed and one stressed syllable.
- **Alliteration:** It means the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of or in closely connected words. Some examples from the “Elegy” are as following: “Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre”, “Their glowing virtues, but their crimes confined”, “ was his bounty, and his soul sincere”, etc.
- **Figurative questions:** This is a literary device used by the poet to draw the reader’s attention to important issues as well as to involve the reader into finding out answers to these questions. For example:  
 Can storied urn or animated bust  
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
 Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,  
 Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death?
- **Personification:** It refers to the attribution of human characteristics to something non-human, or the representation of an abstract quality in human form. For example : “The moping owl does to the moon complain” , “Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth, And Melancholy mark'd him for her own”.
- **Epitaph:** It is a phrase or words written in memory of a person who has died, especially unscripted on the grave. The Epitaph describes an obscure youth of humble birth and sad nature. This youth was enjoyed neither fortune nor fame, but he acquired much knowledge and wisdom. Though he was very sincere and generous, yet his life was full of misery and sorrow. However God recompensed him for his gifts, in the form of a true friend.
- **Metaphor:** Metaphor is a figure of speech which establishes an implicit, implied or concealed comparison between two things that are unrelated but are shown as sharing some common characteristics. For example:

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:  
 Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,  
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

### 3.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

#### Short-Answer Questions

**1. What was Gray's opinion of high-born persons vis-a-vis the low-born?**

**Ans:** Gray admired the virtues of the ordinary people and felt that their potential was not fully explored. The high-born asserted their power and position by constructing huge memorials for themselves.

**2. Explain : The paths of glory lead but to the grave.**

**Ans:** When man enjoys power, he thinks he is invincible. But despite all the glorious deeds, the final resting place is still the grave.

**3. What message does the “Elegy” give?**

**Ans:** The "Elegy" asks us to honor the lives of common, unknown people and not just the rich and famous folks. This idea of glorifying mundane, everyday things becomes central to the poem.

**4. What is the significance of the Epitaph in the “Elegy”?**

**Ans:** It is an inscription on the grave. The poet imagines how the world would talk about him after reading these lines carved on his grave.

**5. How is nature described in the “Elegy”?**

**Ans:** Nature is serene and quiet and adds to the sad tone of the “Elegy”. There are few voices of nature as it is evening time and the day is coming to a close.

#### LONG- ANSWER QUESTIONS

**1. What are the chief themes of the “Elegy”?**

**Ans:** The “Elegy” deals with various themes which have been beautifully portrayed.

- A. Death is a great equalizer .Even the proud and the mighty must one day lie in the grave, like the humble men and women now buried in the churchyard. No grand memorials and no soothing words about the dead can bring him or her back from death.
- B. Missed Opportunities : Due to poverty or other handicaps, many talented people never bet the opportunities they deserve. Their worth remains unexplored. However they should not be under estimated. Had their potential been tapped, they would have proved to be great leaders, poets and rulers. The following lines elucidate this theme through metaphors:
- C. Virtue : The “Elegy” is dedicated to the virtues of the common people. The circumstances might have limited their growth but they had many virtues. They lived a simple life contented with small pleasures. They were neither too ambitious nor cruel to other humans.

**2. Identify the elements in the “Elegy” which foreshadow romanticism?**

**Ans:** Romanticism favored nature, emotion, and imagination. The focus on nature is evident from the beginning with the country churchyard setting ."The curfew tolls the knell of parting day, the lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea, the plowman homeward plods his weary way, and leaves the world to darkness and to me". It also shows a love for nature as it is admired in its quiet and solitary form. The poem also emphasizes the melancholic emotion specifically death, which is a

salient feature of both the pre-Romantics and the Romantics: "Flattery soothe the dull cold of death." It also contains romantic ideals with the portrayal of ordinary citizens, their forgotten lives and unsung deaths. The "Elegy" is replete with symbols and images from nature. All these qualities foreshadow romanticism .

### 3. Why is Gray's "Elegy" considered a landmark work in literature?

**Ans:** "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" moves from a meditation at a particular place upon the graves of the poor to a reflection on the mortality of all humankind. It ponders upon some of the benefits of being constrained by poverty. The poem alludes to the wish of all people not to die and to the eternal wish among all to be remembered after death. Gray concludes by imagining his own death and how he hopes to be remembered. Some critics feel that this progression of thought is not entirely logical, but it is all the more understandable. One reason for the long popularity of Gray's poem lies in the universal chord he managed to touch not only with the thoughts he expressed but even more important, with the progression he gave to those thoughts. The poem also contains some of the most striking lines of English poetry which make it a remarkable work in literature.

### ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS

#### 1. Write about the structure of the "Elegy".

**Ans:** The "Elegy" has been written in quatrains. It may be divided into four sections. The first four stanzas establish the solemn meditative tone and place. The speaker is in a village graveyard at twilight. Stanzas five and six describe the events and activities in which the dead people buried there are no longer able to participate. Stanzas seven to twenty three castigate the great and instruct them not to view the poor with contempt. It is suggested that the poor, too, might have been accomplished and powerful. In fact all men are equal in death. In stanzas twenty four to twenty nine, the poet addresses himself, imagining to be observed by an inhabitant of the village, and finally describing his own death and burial. The poem closes with the speaker's epitaph, assuring that the resourceful are recompensed through their immortalizing virtues . Thus

"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" proceeds from a meditation in the churchyard to a wider consideration of human nature and predicament of the underprivileged lot. In Gray concludes by imagining his own death and how he will be remembered by those who read his epitaph. The Elegy has been skillfully structured with a well- developed progression of thought.

### Answers to Check Your Progress

1. In "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," Gray, or his speaker, certainly does not criticize educating the poor. His sentiment is that among the poor buried in the churchyard there may well be people like Oliver Cromwell (but kinder) or like ruling senators, except that they had no education. And what kept them from having education was their poverty. Penury, or poverty, is cited as what keeps poor people, like those buried in the cemetery, from achieving successes like those achieved by leaders. Thus, in the poem, the speaker certainly condemns poverty, but does not criticize educating the poor.
2. Although the initial inspiration for Thomas Gray's poem "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" may have been the 1742 death of his friend Richard West, the final version, published in 1751, does

not focus on mourning for any one particular person, but instead is an example of a more general meditation concerning mortality.

3. Thomas Gray employs an extended metaphor in the first 7 stanzas to compare the end of humans' life and the mourning for their loss to the end of a day. His use of colors such as grey, sounds such as animals who are readying for the night or the bell "knelling," illustrate the close of not only the day but also of a life that will never experience those colors, sounds, or images again.

### Questions and Exercises

1. **What is the significance of the epitaph in the poem "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard?"**

The speaker in "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is contemplating death. He looks upon the graves in the churchyard and he ruminates on those buried there. The poem is also the speaker's quest to find himself or a quest to understand what is important in life. And this is where the epitaph comes in. Given the implied modesty in the epitaph, we might assume that it was written by someone else; not the speaker himself. This means that another person is looking at the speaker's death in philosophical contemplation of mortality just as the speaker himself did throughout the context of the poem.

2. **How does "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" imbibe the twin features of Romanticism and Neo Classicism?**

**Answer:** Although Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is not considered to be part of the Romantic canon, its first twenty lines do advance some classic Romantic themes. Most notably, the first twenty lines of Gray's poem describe the kind of isolated world of natural beauty favored by most Romantics. In the first stanza, we can see that Gray sets his poem within a world of serene, pastoral beauty. With a wandering herd, an open grassland and a plowman, Gray skillfully develops a world of natural beauty and hard-working farmers. Moreover, since the world is left to the speaker of the poem, it's suggested that he is alone in this picturesque natural setting. A beautiful and isolated natural setting is a typical feature of Romantic literature, as it nurtures an ideal setting for the Romantic imagination to become manifest. At the same time, it needs to be remembered that Neo-classicism was the dominant influence in the eighteenth century English poetry. Poetry was largely based on literary models provided by Greece and Rome. In the neo-classical tradition, the tone and the rhyme scheme of a poem are measured and even, and the argument is intellectual rather than prone to emotional outpouring. While Gray does not address his elegy to a single individual, which is the standard Classical form, this poem is a moving address to those who are dead and gone but yearned to live and to be remembered after death. The poem communicates sadness, but the poet is distant from his subjects. Although it is sad that people die unmourned, but that's the way life is in the larger scheme of nature. So the Romantic traces are present all through but the voice of sane reason is insistently present. Even when Gray seems to be exalting nature in her somber form, there is an underlying restraint that curbs the free flow of the Romantic verve. However the Elegy assimilates the divergent strands effectively.

## UNIT-4

### THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

William Wordsworth

#### Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 About the Poet
- 4.3 About the Poem
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Key Terms
- 4.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 4.7 Explanation of Important Passages
- 4.8 Questions and Exercises

#### 4.0 Introduction

"The World Is Too Much with Us" is a lyrical sonnet written by the great English Romantic poet William Wordsworth. The poem was composed in 1802, when the Industrial Revolution was in full flower. He published it in 1807 as part of a collection, *Poems in Two Volumes*. In this poem, Wordsworth criticises the world of the First Industrial Revolution for being absorbed in materialism and distancing itself from nature. Wordsworth here reflects his view that humanity must get in touch with nature to progress spiritually.

Like most Italian sonnets, its 14 lines are written in iambic pentameter

#### 4.1 Unit Objectives

The objective of this unit/poem is to help the students in understanding the poetic capabilities and deep insight of William Wordsworth a well-known poet of the Romantic Age. The students need to be well versed in understanding William Wordsworth's perception in highlighting the degenerated material distrust of the period.

#### 4.2 About the Poet

A Poet Laureate, William Wordsworth (7 April 1770 – 23 April 1850) was a main English Romantic poet who, with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, helped to launch the Romantic Age in English literature with their joint publication *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

Wordsworth poetry is notable for prominence given to nature and imagination. He called poetry as 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge'. He gave the idea that poetry is a "spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions recollected in tranquillity".

Wordsworth believed that nature never betrays the heart that loved her and advocated that man should completely submit oneself to the nature. Nature in fact should be the guide and guardian of the human soul. In fact, Wordsworth spiritualised nature and emphasised its moral influence on human beings.

Wordsworth's magnum opus is generally considered to be *The Prelude*, a semi auto biographical poem of his early years that he revised and expanded a number of times. It was posthumously titled and published, before which it was generally known as "the poem to Coleridge". Wordsworth was Britain's Poet Laureate from 1843 until his death from pleurisy on 23 April 1850.

Some of Wordsworth's best known poems include lyrics, odes, sonnets and verse tales. He is known for his "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood", 'Daffodils', Tintern abbey', 'The Solitary Reaper'.

### 4.3 About the Poem

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—  
 Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
 It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be  
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

This poem, exposes the vices of the world and asks the reader to stop and enjoy the beauties of nature, and to take the time to think. William Wordsworth wrote this sonnet when he was 32 years old, in 1802, and published it in 1807. This poem, in fact, was a sincere answer to the fall of the cottage industry and rural way of life, which had been taken over by rising industrialisation. People were no longer in touch with Nature.

The industrial revolution had radically transformed England, Wordsworth was always sensitive to the changes in the nation's consciousness, was disturbed with this development.

In a letter he wrote about '*the decadent material cynicism of the time*' and this sonnet replicates poet's helplessness to set right the disparity between the spiritual and material, Nature and the economy.



When Wordsworth wrote this poem, England was being industrialised at a fast pace. Steam engines were being built for the mines and new railways, factories were being established and large scale industrialisation was taking shape.

The countryside was becoming mechanised. Rural families ended up working in the mills and mines. This was a fast and irrevocable change.

Wordsworth believed that society was hell bent on making and spending money in factories and fast-paced business enterprises completely ignoring the immaculate beauty of nature, which is a manifestation of the celestial.

In an angry tone, the poet reprimands the society for giving preference to worldly things and pleasures. In doing so, people are starving their souls. He further declares that he would rather be a pagan. Then he could appreciate nature through different eyes and even see Proteus rising from the sea.

#### 4.4 Summary

In this poem, Wordsworth in an angry tone accuses the modern man of having lost its connection to nature and to everything meaningful: “Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: / Little we see in Nature that is ours; / We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!” He says that even when the sea “bares her bosom to the moon” and the winds howl, people are still out of tune, and looks on indifferently at the spectacle of the storm. The poet wishes to be a pagan raised according to a different vision of the world, so that, “standing on this pleasant lea,” he might see images of ancient gods rising from the waves, a sight that would cheer him greatly. He imagines “Proteus rising from the sea,” and Triton “blowing his wreathed horn.”

#### 4.5 Key Terms

Sordid: awful,dissolute

Boon : gift

Howling: expression of grief

Pagan: a person holding religious belief other than Christianity.

Creed : faith,a statement of belief

Lea : an open area of grassy or arable land

Proteus: Greek God of rivers and Oceans.

Triton : The Messenger of the Seas, according to the Greek Mythology.

#### 4.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

**1. What does the poet mean by ‘the world is too much with us’?**

Ans; It means that we have developed too much love for materialistic things.

**2. What are poet’s views about the winds?**

Ans: According to the poet the stormy winds are now sleeping like flowers.

### 3 Why does the poet feel 'forlorn;?'

Ans: The poet feels forlorn because he finds amidst people who are blind to the beauty and bounty of nature.

#### 4.7 Explanation of Important passages:

##### Passage 1

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from William Wordsworth's famous poem "The World is Too Much with Us" In this poem the poet criticises the decadent material cynicism of the time that made human beings insensitive towards the beauty of nature.

##### Explanation:

In these lines the poet says that people have become too much money-orientated. They waste their time in getting and spending money. They squander all their powers in their race for material things. The poet says that we have no time to look at the splendour of nature. Rather, we have given away our hearts away completely to the God of money.

##### Passage 2

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not.

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from William Wordsworth's famous poem "The World is Too Much with Us" In this poem the poet criticises the decadent material cynicism of the time that made human beings insensitive towards the beauty of nature.

**Explanation:** In these lines the poet says that the sea bares her bosom to the moon. The winds that keep howling all the day, gather up like like sleeping flowers. We are infact, out of tune with these scenes. The poet states that people are not moved by the beautiful scenes of nature.

##### Passage 3

Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

Reference to the Context: These lines have been taken from William Wordsworth's famous poem "The World is Too Much with Us" In this poem the poet criticises the decadent material cynicism of the time that made human beings insensitive towards the beauty of nature.

Explanation: In these lines the poet says that he would rather be a pagan than be a Christian suckled in an obsolete religion. Infact, he wants to stand on this pleasant land and enjoy the sights and beauties of nature that makes him less dejected. Here he could see the Proteus, the sea God rising from the sea and also could hear the messenger of the sea God Triton blow his wreathed horn

#### 4.8 Questions and Exercises

##### Answer the following Questions

**1. According to the poet,how the world is too much with us?**

Ans: According to the poet we aqre too much obsessed with the materialistic things and do not enjoy the beauties of nature.

**2. According to the poet, Why can't we make nature a part of our life?**

Ans: We cannot make nature a part of our life because we waste our time in getting and spending.

**3. What message does this poem convey?**

Ans: The poem conveys an important message that we should stop worshipping material good.

**4. What type of sonnet is " The World is Too Much with Us"**

Ans: It is a Petrarchan Sonnet.

##### Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words.

**1. According to the poet, what is man's attitude to nature?**

Ans: According to the poet, man has lost his connection with nature. He is too much obsessed with material things and wastes his time earning and spending.

**2. Who were Proteus and Triton?**

Ans: According to the Greek mythology, both Proteus and Triton were Sea Gods. Proteus could change his shape at will and Triton could control the sea waves by blowing his conch shell.

**3. Why does the poet want to become a pagan?**

Ans: The poet want be a pagan so that he could worship nature as God and gain spiritual comfort. He wishes to be in harmony with nature.

**4. What does the poet mean by stating ,'The world is too much with us'.**

Ans: According to the poet we are too much obsessed with the materialistic things and do not enjoy the beauties of nature.

**5 What are we ‘out of tune’ with?**

Ans; We are out of tune with nature. We have given our hearts away in exchange for money and material things.

**6 What is the ‘sordid boon’?**

Ans: According to the poet, we are so preoccupied with material things and have become mammon worshippers to such an extent that we have lost touch with the spiritual and natural object.

**7 Who is a pagan, according to the poet?**

Ans: A Pagan , according to the poet, is a non Christian. The poet believes that he would prefer to be in harmony with nature than follow a religion that separates him from nature.

**Answer the following questions in about 200 words each.**

**1. What does the poet think about the way man treats nature? How does he express his thoughts and feelings on this topic in the poem?**

Ans: In this poem, Wordsworth states that we care far too much about these worldly things. By using our time, minds, and energy in “getting and spending” we “lay waste our powers”. We are tied up in our greed for more money.

The poet declares that we should enjoy nature. He describes the beauties of nature. He describes the sea, and the wind, and the flowers. The poet personifies nature to help the reader to connect with each description. The sea “bares her bosom to the moon” which suggests an intimacy between the moon and the sea. The winds “howl”. This gives the wind human emotion. The flowers “sleep”. “we are out of tune” with nature because we are so caught up in worldly wealth. He appeals to God, and even exclaims that he would rather be a pagan than to be out of touch with nature and this would give him joy and hope, or at least make him feel “less forlorn”. He would rather be poor and helpless and connected with nature than rich and powerful and alienated from it.

In the final two lines, the poet looks out at the sea, enjoying nature, long enough to see Triton and Proteus. The speaker refers to these two pagan gods after he first appeals to God and swears that he would rather be a pagan than alienated from nature.

**2. The Sonnet is a criticism of life in this mechanised milieu. Comment on this assessment of the poem.**

Ans: In this Sonnet William Wordsworth has highlighted the decadent material cynicism of the time that has made man insensitive towards the beauty of nature. We are living in a mechanised world.

Wordsworth states that we care far too much about these worldly things. By using our time, minds, and energy in “getting and spending” we “lay waste our powers”. We are tied up in our greed for more money.

The poet accuses the modern age of having lost its connection to nature and to everything meaningful: “Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: / Little we see in Nature that is ours; / We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!” He says that even when the sea “bares her bosom to the moon” and the winds howl, humanity is still out of tune, and looks on uncaringly at

the spectacle of the storm. The speaker wishes that he were a pagan raised according to a different vision of the world, so that, "standing on this pleasant lea," he might see images of ancient gods rising from the waves, a sight that would cheer him greatly. He imagines "Proteus rising from the sea," and Triton "blowing his wreathed horn."

### 3. How does Wordsworth employ Greek mythology and other devices to portray the materialistic mind of modern man?

Ans: Apart from employing the Greek mythology, Wordsworth has used imagery, allusion and contrast to portray the decadent material cynicism of the time that made man insensitive towards the beauties of nature.

The metaphor "we have given our hearts away, a sordid boon" is also an oxymoron. Sordid suggests the worst aspects of human nature such as immorality, selfishness and greed, while a boon is something that functions as a blessing or benefit. The contradiction between the meanings of the words suggests that materialism is a destructive and corrupt blessing which the industrial revolution has produced. It emphasises the tension between the good exterior and the sordid truth behind materialism. On an exterior level, material goods bring pleasure and are a symbol of man's progress; however, in truth, they feed the worst aspects of humanity: thus a "sordid boon."

In the simile "and are up gathered now like sleeping flowers," sleeping flowers suggest that man is numb and unaware of the beauty and power of the natural world. At the same time, however, he is also optimistic, the image of sleeping flowers implies that humans are only inactive, and that there is some hope we will wake up and realise the power of nature.

The tone of the poem is angry, transformed with irony and apparent vengefulness. Initially, the poet reprimands the society for dedicating all its force to material things and pleasures. Later, he proclaims mockingly that he would rather be a pagan; at least then he could appreciate nature through different eyes and even see Proteus rising from the sea—perhaps to wreak vengeance on complacent humankind. Towards the end of the poem employing the Greek mythology the poet desires to see a return to the old times when people were in tune with the land and Nature. Proteus, from Greek mythology, the Old man of the Sea, takes different shapes and can be forced to predict the future. Triton is the son of Neptune, the sea god, and has the power to calm the seas with his conch-shell horn.

### 4. The poet refers Paganism to worldliness. Discuss.

Ans: According to Christianity, there is only one God. However, during the ancient times, particularly in Greece and Rome (Italy) people believed in many different Gods and worshipped many deities. Their religion was referred to as pagan religion and their Gods were referred to as Pagan or Heathen Gods. Christians believed paganism as a pejorative term and the term presumed a belief in false Gods.

But, the poet wishes to offend even Christianity for nature and become a pagan. He wishes he could be a pagan so that he could worship nature as God and gain spiritual relief.

He would prefer to be in harmony with nature than follow a religion that separates him from nature. The poem highlights that sordidness and crass materialism of modern life forces the poet to go back to the ancient myths and seek solace.

## UNIT-5

### MY LAST DUCHESS

Robert Browning

#### Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 About the Poet
- 5.3 About the Poem
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Key Terms
- 5.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 5.7 Explanation of Important Passages
- 5.8 Questions and Exercises

#### 5.0 Introduction

"My Last Duchess", is one of the finest examples of the dramatic monologue. It first appeared in 1842 in Browning's *Dramatic Lyrics*. The poem is written in 28 rhymed couplets of iambic pentameter. The poem is set in 'Ferrara', the capital of a province in Italy that was well-known for its 'high' culture during the Renaissance. This setting also suggests that the poem's story is historical: a factual event occurred.

#### 5.1 Unit Objectives

The purpose of this unit/poem is to facilitate the students in comprehending the poetic ability and profound insight of, well known Victorian poet, Robert Browning. The students need to be well versed in understanding the finer aspects of dramatic monologue of which Robert Browning was the master.

#### 5.2 About the Poet

Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was one of the most renowned English poet and playwright. He is known mainly for his dramatic monologues, in which the words not only convey setting and action but reveal the speaker's character. Robert Browning was considered to be an optimist. His poetry is often considered to be obscure and full of ambiguity.

Browning started writing at an early age . He published *Pauline* in 1833, *Paracelus* in 1835, *Strafford* in 1837, *Sordello* in 1840. His poems are highly ironical in nature. He is known for *Porphyria's Lover*, *My Last Duchess*, *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*, and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*.

#### 5.3 About the Poem

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
Looking as if she were alive. I call  
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands

Worked busily a day, and there she stands.  
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said  
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read  
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,  
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,  
But to myself they turned (since none puts by  
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)  
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,  
How such a glance came there; so, not the first  
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not  
Her husband's presence only, called that spot  
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps  
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps  
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint  
Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
Half-flush that dies along her throat." Such stuff  
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough  
For calling up that spot of joy. She had  
A heart—how shall I say?— too soon made glad,  
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er  
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.  
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,  
The dropping of the daylight in the West,  
The bough of cherries some officious fool  
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule  
She rode with round the terrace—all and each  
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,  
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked  
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked  
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name

With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame  
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill  
 In speech—which I have not—to make your will  
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this  
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,  
 Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let  
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set  
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse—  
 E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose  
 Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,  
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without  
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;  
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands  
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet  
 The company below, then. I repeat,  
 The Count your master's known munificence  
 Is ample warrant that no just pretense  
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;  
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed  
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go  
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,  
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,  
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

The poem is set during the late Italian Renaissance. The poem is set in 'Ferrara', the capital of a province in Italy that was well-known for its 'high' culture during the Renaissance. This setting also suggests that the poem's story is historical: a factual event occurred. The speaker is the Duke and he is talking to a listener, who is an emissary and has come to negotiate Duke's marriage to the daughter of a Count. A Duke murdered his seventeen-year-old wife after three years of marriage, and married another girl.

He shows the messenger a painting of a woman, explaining that it is a portrait of his late wife; he invites his guest to sit and look at the painting. As they look at the portrait of the late Duchess, the Duke describes her happy, cheerful and flirtatious nature, which had displeased him. He says, "She had a heart – how shall I say? – too soon made glad..." He goes on to say that his complaint of her was that "'twas



not her husband's presence only" that made her happy. Eventually, "I gave commands; then all smiles stopped together." This could be interpreted as either the Duke had given commands to the Duchess to stop smiling or commands for her to be killed. He now keeps her painting hidden behind a curtain that only he is allowed to draw back, meaning that now she only smiles for him.

#### 5.4 Summary

The speaker here is the Duke tells his listener that the painting of the Duchess is impressively accurate. The painter, Frà (or "Friar") Pandolf, worked hard to achieve a realistic effect. The Duke asks his listener politely to sit down and examine the painting.

The Duke explains to the listener why he brought up the painter, Frà Pandolf.

He says that he mentioned Pandolf on purpose, or "by design" because strangers never examine the Duchess's portrait without looking like they want to ask the Duke how the painter put so much "depth and passion" into the expression on the Duchess's face, or "countenance" They don't actually ask, because they don't dare, but the Duke thinks he can tell that they want to.

Addressing his still-unknown listener as "sir," the Duke goes into more detail about the expression on the Duchess's face in the painting.

He describes her cheek as having a "spot / Of joy" in it, perhaps a slight blush of pleasure.

It wasn't just "her husband's presence" that made her blush in this way, although the Duke seems to believe that it *should* have been the only thing that would.

The Duke doesn't like the idea that anyone else might compliment his wife or do something sweet that would make her blush.

The Duke imagines some of the ways that Frà Pandolf might have caused the Duchess to get that "spot of joy" in her face.

He might have told her that her "mantle" (her shawl) covered her wrist too much, or he might have complimented her on the becoming way that she flushes, telling her that "paint / Must never hope to reproduce" the beautiful effect of her skin and coloring.

The Duke thinks the Duchess would have thought that comments like this, the normal flirtatious "courtesy" that noblemen would pay to noblewomen, were "cause enough" ) to blush.

Strangely, the Duke seems to believe that blushing in response to someone like Frà Pandolf was a decision, not an involuntary physical reaction. Notice that the Duke also seems to infuse his comments with a judgmental tone.

The Duke describes the Duchess as "too soon made glad" and "too easily impressed" . This is his main problem with her: too many things make her happy.

Another way of looking at it is that she's not serious enough. She doesn't save her "spot of joy" for him alone. She's not the discriminating snob that he wants her to be.

She likes everything she sees, and she sees everything.

The Duke elaborates further on the Duchess's tendency to see every pleasant thing as pretty much the same.

If he gives her a "favor" or mark of his esteem that she can wear, such as a corsage or piece of jewellery, she thanks him for it in the same way that she approves of a pretty sunset, a branch of cherries, or her white mule.

At first the Duke suggests that she speaks of all these things equally, but then he changes his claim and admits that sometimes she doesn't say anything and just blushes in that special way. Part of the problem is not just that she likes boughs of cherries – it's that some "officious fool" brings them to her.

The Duke claims that, although it's all well and good to thank people for doing things for you, the way the Duchess thanked people seemed to imply that she thought the little favors they did her were just as important as what the Duke himself did for her. After all, the Duke gave her his "nine-hundred-years-old name" – a connection to a longstanding aristocratic family with power and prestige. The Duke's family has been around for nearly a thousand years running things in Ferrara, and he thinks this makes him superior to the Duchess, who doesn't have the same heritage. He thinks the Duchess ought to value the social elevation of her marriage over the simple pleasures of life.

The Duke lists all the obstacles that prevented him from talking to the Duchess directly about his problems with her behavior. He claims that he doesn't have the "skill / In speech" to explain what he wants from her – but his skillful rhetoric in the rest of the poem suggests otherwise. He also suggests that she might have resisted being "lessoned", that is, taught a lesson by him, if she had "made excuse" for her behaviour instead.

But even if he were a skilled speaker, and even if she didn't argue, he says he still wouldn't talk to her about it. Because he thinks that bringing it up at all would be "stooping" to her level, and he refuses to do that.

The Duke admits to his listener that the Duchess was sweet to him – she did smile at him whenever he passed by her. But, he says, it's not like that was special. She smiles at everyone in the same way. The Duke claims that "This grew" that is, the Duchess's indiscriminate kindness and appreciation of everything got more extreme.

The Duke then "gave commands" (45) and as a result "All smiles stopped together" (46).

Our best guess is that he had her killed, but the poem is ambiguous on this point.

The Duke ends his story of the Duchess and her painting by gesturing toward the full-body portrait again, in which she stands "As if alive"

The Duke invites his listener to get up and go back downstairs to the rest of the "company."

The Duke tells the servant that he knows about the Count's wealth and generosity, or "munificence", so he expects to get any reasonable dowry he asks for. But his main "object" (53) in the negotiations is the daughter herself, not more money.

The Duke stops him and insists that they stay together as they go back to meet everyone else downstairs

Before the Duke and his listener leave the gallery, the Duke points out one more of his art objects – a bronze statue of Neptune, the god of the sea, taming a sea-horse.

The Duke mentions the name of the artist who cast this statue, Claus of Innsbruck, who made it specifically for him.

### 5.5 Key Terms

Duchess : wife of a duke

Fra : friar, a monk

Spot : a small mark on the cheek

Mantle : woman's loose sleeveless cloak

By design : intentionally

Pictured countenance : the face of last Duchess in the picture hanging on the wall.

Laps : overlaps

Half flush : half suffused with passion and pride

Plainly : clearly

Officious : bureaucratic, interfering

Munificence : kindness in bestowing gifts, extremely liberal and generous of spirit

Trifling : foolish

Just pretence : reasonable expectation

Stoop : lower one's standards or morals

Avowed : that has been asserted, stated publicly

Neptune : Roman God of Sea

Claus of Innsbruck : a fictional sculptor or artist

### 5.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

1. Who was Fra Pandolf and what did he do ?

Ans: He was a monk who painted for Duke a portrait of his last Duchess.

2. What does the poet say about the woman's heart?

Ans: According to the poet the woman had a heart that was made glad too soon.

3. Whose smiles s' stopped together'?

Ans: The Last Duchess.

4. What does the poet say about count's daughter?

Ans: He says that it is not dowry but Count's beautiful daughter the real object of his desire.

## 5.7 Explanation of Important Passages:

### Passage 1

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
 Looking as if she were alive. I call  
 That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands  
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.  
 Will't please you sit and look at her?

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from Robert Browning's famous poem "My Last Duchess". This poem is a remarkable dramatic monologue. Here the speaker is the Duke of Ferrara. He is talking to an envoy of a Count whose daughter the Duke plans to marry.

**Explanation:** In these lines the Duke points to a portrait painted on the wall. He tells the messenger that it is the portrait of his last Duchess. Here, the Duchess appears to be alive. The Duke calls this painting as a wonderful piece of art. He states that it was Fra Pandolf, a monk, who painted it. He worked busily for this the whole day and completed it. The speaker asks the messenger to sit down and look at the portrait.

### Passage 2

She had  
 A heart—how shall I say?— too soon made glad,  
 Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er  
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from Robert Browning's famous poem "My Last Duchess". This poem is a remarkable dramatic monologue. Here the speaker is the Duke of Ferrara. He is talking to an envoy of a Count whose daughter the Duke plans to marry.

### Explanation:

In these lines the speaker says that the Duchess had a heart that was too soon made glad. She had a heart that was too easily impressed. She liked whatever she looked on and her looks went everywhere.

### Passage 3

She thanked men—good! but thanked  
 Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked  
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name  
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame  
 This sort of trifling?

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from Robert Browning's famous poem "My Last Duchess". This poem is a remarkable dramatic monologue. Here the speaker is the Duke of Ferrara. He is talking to an envoy of a Count whose daughter the Duke plans to marry.

**Explanation:**

In these lines the speaker says that the Duchess thanked men who bought gifts for her. The Duke gave her the gift of his nine hundred year old family name. He was upset that she ranked his gift equal to anybody's gift. The Duke arrogantly states that he would never stoop to blame a trifling in his Duchess.

**Passage 4**

Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,  
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without  
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;  
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands  
 As if alive.

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from Robert Browning's famous poem "My Last Duchess". This poem is a remarkable dramatic monologue. Here the speaker is the Duke of Ferrara. He is talking to an envoy of a Count whose daughter the Duke plans to marry.

**Explanation:**

In these lines the speaker says that the Duchess used to smile whenever he passed her. Infact, there was nobody who passed her without getting the same smile. As this grew, the Duke gave commands and then all the smiles stopped together. The Duchess was murdered at the behest of the Duke. The Duke pointing to her portrait says that she looks as if alive.

**Passage 5**

Will't please you rise? We'll meet  
 The company below, then. I repeat,  
 The Count your master's known munificence  
 Is ample warrant that no just pretense  
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;  
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed  
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go  
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,  
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,  
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

### 5.8 Questions and Exercises

**1. What does the Duke call the painting?**

Ans: A wonder.

**2. Who was easily impressed?**

Ans: The last Duchess.

**3. How did the Duchess thank men?**

Ans: The Duchess thanked men with a smile.

**4 Whose ‘smiles stopped together’?”**

Ans: The last Duchess’s .

**5. Whose Statue did the Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for the Duke?**

Ans: The statue of Neptune taming the sea.

**6. Who is the speaker in the poem?**

Ans: The Duke of Ferrara.

**7. Who is the listener in the poem?**

Ans: The Count’s envoy.

**8. What proposal did the envoy bring for the Duke?**

Ans: The envoy brought a marriage proposal of count’s daughter with the Duke.

**9. Where did the Duke take the envoy to?**

Ans: The Duke took the envoy downstairs to meet the visitors .

**10. Who painted the portrait of the Last Duchess?**

Ans: Fra Pandolf.

**Answer the following questions in 20-30 words each.**

**1. Why did the Duke want to remarry?**

Ans: The Duke was a prestigious and a rich man. After the death/murder of his last Duchess he was left alone. So, he wanted to remarry.

**2. What was the envoy curipous about?**

Ans: The Duke showed the envoy a painting on the Wall. him. The painting had a blushful glance on her face. The envoy was curious to know the reason of that blush.

**3. What does the Duke say about the temperament of the Duchess?**

Ans: According to the Duke, the Duchess was pleased by everything. She smiled at every person. She expressed her gratitude to everyone who gave her gifts.

**4. How did the Duke react to the 'unkind' behaviour of the Duchess?**

Ans: The Duke was an arrogant man. He could not tolerate the simple nature of the Duchess. Finally he ordered his men to get her killed. Then all smiles stopped together.

**5. What is the Duke's explanation for his cruel treatment of the Duchess?**

Ans: The Duke believed that the Duchess had a heart that was too soon made glad. She was easily impressed by everyone. This annoyed the Duke.

**6. What do you think happened to the Duchess?**

Ans: The Duchess was finally murdered at the commands of the Duke, because the Duke was suspicious of her simplicity and could not tolerate her behaviour.

**Answer the following questions in about 200 words each.**

**1. Evaluate the poem as a dramatic monologue.**

Ans: *Dramatic monologue* refers to a particular type of poetry. These poems are *dramatic* in the sense that they have a theatrical quality; that is, the poem is meant to be read to an audience. To say that the poem is a *monologue* means that these are the words of one solitary speaker with no dialogue coming from any other characters.

'My last Duchess is a fine example of dramatic monologue. Here, Duke of Ferrara, is the speaker and an envoy of the Count is a silent listener. In this poem, the speaker tells us about his own character and also the character of his Last Duchess.

The poem begins abruptly, "That's my last Duchess painted on the wall." Through this line, the Duke reveals his egotistical and possessive nature. Throughout the poem, we have numerous examples of Duke's pride and haughtiness. Towards the end, the reader is aware of his cruel nature as well. When he gives orders to kill the Duchess: "I gave commands. Then all smiles stopped together.'

Moreover, Duke's diplomatic attitude also comes to the fore when he refers to Count's known munificence'. His greedy nature is evident when he demands dowry. Hypocritically he announces that it is Count's daughter and not the dowry he craves.

**2. The tyranny, pride and greed of the Duke have been shown in sharp contrast to the good nature of the Duchess. Explain.**

Ans: In this remarkable dramatic monologue, the Duke not only reveals his own character but that of his last Duchess's as well. "That's my last Duchess painted on the wall." Through this line, the Duke reveals his egotistical and possessive nature. Through out the poem, we have numerous examples of Duke's pride and haughtiness. Towards the end, the reader is aware of his cruel nature as well. When he gives orders to kill the Duchess: "I gave commands. Then all smiles stopped together.'

Moreover, Duke's diplomatic attitude also comes to the fore when he refers to Count's known munificence'. His greedy nature is evident when he demands dowry. Hypocritically he announces that it is Count's daughter and not the dowry he craves.

Thus, through Duke's speech his egoistic, cruel and tyrannical nature is exemplified. However, his nature is in sharp contrast to the sweet simple and the guileless innocence of his Last Duchess.

**3. Comment on the use of irony in the poem. Illustrate your answer with examples from the text.**

Ans: Irony is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words. It may also be a situation that may end up in quite a different way than what is generally anticipated. In simple words, it is a difference between the appearance and the reality.

In this poem there are numerous examples of irony employed by the poet. Throughout the poem the Duke heaps praises on his last Duchess. He talks about his beautiful face, simple nature. He talks about her pure heart and believes that she had a heart that was too soon made glad. It was a heart that was easily impressed. The Duke talks about her pleasant smile stating that she smiled at whatever or whosoever she looked at. "all and each/ Would draw from her alike the approving speech/Or blush, at least".

But the irony is evident when the Duke says:

“ This grew; I gave commands;  
Then all smiles stopped together.’

Another example of irony is evident in his demand for dowry though pretending to marry the Count's daughter due to her beauty. To quote:

“The Count your master's known munificence  
Is ample warrant that no just pretense  
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;  
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed  
At starting, is my object.

Thus, Robert Browning has remarkably used this genre of irony to heighten the poetic effect.



## UNIT-6

### WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR

Rabindranath Tagore

#### Structure

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Unit Objectives
- 6.2 About the Poet
- 6.3 About the Poem
- 6.4 Summary
- 6.5 Key Terms
- 6.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 6.7 Explanation of Important Passages
- 6.8 Questions and Exercises

#### 6.0 Introduction

This poem by great Rabindranath Tagore was most likely composed in 1900. It was included in the volume called 'Naibedya', the original poem bears the title 'Prarthana' meaning prayer. In 1911, Tagore translated this poem into English. It appeared as poem 35 in the English *Gitanjali*, published by the Indian Society, London, in 1912. In 1917, Tagore read out the English version (then titled 'Indian Prayer') at the Indian National Congress session in Calcutta. The poem is a prayer to God. It was written by Rabindranath Tagore during the time when India was under the British Rule and people were eagerly waiting to get their freedom from the British Rule. This poem had given a lot of strength to the people who were struggling for India's independence. It is a prayer to the Almighty for creation of a peaceful nation free from any kind of scheming or polluted powers.

#### 6.1 Unit Objectives

The objective of this unit/poem is to help the students in appreciating the poetic capabilities and deep insight of Rabindranath Tagore's poetry. The students need to be well versed in understanding the finer aspects of Tagore's poetry which aimed at inculcating a sense of self dignity, truthfulness, rationality, broadmindedness making them fearless and hardworking.

#### 6.2 About the Poet

Rabindranath Tagore, popularly known as Gurudev, restructured Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art during the 19th and early 20th centuries. He became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his collection of verses and songs known as *Gitanjali*. Tagore introduced new prose and verse forms, and also popularised the use of colloquial language in Bengali literature that freed Bengali literature from traditional models based on classical Sanskrit. Tagore was

also supportive in introducing the best of Indian culture to the West and vice versa. He is by and large regarded as the most exceptional creative artist of the modern Indian subcontinent.

He wrote primarily in Bengali but translated many of his works into English to be read worldwide. His best known works are *Gitanjali* (meaning “*Song Offerings*”), *Gora* (meaning “*Fair-Faced*”) and *Ghare-Baire* (meaning “*The Home and the World*”). His writings, eulogised worldwide, are held in high regard for their lyricism, colloquialism, naturalism, and unnatural contemplation. He founded, Visva-Bharati University, where we can have a look at his rich legacy. His novels, stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays deal with both political and personal themes.

His compositions were chosen by two nations as national anthems: India’s *Jana Gana Mana* and Bangladesh’s *Amar Shonar Bangla* are both composed by him.

In 1915, he was granted knighthood, a British Crown but he renounced it in protest against the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre. His views on culture, education, poverty, gender and freedom are relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as well.

### 6.3 About the Poem

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high  
 Where knowledge is free  
 Where the world has not been broken up into fragments  
 By narrow domestic walls  
 Where words come out from the depth of truth  
 Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection  
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way  
 Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit  
 Where the mind is led forward by thee  
 Into ever-widening thought and action  
 Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

The poem was written at a time where Indians were under the British Rule. By yearning for an awakened country where there would be freedom of the mind and the spirit, the poem invokes deep patriotic feelings among the readers. By praying for a freedom of spirit, education, work the poem actually highlights the condition of the country then –Subjugated, dependent, bound by cast creed, superstitious beliefs and prejudices

Throughout the poem the poet has yearned, prayed, appealed for a country which would be the “heaven of freedom” thus giving us, the readers, a state to aspire for. The poem has always had a global appeal and is relevant even today. The same yearning continues. The yearning for a world where there would be freedom of the spirit, dignity, where people would not cower in fear of subjugation.

The poet wishes that in his country everyone should be fearless and honoured. He wishes a free country where one can acquire knowledge without restriction. He wishes that his country should not be divided on the basis of narrow-domestic walls of caste, class, colour, religion, creed and religion. He wishes that his countrymen should be honest and truthful. They should strive tirelessly to achieve perfection in all their undertakings. They should not be led astray by bad habits and thoughts. Their mind should be led forward towards noble thoughts. He prays to God to raise his country into the heaven of freedom.

#### 6.4 Summary

Rabindranath Tagore sketches a moving picture of the nation; he would like India to be. In lines 1-2, the poet pledges to the Almighty that his country should be free from any fear of oppression or forced compulsion. He wants that everyone in his country should be free to hold their heads high in dignity. He dreams of a nation where knowledge or education would be free that is education should not be restricted to the upper class only but everybody should be free to acquire knowledge. There should not be any caste distinctions or gender distinction when it comes to education.

Tagore, in his poem ‘Where The Mind Is Without Fear’ wishes for a world which is not ‘fragmented’ by prejudices based on caste, creed, color, religion or other baseless superstitions. Prejudices and superstitions should not divide the people in groups and break their unity (line 4). He wants a nation where people are truthful, not superficial and words should come out from the depth of their hearts (line 5). The sixth line of ‘Where The Mind Is Without Fear’ talks about the poet yearning for a country where people would strive without getting tired to reach perfection leaving behind prejudices and old traditions. In the next line, line 7, Tagore wants the power of reason to dominate the minds of his countrymen, he does not want the ‘stream of reason’ to be lost amongst outdated customs and traditions and only that can direct the mind towards selfless thoughts and everlasting action. In the final line of the poem, Tagore asks the ‘Father’, presumably God to awaken his country into such a heaven of freedom.

#### 6.5 Key Terms

Fragments: small pieces

Narrow	: Limited in amount, or scope
Domestic	: Existing or occurring inside a particular country
Tireless	: Having or showing great effort or energy
Striving	: to make great efforts to achieve or obtain something
Stretches	: to straighten or extend one’s body or a part of one’s body to its full length
Clear	: transparent; unclouded
Stream	: A small, narrow river
Dreary	: monotonous, Depressingly dull and bleak
Thee	: An older form of the word “you”
Ever-widening	: Constantly increasing in scope

## 6.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

### 1. How can the head be held high?

Ans: The head can be held high when there is no fear in the mind.

### 2. What does the poet mean by ‘narrow domestic walls’?

Ans: Poet means that class, colour, caste, creed and religion are the narrow domestic walls.

### 3 In what kind of heaven does the poet want his country to be?

Ans: The poet wants his country to awake into a heaven of freedom, sound reasoning and righteous action.

## 6.7 Explanation of Important Passages

### Passage 1

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high  
 Where knowledge is free  
 Where the world has not been broken up into fragments  
 By narrow domestic walls  
 Where words come out from the depth of truth.

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from Rabindranath Tagore’s famous poem “Where the Mind is without Fear” In this poem the poet wants his country to awake in the freedom of mind thought, speech, education, belief practice and behaviour.

### Explanation:

In these lines, the poet prays to the Almighty that everyone in his country should be fearless. People of his country should be free to hold their heads high in self-respect without having any fear of oppression or compulsion. In his country education should not be the monopoly of the rich and the affluent. The distribution of knowledge should not be restricted by narrow ideas and loyalties. The poet feels that the world of man is fragmented; it is restricted to small mutually exclusive compartments. The poet prays that the minds of his countrymen should not be engulfed in prejudices based on caste, class, colour, religion, creed, region and narrow superstitions. On the other hand, their minds should be enriched by thoughts and actions, which are worthy and beneficial to the nation. He feels that the words of truth should come out from the depth of the heart and should be spoken courageously in the open for the world to hear.

### Passage 2

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection  
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way  
 Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit  
 Where the mind is led forward by thee  
 Into ever-widening thought and action  
 Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake

**Reference to the Context:** These lines have been taken from Rabindranath Tagore’s famous poem “Where the Mind is without Fear” In this poem the poet wants his country to awake in the freedom of mind thought, speech, education, belief practice and behaviour.

**Explanation:**

In these lines the poet prays that his countrymen should work for perfection in everything with the help of reason, leaving aside superstitious rituals. They should not be led astray from their goal in the dry desert of dead habits, that is, in a place where outdated customs and traditions are followed. His countrymen’s mind should be led forward into progressive thought and action, that is, they should be led by the power of reasoning to focus on the future with scientific thought. Tagore wants his country to awake to such a state of sound reasoning and righteous action. He prays to God, that his country should awake into a heaven of freedom.

**6.8 Questions and Exercises**

Answer the following Questions in 20 to 30 words each.

**1. What does Tagore mean by ‘narrow domestic walls’?**

Ans: According to Tagore narrow domestic walls are the walls of caste, class, colour, creed and religion. These walls create prejudices and divide the people in groups and break their unity .

**2. How can people achieve perfection?**

Ans: According to the poet people can achieve perfection by striving tirelessly in all their undertakings leaving behind prejudices and old traditions.

**3. What importance does Tagore ascribe to knowledge, truth and reason?**

Ans: Tagore wants his country to awake in a state of sound reasoning and righteous action. He feels that proper knowledge, should be accompanied by truthfulness and logical reasoning.

**4. Why does the poet repudiate the idea of narrow domestic walls?**

Ans: According to the poet, narrow domestic walls are detrimental to the overall growth of the nation. These walls create a rift between the society.

**5. What type of strength does the poet pray for?**

Ans: The poet in a patriotic mood prays for awakening of the country that is independent, where the people are free to express their thoughts, ideas and are free from all kinds of bondage.

**Answer the following questions in about 200 words.**

**1. What kind of freedom does Tagore visualise for his country?**

Ans: Rabindranath Tagore in this famous poem prays to God to awake his country in a heaven of freedom. This poem was written when India was under the British rule. So he wanted his country to get freedom from the British imperial rule. Tagore aspires of a true comprehensive society that should be knowledgeable, rational, truthful, hard-working and broad-minded to make his nation achieve true freedom — a kind of spiritual freedom.

Tagore pledges to God that his country should be free from any fear of oppression or forced compulsion. He wants that everyone in his country should be free to hold their heads high in dignity. He dreams of a nation where knowledge or education would be free that is education should not be restricted to the upper class only but everybody should be free to acquire knowledge. There should not be any caste distinctions or gender distinction when it comes to education.

The poet craves a world which is not ‘fragmented’ by prejudices based on caste, creed, color, religion or other baseless superstitions. Prejudices and superstitions should not divide the people in groups and break their unity. He wants a nation where people are truthful, not superficial and words should come out from the depth of their hearts ,where people would strive without getting tired to reach perfection leaving behind prejudices and old traditions.He wants the power of reason to dominate the minds of his countrymen, he does not want the ‘stream of reason’ to be lost amongst outdated customs and traditions and only that can direct the mind towards selfless thoughts and everlasting action based on truth and fearlessness.

Tagore, infact, pleads to the Almighty that apart from territorial independence, his country should also have spiritual and intellectual freedom.

**2. Write a note on Tagore’s concept of ‘ the heaven of freedom’.**

Ans: Rabindranath Tagore in this famous poem pleads to the Almighty that apart from territorial independence, his country should also be blessed with spiritual and intellectual freedom.

Tagore aspires of a true global society that should be well-informed, realistic, honest, hard-working and tolerant to make his nation achieve true freedom — a kind of spiritual freedom.

Tagore pledges to God that his country should be free from every kind of fear of oppression or forced compulsion. He wants that everyone in his country should be free to hold their heads high in dignity. He dreams of a nation where knowledge or education would be free for all and it should not be restricted to the upper class only but everybody should be free to acquire knowledge. There should not be any caste distinctions or gender distinction when it comes to education.

The poet craves a world which is not divided by prejudices based on caste, creed, color, religion or other baseless superstitions. Prejudices and superstitions should not divide the people in groups and break their unity. He wants a nation where people are truthful, not superficial and words should come out from the depth of their hearts ,where people would strive without getting tired to reach perfection leaving behind prejudices and old traditions.He wants the power of reason to dominate the minds of his countrymen, he does not want the ‘stream of reason’ to be lost amongst outdated customs and traditions and only that can direct the mind towards selfless thoughts and everlasting action based on truth and fearlessness.

**3. Comment on the wide gap between the reality of contemporary India and Tagore’s concept of India.**

Ans: Tagore’s desired India to become a heaven of Freedom. By this he dreamt of a global society where the society was not divided on the boundaries of colour, caste creed and religion.Tagore

does not talk about independence from the British rule rather he craves academic and sacred freedom for every citizen.

He wants his nation to rise above paltry issues and prejudiced intolerance and rise high above into the world of freedom of thought and expression based on truthfulness and courage. Tagore wanted that his countrymen should work for perfection in everything with the help of reason, leaving aside superstitious rituals. They should not be led astray from their goal in the dry desert of dead habits, that is, in a place where outdated customs and traditions are followed. His countrymen's mind should be led forward into progressive thought and action, that is, they should be led by the power of reasoning to focus on the future with scientific thought. Tagore wants his country to awake to such a state of sound reasoning and righteous action.

But, the reality of contemporary India is all together different. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian society is largely divided on caste, colour and religious lines. Corruption and nepotism is rampant in all walks of life. Education and Health services are going beyond the reach of common man. A large section of Indian society is interested in filling their own coffers exploiting the natural resources to the maximum.

## UNIT-7

### THE BANGLE SELLERS

#### Structure

- 7.0 Introducing the Author
- 7.1 Unit Objectives
- 7.2 The Poem- Bangle Sellers
- 7.3 Summary
- 7.4 Key Terms
- 7.5 Answers to check your progress
- 7.6 Questions and Exercises: Short and Long Answer Questions
- 7.7 Language Practice

#### 7.0 Introducing the Author

##### ***Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949)***

Sarojini Naidu is also known as the nightingale of India. She played an active role in the Indian Independence struggle and also in the formation of the Indian constitution. In 1985, she travelled to England to study at King's College London and Girton College Cambridge respectively. She was the first Indian woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress and the Governor of the United Provinces From 1947 to 1949. She was the first woman to become Governor of an Indian state. Naidu played a major role in the Indian Independence movement after coming in contact with Gopal Krishan Gokhale, Rabindranath Tagore, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Anny Besant, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1931, she participated in the Round Table Conference with Gandhi and Madan Mohan Malaviya. She played a leading role during the Civil Disobedience Movement and was jailed along with Gandhi and other leaders. In 1942, she was arrested during the Quit India Movement.

Naidu began writing at the age of thirteen. Her major themes are nature, love, life and death, folk life, patriotism and mysticism. Her first collection of poems named *The Golden Threshold* was published in 1905. *The Bard of Time* was published in 1912, *The Broken Wing* came out in 1917, *The Sceptred Flute* in 1943. Her work *The Father of the Dawn* was edited and published posthumously in 1961 by her daughter Padamja. The poem "Bangle Sellers" was first published in the year 1912 by Sarojini Naidu in her collection of poems called "The Bird of Time." The speaker makes strong connections between the bangles and their role in providing "happy daughters and happy wives."

#### 7.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the imagery associated with bangles and the implications for women's roles in a traditionalist Indian social setting.



- Appreciate the figures of speech employed to describe the celebration of Indian womanhood.
- Understand the auspiciousness and symbolic value of the custom of wearing bangles.

## 7.2 The Poem

The Bangle sellers

### 7.2.1 Bangle sellers are we who bear

Our shining loads to the temple fair...

Who will buy these delicate, bright

Rainbow-tinted circles of light?

Lustrous tokens of radiant lives,

For happy daughters and happy wives.

**Explanation:** Naidu's poem explores the feelings associated with bangles and the implications for women's roles in a traditionalist Indian social setting. Bangle sellers take their load of bangles to the temple fair to sell them. The bangles are termed as "lustrous tokens of radiant lives" which mean that they are symbols of love in people's lives. They are trying to convince the purchasing public of the spiritual and symbolic importance of these bangles. In this process, the speaker makes strong connections between the bangles and their role in providing "happy daughters and happy wives."

### Check Your Progress

1. What kind of poem is The Bangle Sellers?
2. What do bangle sellers carry and where?

### 7.2.2 Some are meet for a maiden's wrist,

Silver and blue as the mountain mist,

Some are flushed like the buds that dream

On the tranquil brow of a woodland stream,

Some are aglow with the bloom that cleaves

To the limpid glory of new born leaves

### Explanation:

The poet says that some of the bangles are made for the unmarried women and they are of silver and blue in color. They also choose reddish colour bangles 'flushed like the buds.' Some maidens also prefer green colour which is like the colour of newborn leaves.

### Check Your Progress

1. What colour of bangles are more suitable for a maiden's wrist?
2. Which colour do some other maidens prefer and why?

7.2 .3 Some are like fields of sunlit corn,  
 Meet for a bride on her bridal morn,  
 Some, like the flame of her marriage fire,  
 Or, rich with the hue of her heart's desire,  
 Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,  
 Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.

**Explanation:**

The other bangles made for the bride glow like the fields of corn during morning. Those bangles glow like the bride's marriage flame and rich in her heart's desires. The bangles are tinkling with 'luminous' colors like the bride's laughter or tears.

**Check Your Progress**

1. How do the bangles made for the brides glow?
2. Explain the comparison of bangles with "the bride's laughter or tears."

7.2 .4 Some are purple and gold flecked grey  
 For she who has journeyed through life midway,  
 Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest,  
 And cradled fair sons on her faithful breast,  
 And serves her household in fruitful pride,  
 And worships the gods at her husband's side.

**Explanation:**

Some bangles are made for the elderly women who have journeyed through half of their life. The purple and grey flecked bangle is meant to symbolize a woman who "serves her household in fruitful pride,/ And worships the gods at her husband's side."

**Check Your Progress**

1. Who chooses purple and gold flecked grey bangles and what do they symbolize?
2. What is onomatopoeia? Explain giving an example.

Mothers who have passed half of their life choose purple and gold flecked grey colour bangles, which symbolizes their love for their sons and their humble prayers to Gods while sitting with their husbands.

**7.3 Summary:**

Bangle sellers take their load of bangles to the temple fair to sell them. The bangles are termed as "lustrous tokens of radiant lives" which mean that they are symbols of love in people's lives. The bangles are made for happy daughters and wives. The poet says that some of the bangles are made for the unmarried women and they are of silver and blue in colour. The other bangles made for the bride

glow like the fields of corn during morning. Those bangles glow like the bride's marriage flame and rich in her heart's desires. The bangles are tinkling with 'luminous' colours like the bride's laughter or tears. Some bangles are made for the elderly women who have journeyed through half of their life. These bangles are purple in colour with gold fleckers. These women have served their household well, cradled their sons and have worshipped the household gods with their husbands beside them. The subsequent stanzas describe through lush and natural imagery the beauty of the bangles and their representation of these ideals help to increase their precious value. Some of these descriptions invoke the passion of "marriage's fire" and, in the last stanza, help to bring to light the socially accepted role of women in this setting.

The poem employs colorful imagery liberally and is an epitome of the typical Indian scene. Onomatopoeia is one of the figures of speech used to describe the sounds of the bangles, which gives a musical flow to the poem. The rhyme scheme of the poem is aa-bb-cc.

#### 7.4 Key Terms

Rainbow tinted	: rainbow colored
Lustrous	: shining
Meet	: suitable
Tranquil Brow	: Calm and quiet bank of a river, lake, pond etc
Limpid	: clear
Hue	: colour
Luminous	: glowing

#### 7.5 Answers to check your progress

1. The Bangle Sellers is a poem that deals with folk theme, folk characters and their vocations. She invests the folk theme with richness of allegory and symbolism, with bangles symbolizing love and happiness in people's lives.
2. The bangle sellers carry their load of bangles to the temple fair in order to sell them.
3. The bangles more suitable for a maiden's wrist are of silver and blue in colour like the mountain mist.
4. Some other maidens also prefer green colour which is like the colour of newborn leaves.
5. The bangles made for the bride glow like the fields of corn during morning. They appear like the bride's marriage flame and rich in her heart's desires.
6. The bangles worn by the bride reflect the burning desires of her heart and hence tinkle with luminous colours like the bride's laughter or tears.
7. Mothers who have passed half of their life choose purple and gold flecked grey colour bangles, which symbolize their love for their sons and their humble prayers to Gods while sitting with their husbands.
8. Onomatopoeia is a figure of speech used to describe the sounds of the bangles, which gives a musical flow to the poem. It is defined as a word, which imitates the natural sounds of a particular thing, creating a musical sound effect that mimics the thing that is being described. For instance:

“Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,  
Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.”

## 7.6 Questions and Exercises:

### Short Answer Questions

**1. Who are bangle sellers?**

Ans: The bangle sellers are a group of people on its way to the temple fair to sell their bangles of different colours.

**2. How are the bangles described by the poet?**

Ans: The bangles are described as “lustrous tokens of radiant lives” by the poet and there are different bangles for different women.

**3. What are some of the different colours of bangles?**

Ans: There are rainbow-tinted bangles for daughters and wives, silver and blue ones for the maidens, rich hues for the brides, and purple flecked for older women.

**4. What is the figure of speech prominently used in the poem?**

Ans: Onomatopoeia is the figures of speech prominently used in the poem to describe the sounds of the bangles, which gives a musical flow to the poem.

**5. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?**

Ans: The rhyme scheme of the poem is aa-bb-cc, which means line one rhyming with line 2, line three rhyming with line 4 and line 5 rhyming with line 6.

### Long-Answer Questions

**1. What is the significance of bangles for various categories of women?**

Ans: Some of the bangles are made for the unmarried women and they are of silver and blue in colour. The other bangles made for the bride glow like the fields of corn during morning. These bangles are tinkle with ‘luminous’ colours like the bride’s laughter or tears. While some other bangles, purple in colour with gold fleckers, are made for the elderly women who have journeyed through half of their life.

**2. How does this poem celebrate womanhood?**

Ans: The poem celebrates womanhood by vividly describing the different stages of a woman’s life like maidenhood, marriage, middle age through the use of varied colours, feelings and emotions. Women in various stages of their lives tend to express their love, happiness and heart’s desires by wearing different sets of bangles- different shades and lustre for the unmarried young teen; different colours and patterns for a woman about to be married and more sedate ones for the woman who is now a mother and hence is older and more settled and content.

**3. Discuss the use of imagery and symbols in the poem**

Ans: The bangles termed as “lustrous tokens of radiant lives” symbolize love and radiance in people’s lives and are made for happy daughters and wives. Her images of bangles of various colours are

visual, vivid and graphic. While some bangles are described as “delicate, bright rainbow-tinted circles of light”, others are “silver and blue as the mountain mist,” while “some are flushed like the buds that dream on the tranquil brow of a woodland stream.”

### Essay type question

#### 1. How does the title and the theme of the poem depict Indian scene and sensibility?

Ans: The very title “The Bangle Sellers” sets the Indian scene in the sense that a group of bangle sellers is on its way to the temple fair to sell their bangles and one of them is the narrator of the poem. The use of different kinds of bangles for different ages and stages of Indian women further consolidates Indian setting and characterization. The poet says that some of the bangles are made for the unmarried women and they are of silver and blue in colour. The other bangles made for the bride glow like the fields of corn during morning. Those bangles glow like the bride’s marriage flame and rich in her heart’s desires. The bangles are tinkling with ‘luminous’ colours like the bride’s laughter or tears. Some bangles are made for the elderly women who have journeyed through half of their life. These bangles are purple in colour with gold fleckers. These women have served their household well, cradled their sons and have worshipped the household gods with their husbands beside them. The poem describes through lush and natural imagery the beauty of the bangles and how their representation of these ideals help to increase their precious value for Indian women of different ages. Some of these descriptions invoke the passion of "marriage's fire" and, in the last stanza, help to bring to light the socially accepted role of women in this setting.

### 7.7 Language Practice:

#### 1. List some of the

#### 2. Use the words ‘lustrous’ and ‘tranquil’ in a sentence of your own.

Ans: Lustrous: Her dark, deep-set and lustrous eyes impressed one and all.

Tranquil: Everyone is a great admirer of his tranquil state of mind.

#### 3. Use the word ‘journey’ as a verb and as a noun in sentences of your own.

Ans: **Noun:** Life is an endless journey.

**Verb:** I salute those who have journeyed so well through the twists and turns of life.

#### 4. List examples of a metaphor and a simile from the above poem.

Ans: **Metaphor:** Rainbow-tinted circles of light?

**Simile:** Silver and blue as the mountain mist,

#### 5. Find out a few examples of onomatopoeia from the above poem.

Ans: Or, rich with the hue of her heart's desire,

Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,

## UNIT-8

### POETIC FORMS AND DEVICES

#### Structure

8.1 Sonnet

8.2 Ode

8.3 Dramatic Monologue

8.4 Rhythm and Rhyme

8.5 Alliteration

8.6 Simile

8.7 Metaphor

#### 8.1 Sonnet

The word sonnet is derived from the Italian word “sonetto”. It means a small or little song or lyric. It is a poem of 14 fourteen lines, written in iambic pentameter. The rhymes of a sonnet are arranged according to a certain rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in English is usually abab-cdcd-efef-gg and in Italian abba-abba-cde-cde.

#### Types of Sonnet

Sonnets can be categorized into six major types:

**Italian Sonnet**

**Shakespearean Sonnet**

**Spenserian Sonnet**

**Miltonic Sonnet**

**Terza Rima Sonnet**

**Curtal Sonnet**

Examples of Sonnets in literature

Let us take a look at the examples of sonnets in Literature based on its different categories:

#### Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet

Italian or Petrarchan sonnet was introduced by an Italian poet Francesco Petrarch of 14th century. The rhyme scheme of Petrarchan sonnet has first eight lines called *octet* that rhymes as abba -abba –cdc-dcd. The remaining six lines called *sestet* might have a range of rhyme schemes.

#### Shakespearean Sonnet

A Shakespearean sonnet is generally written in an iambic pentameter, there are 10 syllables in each line. The rhyme scheme of Shakespearean sonnet is abab-cdcd-efef-gg and this is difficult to follow. Hence only Shakespeare is known to have done it.

### **Spenserian Sonnet**

Sir Edmund Spenser was the first poet who modified the Petrarch's form. The rhyme scheme in this sonnet is abab-bcbc-cdcd-ee which is specific to Spenser and such types of sonnets are called Spenserian sonnets.

### **8.2 Ode**

An Ode is derived from a Greek word *aeidein*, which means to chant or sing. It is highly sombre and solemn in its tone and subject matter, and usually is used with elaborate patterns of stanzas. A significant feature of ode is its uniform metrical feet, but poets generally do not strictly follow this rule though use highly elevated theme.

There are three type of Odes

#### **Pindaric Ode**

This ode was named after an ancient Greek poet, Pindar, who began writing choral poems that were meant to be sung at public events. It contains three triads; strophe, antistrophe and final stanza as epode, with irregular rhyme patterns and lengths of lines.

#### **Horatian Ode**

This ode was named after a Latin poet, Horace. Horatian ode is informal, contemplative and personal dealing with exciting subject matters that were simple and gave pleasure to senses. Since Horatian odes are informal in tone, they are devoid of any strict rules.

#### **Irregular Ode**

This type of ode is without any formal rhyme scheme and structure such as Pindaric ode. In this kind of ode the poet has great freedom and flexibility to try any types of concepts and moods. William Wordsworth and John Keats were such poets who extensively wrote irregular odes, taking advantage of this form.

Many renowned poets like John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Thomas Gray, S.T Coleridge, William Wordsworth and Edmund Spencer, etc. have written popular odes.

### **8.3 Dramatic Monologue**

Dramatic monologue refers to a poetic form. These lyrical poems are dramatic having a theatrical quality. The poem is meant to be read to an audience. In a dramatic monologue there is only one solitary speaker with no dialogue coming from any other characters.

In it poets express a point of view through the words of a character. The great Victorian poet, Robert Browning is considered to be the master of this type of poetry. His poem, "My Last Duchess" is considered to be one of his best dramatic monologues.

### **8.4 Rhyme**

A rhyme is used for a specific purpose of rendering a pleasant effect to a poem which makes its recitation soothing. It is a repetition of similar sounding words occurring at the end of lines in poems or songs.

In poetry various types of Rhyme is employed

### **Perfect Rhyme**

In a perfect rhyme, two words rhyme in such a way that their final stressed vowel and all following sounds are identical e.g. dope and hope, cloak and clock etc. In general rhyme there is a variety of phonetic likeness between words displaying a similar sounding last syllable but without a stressed vowel For example, cleaver and silver, patter and pitter etc. Imperfect rhyme is between a stressed and an unstressed syllable. For example, Wing and caring, sit and perfect, reflect and subject etc. In Slant rhyme, words having the same vowel sound are used e.g. kill and bill, wall and hall, shake and hate etc.

### **8.5 Alliteration**

Alliteration is a stylistic device in which a number of words, having the same first consonant sound, occur close together in a series.

Consider the following examples:

But a better butter makes a batter better.

This is an alliterative sentence because the same first letter of words (B) occurs close together and produces alliteration in the sentence. Alliteration does not depend on letters but on sounds.

Best Buy

Coca-Cola

For example in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,

The furrow followed free;

... Into that silent sea."

Here alliteration ("b", "f" and "s") is used in the phrases "breeze blew", "foam flew", "furrow followed", and "silent sea".

### **8.6 Simile**

A simile is a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison, showing similarities between two different things. Unlike a metaphor, a simile draws resemblance with the help of the words "like" or "as".

**For example:**

Torres is as fast as a Cheetah.

Cheetah is known for its speed and Torres is compared to that speed of a Cheetah.

**For example**

Robert Burns uses a simile to describe the beauty of his beloved.

"O my love is like a red, red rose"

The poet here says that his love is a fresh red rose that blossoms in the spring.



## **8.7 Metaphor**

Metaphor is a figure of speech which makes an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated but share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics.

### **For example**

“Raju is the black sheep among the teachers” is a metaphor because Raju is not a sheep and is not even black. But, we can use this comparison to describe an association of a black sheep with that person. A black sheep is an unusual animal and typically stays away from the herd, and the person you are describing shares similar characteristics.

William Shakespeare’s famous sonnet “Sonnet 18,” also known as “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day,” is an example of literary metaphor. Here, the poet has used a metaphor to highlight the love of the speaker and the fairness of the summer season. He writes that “thy eternal summer,” here taken to mean the love of the subject, “shall not fade.”